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## Are We Developing Efficiency in Method?

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# From Our Normal Schools

## Are We Developing Efficiency in Method?

By AMANDA HEBELER,  
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Our newspapers and periodicals frequently give space for lengthy discussions concerning the weaknesses of our schools. Few of these critics, however, ever consider the gigantic



Miss Amanda Hebeler

task of modern education with the manifold duties that are forced upon it by a society which is constantly changing and becoming increasingly complex. That the child may take his place in such a society, he must have not merely a knowledge of facts, but he must be a "thinker" and a "doer." His own success in life and the stability and the progress of the society in which he lives demand that he be capable of realizing great issues and be ready to meet them with a clear mind, which arrives at conclusions, based upon orderly thought.

We have many evidences that methods of right thinking have been the conditioning factors in the world's progress. The development of physical science is a striking and frequently quoted example of the advancement which attends right methods of work. As long as the individual is satisfied to be a follower in the path of other men's thoughts, he will have no more mental development than they. But he who is ready to take the forward step, forming conclusions that are based upon independent thought, carries himself and society forward.

If we accept the aim of education  
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## Speech Work of Our Schools

By VIVIAN TURNER  
State Normal School, Cheney

One of the problems of modern education is to determine the knowledge most practicable in the child's life work. In any career, speech is an important tool. Twelve years spent in our schoolrooms should furnish the child a form of speech which will afford him social adaptability, provide him with an adequate mental outlet, and reveal his capabilities of personality. Every boy or girl has a right to a full, resonant, pleasing voice, a distinct, correct enunciation, and mode of expression that will secure for him recognition. The duty of the public school system is to furnish this essential equipment.

There are encouraging signs. The superintendent of one of our largest counties recently sent out to his teachers a form letter containing twenty-one suggestions. Six of these pertained directly to speech. A city superintendent recently conducted a painstaking search for grade teachers who could do efficient work in Spoken English. The prevalence of declamatory contests, the continual calls for plays, the crowded speech



Miss Vivian Turner

departments in the higher institutions of learning, all indicate that the field is ready for the sowing of much good seed.

In teaching any phase of speech work, we must be concerned first with impressions, then with expressional  
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## What the Primary Grades Are Doing to Meet the Demands of Adult Reading

By MARJORIE E. DAWSON  
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"Intelligent reading is an indispensable means of familiarizing adults



Miss Marjorie E. Dawson

with current events, with social issues, with community and national problems and with American institutions, ideals, and aspirations. It is essential also in broadening one's range of general information, in attaining vocational efficiency, and in securing pleasure and profit during leisure hours," writes W. S. Gray, in the Twenty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. In view of this statement it follows that adults must have a real interest in reading and must have cultivated the reading habit.

What are the conditions of intelligent reading? They at least include:

First, to read understandingly; i. e., get the thought back of the printed symbols.

Second, to interpret what is read in the light of one's previous experience.

Third, to be able to evaluate the material read in terms of accuracy and worth, in the light of the reader's earlier experience and his knowledge of the author.

Fourth, to be able to select from the vast quantity of reading matter produced, that material which seems of greatest worth and most fitting for  
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## EFFICIENCY IN METHOD

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to be growth and development, we must recognize the importance of method in the child's activities. How the child studies, how he uses his leisure time, how he works, these are the tests which are now being used to measure the efficiency of our schools. Good citizenship demands that the individual should be able to participate in life situations and help solve the problems of the society in which he lives. Citizenship and a knowledge of civics are as different as morality and ideas about morality. Just as a man may know what honesty is without living an honest life, children may be taught facts of civics and be quite unable to assume the duties of citizenship. I have seen a group of children working out problems of citizenship in their classroom. They were guided to recognize issues; they discussed and analyzed situations; they reached decisions and framed laws for the government of their class group. Then in connection with their own work, they studied the government of city, state, and nation. They were preparing for participation in state and national citizenship by solving the problems and sharing the duties of the diminutive society of their classroom. They were learning methods of procedure. In contrast to this work, I am reminded of my meager introduction to civics when my daily lessons consisted of memorizing portions of the Constitution.

Experiments have been made which show that not only the average but the most efficient readers can greatly improve their reading ability through practice of right methods. Since good methods of reading, have received more emphasis than good methods of thinking, and thinking is involved in a much greater share of life's work than reading is, it would be quite impossible to estimate the great loss of time due to mental dawdling. Recently in working with a class of students, I suggested some readings which might be helpful in studying a certain problem. In the succeeding class discussion, many of the students reported on what they had read, paying little heed as to whether they were making any point bearing upon the problem of discussion. Some of them had thought it necessary to read every word of all references suggested and had never developed the habit of reading discriminatingly or of keeping to the point in their discussions. They had never been made conscious of a meth-

od of study, even though they had been in school for twelve years.

Much of the indifference or lack of enthusiasm for school work may be traced to poor methods of work. The child who has developed skill in thinking, who is successful because of right methods of work is usually happy because successful achievement develops his self-confidence and kindles his ambition. In the past, our teaching has emphasized the learning of subject-matter with little attention being given to the method of learning. It has not considered facts and information as raw materials to be subordinated to thinking. A premium has been placed upon the child's ability to reproduce someone's else thoughts. We have to realize that "educative training has not been touched until we know what the child is mentally occupied with." When we help the child to make connections between this inner self and life problems, then will he develop independent thought and effort and he will take enjoyment in it, for, as has been truly said, "any person who amounts to much must do considerable thinking and take pleasure in it."

## SPEECH WORK

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forms. The individual must be considered in three distinct periods: first, the child up to the age of ten; second, the adolescent; third, the adult. For each period, speech work must have a distinct and characteristic motivation and definite aim. The teachers up to the seventh grade, making a rough division, are concerned with the first period; the grammar grade and the high school teachers, with the second period.

The work of the first period is one of establishing language sounds and of associating them with ideas. Imitation and motor activity are the child's strongest instincts; hence there must be good speech models, teachers who have a clear-cut enunciation, an accurate pronunciation, and a resonant, colorful voice. Vocabularies are built and sentence formation perfected. "Association" being the guiding law of this period, words are windows to be opened, revealing the things behind them! The reading in the lower grades should train the child to become familiar with main thoughts, subordinate thoughts, succession of thoughts, contrast and climax, thus affording him an utterance made smooth and penetrating by related speech. Drill in basic forms should establish an almost automatic utterance. The child should never be

made self-conscious or uncomfortable during speech, and there should be no thought of exhibition. Most authorities agree that the public appearance of the child before the age of ten years, however precocious he may be, is very likely to be harmful. Memorizing rhymes and poetry should afford the child an opportunity for musical voice development and for acquiring a love for oral expression. Story telling should feed and quicken the imagination and do much to create an original style of speech. Dramatizing permits the body to keep pace with the voice in liberating the thoughts and emotions which stir the young life and which cause serious results if they do not find an outlet. In the mere utterance of words, the child may find a joy that will beget accuracy. Again, the teacher has only to be a good model.

When working with the adolescent, our efforts should be to facilitate and promote recognition of the beautiful and worth-while in our language and literature. The deep disregard for English, whether spoken or written, into which many boys and girls are forced, is not pleasant for us as teachers to contemplate. To create in a child a resentment towards his native language is a terrible thing to do. Boys and girls should be made to feel that one of the finest accomplishments of the human soul is the ability to tell in a simple and effective way that which one experiences.

Unfortunately in many schools "speech work" is recognized only when the time approaches for the Annual Declamatory Contest. The contest rightly conducted is a medium of speech activity laden with educational possibilities, but as we ordinarily behold it, it is fraught with horrors. "Few persons," Professor Dowden says, "seem to realize nowadays how powerful an instrument of culture may be found in modest, intelligent, and sympathetic reading aloud. A mongrel something, which at least with the inferior adepts, is neither good reading nor veritable acting, but which sets agape the half-educated with the wonders of its airs and attitudinizing, its pseudo-heroics, and its pseudo-pathos, has usurped the true art of reading aloud, and has made the word 'recitation' a terror to quiet folk who are content with intelligence and refinement." The contestants are coached declaimers who presumably were talented. Little is accomplished for the speech of the student body. Unless this form of extra-curricular activity is conducted in a pedagogical and a psychological manner, which