

6. When it is necessary to teach a new word, always, as far as practicable, give the idea before the word. That is the order of nature.

7. Labor to increase steadily the pupil's knowledge, both in the number of words and in the extent and clearness of the understood meanings. The enlargement of a pupils language is the increase of his knowledge and of his capacity to know.

8. Secure the largest and best possible use of language by the pupil. The teacher is succeeding best whose pupils talk most freely and correctly on the subject of the lessons.

9. Young pupils may be asked to repeat words after the teacher, to form the habit of speech; and all pupils should talk on the review.

Violations.—This third great law of teaching is violated more frequently than even the best teachers suspect. The interested look and the smiling assent of the pupil often deceive the experienced instructor into the belief that his language is understood, and all the more easily because the pupil himself is deceived, and says he understands when he has only a mere glimpse of the meaning. Children are often entertained with the manner and seem attentive to the thoughts when they are only watching the eyes and lips of a speaker. They sometimes also claim to understand, simply to please their instructor and gain his good will. Thus the teacher is constantly in danger of being betrayed into a serious, if not fatal mistake.

The misuse of language is perhaps the most common failure in teaching. Not to mention those pretended teachers who cover up their own ignorance or indolence by a use of words which they know the children will not understand; and omitting also those who are more concerned to exhibit their eloquence and to awaken wonder at their wisdom, than to convey it to others; we find still some honest teachers who labor hard to make a clear and forcible statement of the truth, and then feel that their duty is done. If the children do not understand it must be from hopeless stupidity or from willful inattention. Often it is a single unusual or misunderstood term that makes the break in the electric cable; but it does not occur to the teacher to hunt up the break, and substitute a clearer term. The history of teaching is full of strange and even comical mistakes made by children in interpreting the language of adults; enough to put every teacher on his guard against this painful source of failure.

But even those teachers who easily use simple and intelligible language to their classes, frequently fail in the higher use of this teaching instrument. They do not secure a clear statement of the truth from the child, and they have no test of their own success. A volume would be required to state fully the blunders committed in violation of this law. They may be suspected from the facts that there are above *eighty thousand* words in the English language; that perhaps not more than two thousand of these are in use in common life, and that a child's vocabulary does not often contain over five hundred or one thousand words. But the topics studied in school lie mostly outside of our daily life, and hence outside much of our every-day speech. It has been acknowledged that the greatest obstacle to the general enlightenment of the common people is their lack of knowledge of the language through which they might be addressed. We add that this lack of language is itself lack of knowledge, since words, to be true words, must be signs of known ideas.—*National S. S. Teacher.*

The first steps in Teaching a Language.

Paper Read by Revd. R. H. QUICK, before the College of Preceptors February 7th, 1875.

Those of us who have visited the Brighton or the Sydenham Aquarium well know the sight of the sea anemones. The first impression one gets of them is, that they are merely enjoying themselves, or exhibiting their beauty as a peacock spreads his tail. But if we watch them till a tiny fish happens to stroll their way, we discover then that the anemones are not standing at ease or courting our admiration. No sooner is the fish within reach, than the hitherto placid anemone becomes all activity; the beautiful fibres disappear, and the little fish disappears with them. If we have the patience to await the result, we see the anemone at length open out again, and there reappears, not the fish, but just so much of it as the anemone finds indigestible. The rest has become anemone.

Now here we see in a figure the proper attitude and action of the mind of a learner. It keenly desires knowledge; it is on the look-out for it; it seizes on whatever information comes within its reach, and it works upon this information, analyzes it, appropriates all the pith of it, and rejects nothing but the useless shell.

If I were asked, then, who, in my opinion, were the best teachers of language, I should not say, those who follow Ascham's method, or Jacotot's method, or Prendergast's method; but those whose pupils desire to learn, and have their minds well exercised on the information given to them. It is with teaching as with the religion of the Bible. The outcome of that religion should be charity; and even if the Roman Church were infallible, a Quaker with charity would clearly be a better Christian than a Roman Catholic without it. In like manner, the outcome of intellectual teaching should be interest and mental vigour; and the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesie*, if by *ecclesia* you understand any teaching whatever, must always be the answer to the questions—Does it make the pupils anxious to learn? Does it set their minds to work on what they are learning?

I have thought it necessary to make this preface, because I shall be concerned chiefly with different methods; and yet I do not think that he is necessarily the best teacher who follows the best methodizer. On the other hand, I am keenly alive to the advantages of a good method; and I long to see the different methods of teaching much more commonly studied than they now are. Everybody who attempts to teach must have his *modus operandi*; and if it is home-made, it will probably be a very awkward one. We have all heard of the celebrity who was a man of great taste, but unfortunately it was bad taste. Similarly, the ignorant untrained teacher will certainly be a man of method, and of very bad method too. As Talleyrand has said, "*Les méthodes sont les maîtres des maîtres.*" Teaching is very highly skilled labour; and all such labour can be perfected only by means of traditional knowledge. There may, indeed, have been great teachers, who dispensed with such knowledge; but it is not safe for us to do so. In going out to fight our Goliath, the giant Dullness, we must not reject the most approved weapons because David was so successful without them.

Let me, then, begin by stating, as briefly as possible, the methods for language-teaching that have become most celebrated.

Ascham's is so generally known, that I need only recall it to your memory. He made a model-book of some letters of Cicero's. His method is chiefly remarkable for two things; first, for thoroughness with which the model book was to be studied; secondly, for the great stress