

SHALL WE TEACH SCRIPT OR PRINT TO BEGINNERS?

MRS. J. B. POWELL, HILLSBOROUGH, TEXAS.

IN teaching the little child its first lesson, script is not the only means, but is considered the best, for several reasons. In the first place, it is the natural means of written communication of thought, consequently a child should not be required to print its first lesson, but taught at once, with blackboard and crayon, how to form the elements in the first word that it has learned to recognize, through the association of the object. Only one word should be taught at first, and pupils should know how to trace and copy the word neatly before attempting another. Teachers of primary work, have you ever watched with anxious eye the expressions of a little child, who, after repeated efforts, has succeeded in copying its first word? The script method of teaching beginners is preferable to print, because it is easier to change from script to print than from print to script. There was a time when pupils were allowed to read through several readers without knowing a letter in script. Now, in our present plan of teaching, we find a reverse order from this. Our primary pupils can read script as readily as print. The resemblance of the one to the other is so marked that with proper teaching the change can be made in a short while. After the pupil has learned to copy well a number of words and sentences, the printed chart or primer should be introduced.

Each printed lesson should be

written in neat script on the board, and pupils required to copy the work. The lesson should be read first from the board, and then from the primer. The words are thus contrasted, are spelled both by sound and letters, and very soon both forms are familiar to the child. Script should be taught early, for it is the correct means of communication of thought. The object of the first lesson is not only to teach the little one to read, but to cultivate the expression of ideas, hence writing as a means of expression is one of the first lessons taught. The little child soon delights in writing original sentences, compositions from pictures, wee letters, etc. Of course the teacher must be the guide in all this, not only teaching correct forms of expression, but guiding the mind into a proper channel of thought. The minds of these little ones may be compared to precious jewels, which only a master-workman's hand can mould and fashion into any beautiful design. These pliant minds can be moulded just as the teacher would have them. Last, script is a means of discovering mistakes of pupils. How many children do we find in our schools that can give a correct oral definition, who if required to write the same, would utterly fail in capitalization, punctuation and spelling? Teachers, wherein lies the fault? Do we devote the attention to written language that we should? —*Ex.*
