

presence of the incompetents is not the teacher's fault, but the fault of grading — unless, indeed, the teacher is also the grading officer, when he can and should speedily remedy the evil.

Perhaps a rider should be placed here to the effect that if a pupil or two had been placed in a class (as may sometimes be necessary on account of age) so hopelessly incompetent for the work that its attempt can succeed only in breaking the teacher's heart or robbing the other pupils of precious time, in that case try to have them removed to classes where they belong, failing which, let them glean after the reapers of the harvest.

And here I would insert a note concerning review tests. To my mind teachers who do not habitually test their pupils' knowledge of work they have been over by written examinations, fail in a plain duty. If a teacher does not apply review tests (written when possible), I do not see how he can tell whether his pupils have retained principles taught. In fact I venture the statement that he does not know; that he deceives himself in thinking he does know; and that he will acknowledge it if he test them. This test, too, will just as likely be an eye-opener for the pupil as for the teacher. It is apt to show him that he is not as clear upon the matter as he thought, and to stimulate him, as well as his teacher, to increased care and diligence. These review tests will unify and connect the piecemeal daily tests and tend to give the pupil a connected and comprehensive view of the subject. How often these review tests should be applied is a moot question. Some teachers hold what they call monthly examinations on all or most of the subjects studied; others will have, what is better, the test confined to a single subject, and will hold it at a certain completed stage of the work; for example, on a reign or a period in English history; or on the reduction of long measure or of all measures. If pupils know that a test is coming when they have spent a reasonable time, say on the geography of New Brunswick, they will work with more zest.

And not only is it wise to let pupils know that a test is certainly coming, but to let them know as soon as possible when it is coming. It will tend to bring scattered ideas to a focus by leading them to question themselves as to whether they really know the subject or not. Do not be afraid of cram—that would imply that your tests were not of the right sort. If cram means stuffing the memory, it affords no help in that right sort of a test which asks for the pupil's own thinking and expression.

Then when the teacher has examined their work, if he represents his estimate by values, let him exhibit to the class the values not only of the whole test but of each question in it. It is, however, by no means necessary for the teacher to put definite values to tests unless he wishes to utilize the tests otherwise than to ascertain proficiency, such as standing or grading.

One objection sometimes urged to this testing is that it takes time from teaching; but this is a mistake, for in our everyday work testing and teaching must be intertwined, so to speak. We must proceed from the known to the unknown, and we can only discover the known by testing; and after teaching the unknown, it must be tested to see that it has become the known. Neither do review tests unneces-

sarily take up time from teaching, if they are properly handled, for they teach in so far as they give scope for original thinking or expression (or tests of power), and their other part may be simply drill, and can be utilized for that very necessary part of teaching. But notice the inimitable teaching chance which the teacher's treatment of these written tests affords? The teacher does not, after estimating their value, burn them, as an outside examiner would, but he marks all errors in knowledge and in expression, to the minutest detail, such as dotting an *i* and crossing a *t*; and he then returns the papers to the pupils who carefully correct the errors and show the teacher the corrections. The special excellence of the written test handled in this way, as a teaching exercise, is that the pupil has to study the very points on which he has shown himself weak; and his ignorance of which would otherwise probably remain to breed trouble in subsequent work. These tests, then, being either inimitable opportunities for teaching, or a part of necessary drill, do not steal time from teaching.

And just here I pause to suggest that testing in everyday work be done immediately where possible; that is, when the simplest thing has been taught, test regarding that simple fact at once; and if a complex operation is being taught, test at every step and insist that every one understand it.

As to methods of testing, it is perhaps desirable that a reference or two be made.

Should the test be by the question and answer, or by the topic and narrative method? It is evident that both have their legitimate place. In testing as one teaches, and in cases continually arising, the question method may be used with effect; but the questions need to be skilfully put, neither indistinct nor suggestive. Nor should the pupil, in answering anything he should know, get the faintest sign of assistance from the teacher; and as to being prompted by a classmate, the pupil should be trained to scorn it as an insult to the one prompted. But the value of the topic method would award a wider adoption than I think prevails in oral tests. It trains to more connected thinking, and will, in most subjects, secure a fuller, more intelligent, and more appreciative grasp of the subject than incidental piecemeal questioning is likely to secure, even if conducted by a Socrates.

Again, should the tests be written or oral? Both; review tests generally written, and daily tests generally oral. But even daily tests should be written, when in the teacher's judgment either the subject or occasion would make writing more effective. Such a subject would be spelling, and such an occasion would be the teacher's wanting to test two classes at the same time—let one write while he tests the other orally. Oral testing has the advantage of affording a chance for incidental teaching; and written testing has the advantage of testing all more surely; but it has the disadvantage of taking time from the teacher in looking over so many exercises. Occasionally, perhaps, the written tests can be exchanged among the pupils to be examined—the teacher looking over one or two, and having the best and poorest read or exhibited.

I will illustrate some of the principles and methods I have here laid down by taking one or two subjects:

What is the test as to whether a child can read a passage and how well? He can read it for himself, can he not, if he can perceive its meaning clearly? And the how well depends