BOOK REVIEWS

Spelling Efficiency in Relation to Age, Grade, and Sex, and the Question of Transfer. By J. E. WALLACE WALLIN. Baltimore: Warwick & York, 1911. Pp. 91.

This study, which is published in the series of "Educational Psychology Monographs," is a good contribution to the subject of the method of teaching spelling. The author begins with a description and critical discussion of the two contrasted methods, the incidental method and the method of drill. The incidental method received an impetus from the investigations of Rice and Cornman. This method did not seem to Wallin to be in accordance with the conditions of efficient habit formation. He accordingly arranged a method which should involve the elements of drill, that is, focalization of attention upon the words to be learned, and attentive repetition. The method also included the use of the test words in dictation in order to facilitate their application to the ordinary conditions of the use of words. This method has been used in the public schools of Cleveland.

The results of the method in the spelling efficiency of the Cleveland pupils are compared with the results of the tests given by Kratz, Chancellor, and Rice. The Cleveland averages are from 12.6 per cent to 27 per cent higher than those obtained by the other investigators, with the same sort of test—the word-column method. It was found also that the efficiency reached in the word-column tests carried over into dictated writing or compositions in which the same words were used. This fact meets the objection of the incidentalists that formal drill in spelling does not carry over to connected writing. These results were obtained by devoting to spelling "5.96 per cent of the available time, as compared with 7.22 per cent, the average for a number of the leading cities of the country."

The author also discusses the relation of spelling to age, grade, and sex, but the most important point, which he seems to have made clearly, is that a carefully devised drill has a marked effect in raising spelling efficiency.

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