

HOW TO HOLD ATTENTION.

A very small boy of seven was corrected for saying, "You was" and "We was." After the third correction, he stopped his tale of woe which he had been telling, and said seriously, "You see I can't help it. I have lost my grammar this summer."

Many a teacher finds that she too has lost something; something which helps her hold her class attention, and she cannot analyze her failure. She needs new methods for getting and holding attention. The following devices have all been tried says Estelle Hinton in "Primary Education." There are suggestions which will aid any primary teacher working under any condition or in any environment. The old pedagogical principles are observed with concrete illustration.

1. *Vary the Work.* In a reading lesson, one day have the pupils at seats to read; the next time, have them go to the front of the room and face the class; again, let one row stand at a time, this row to be seated as soon as all have read; again, select the best readers first to read a dialogue, taking the slower readers last, or let the boys and girls have a reading match, placing emphasis on intelligent reading.

2. *Correlate the Lessons; e. g.,* if some live animal, as a dog, cat, turtle or rabbit, is brought into the room, use this material for the nature lesson. For the spelling, teach a few important words necessary to write some sentence about the animal. For language have sentences written, using the vocabulary taught. For drawing have outline sketches of the animal made on board or paper. The same idea can be used with the gardening, the story work, etc.

3. *Keep the voice well modulated.* A well modulated voice means poise and command. Any individual must control himself before he can control others.

4. *Watch the position of the class.* For first and second grades, hands on knees is a more natural position than hands on desks. When the position grows careless, it is better to get the child in position through a motion of hands or eyes, rather than words, as spoken commands interfere with the thought of the pupils.

5. *Enunciate clearly.* When the teacher speaks distinctly, the pupils can justly be held accountable for directions given. If the teacher enunciates clearly, she will not tolerate slovenly speech by the pupils.

6. *Keep all drill work sharp and quick.* The spirit of competition must enter into the drill work. Relay races, spelling or arithmetic matches, etc., make children study and make them interested in their work. The teacher's voice and manner must show interest and animation. Quick decisions over disputed points are necessary. Any partiality kills class interest and attention.

7. *Use flash work.* Use the cards for arithmetic problems or sentences on the board. Erase as soon as the writing is completed. Interest is added if the children's names are used in the sentences. This flash work can be used the first week of school in the recognition of figures and later in the combination work. Any work in the four processes is good. In making the flash arithmetic cards omit the signs, e. g., show a card with

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and say and or plus; or, less or minus.

8. *When you touch a word or sentence on the blackboard, remove the pointer at once.* This compels the child to give attention to keep up with the work and it also places responsibility on the child.

9. With blackboard work, having a child look at a sentence and then close eyes and give the sentence, concentrates attention, rests the eyes and causes the child to work for the thought or the whole mental picture.

10. In a recitation, call on the children *unexpectedly*, especially on the ones whose attention wanders. If an oral spelling lesson is heard in the same order, children will learn to count the words that should be theirs and they cease to feel responsibility for the entire lesson.

11. *Observe special days or events* as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, The King's Birthday, Circus Day, birthdays, picnics, etc. This varies the work, broadens the interest and the newness does much to hold attention.

12. *If attention lags, pause for a moment in the middle of a sentence.* Try to get the eyes and attention of every child before you conclude your sentence.

13. *Change the atmosphere.* If the class are restless and inattentive, throw up the windows and give physical exercises and breathing exercises for two minutes. Have the work quick and snappy.

14. Sometimes inattention is caused by the *light falling wrong* on the eyes, causing physical discomfort and injury to the eyes. Sit down at the children's desks and test the light, the writing on the board, etc. You will know definitely what the physical discomforts are.

15. Lower the voice. Say to the class, "You will have to keep very quiet to hear what I say." If some child is not inclined to help the class, isolate him.

16. See that the class understand the work assigned. If the task is too easy, or too difficult, attention will lag.

17. *Set up problems; e. g.,* "Here is a key!—ag. See how many words you can write containing this key;" or "Read your lesson and make a list of all the descriptive phrases you can find;" or "Find three reasons in your lesson which tell that Jack was honest."

18. *Have short recitation periods* and change the work often. During this period have vigorous work. A recitation or study period which is too long cultivates careless inattentive habits.

19. *Give attention yourself.* Plan carefully and keep mentally alert so as to meet situations promptly.

20. *Before beginning a story,* have the class listen to the *ticking of the clock.* When the room is perfectly quiet begin your story with the right atmosphere.

21. Let the teacher *play question mark.* Every thought must be expressed clearly, or she can't understand it; the name of every flower brought in must be told her, for she wants to know, etc. Children enter into this play idea beautifully.

22. *In reading a new story* to the class stop and let a few comment on the probable ending. Then they will be eager to see how the story really ends.

23. When some direction is lost through inattention always call on some pupil to give the direction, instead of giving the direction yourself.

(To be Continued).