

Again, let me ask how many teachers have been teaching little children lists of words, without life or meaning, from lack of that association which gives them their force?

The word cat written by itself on the board or seen on the printed page is as meaningless and lifeless as the scrawl of an infant, and, perhaps, more so, for in his formless scrawl he sometimes sees an elegant picture of a dog or cat, but in the purely artificial characters which he sees before him, he recognizes nothing.

Put a bright and correct picture of a household tabby before him, ask him what it is, then tell him that the chalk will tell him the same thing, whereupon he almost involuntarily exclaims, as he sees the words associated with some tangible object—the cat.

At first he should learn a few expressions, such as a cat, a rat, a hat, the cat, the rat, the hat; then, showing him a running cat or rat, he reads, almost without effort,—the cat runs,—the rat runs. It is not necessary to prolong this discussion, for the intelligent teacher will readily understand the method from what has already been said, and will see the necessity of teaching groups of words properly associated, if she would rapidly teach children to read, and banish that unspeakable drawl and monotone so frequently heard in the school-room.

Again, I would like to ask how many teachers have been allowing children to read around the class in consecutive order while she has been correcting exercises or been engaged in some other work foreign to the lesson? Let me say here that such a lesson is worse than lost time; it is suicidal, for it is but the breeder of disorder, the producer of carelessness, the direct cause of monotonous reading and indifferent conduct.

A reading lesson demands the closest watchfulness, the most vivacious manner, and the exercise of all the intelligence at the command of the teacher. There are questions to be asked, words to be especially noticed on account of some peculiarity of spelling or derivation, time to be judiciously divided up so that the greatest possible advantage may be taken of it, mistakes to be corrected, and the class, as a whole, to be kept on the *qui vive* from the beginning to the end of the lesson.

Can this be done if the teacher is engaged with some other duty? I need hardly answer such a question. Too much time must not be taken for questions, as it is essentially a reading lesson, but a question here and another there, with a wise explanation now and then, work wonders in keeping up the spirit and attention of the class.