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Geographical Queries: A Clearing House for Geographical Wants and Doubts

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GEOGRAPHICAL QUERIES

A CLEARING HOUSE FOR GEOGRAPHICAL WANTS AND DOUBTS.

IT is hoped this department will prove of practical benefit to teachers of geography, opening a way for the solving of the many geographical problems which are constantly met with in the classroom. All questions received will be answered by specialists in the various methods of geographical work. We invite inquiries, criticisms, suggestions, and discussions. Address all communications for this department to: EDWARD M. LEHNERTS, *Winona, Minn.*

(6) Having noticed a tendency in the schools to combine language lessons with the teaching of geography, I would appreciate a statement from THE JOURNAL OF GEOGRAPHY as to where, in its opinion, lies the value of this correlation of one pedagogical subject with another. M. FAULDS, *Aylmer (West), Ontario, Canada.*

The function of language is to express thought. Language fulfills its function when it enables the individual to convey to others his states of consciousness. That form which expresses thought most clearly and most concisely is the best form.

Any one who has watched the development of children before they enter school, knows how rapidly they acquire the ability to use language. Early childhood is a period of intense activity. It is a stage of inquiry, of desire to know. The world is rapidly unfolding before the eyes of the child, and he cannot remain passive in the presence of such wonders. Expression becomes a necessity, and hence the power to use language develops rapidly.

To the teacher this fact should be very significant. It is at once associated with the immediate needs and desires of the child, and with his present environment. Why not follow this method in the school? Create a desire to possess, and you have implanted in the mind that which is fundamental in leading to possession. It is evident that this desire will grow out of that in which the child is most deeply interested — his environment — for in this his experiences are bound up.

In the study of geography we are constantly dealing with objects of interest, beauty, use. We are studying processes which influence the daily life of every living thing. Types of the objects are ever before the pupils. The processes by which the world has been and is being shaped are at work upon every hillside and highway, along every stream course, and in the very atmosphere about us.

Geography thus opens an unlimited field for training in the use of language, both oral and written. Let the pupil be taught to express his

growing personal experiences in the best form. Mistakes must be discovered, with or without the aid of the teacher, and must be corrected by the pupil. Demand the child's best in all work.

How shall we test the value of the present method of teaching language? I believe that I am quite correct in saying that it is customary to judge the pupil's progress by his record in the language class. It is in connection with geography, history, arithmetic, and other subjects that the test should be made.

Manual training involves the use of the saw, hammer, plane, and other tools. What teacher of manual training would attempt to teach the use of these tools by having his pupils saw, hammer, and plane worthless scraps of lumber month after month and year after year? Children learn how to use these tools by making something. In other words, the tools are used just as they are used in the actual affairs of life — as a means of expression. Does manual training suffer by being taught in a rational manner? Should language be taught by a method any less rational?

Language should be taught in connection with geography and all other subjects for the following reasons: (1) Its function is to express our thoughts in terms of these subjects. (2) This method is along the line of the pupil's interest. (3) It makes possible the greatest progress. (4) It furnishes a rational test of the pupil's ability. (5) It makes language a means rather than an end.

J. F. CHAMBERLAIN,

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EDITORIAL

GEOGRAPHY TEACHING IN NORMAL AND TRAINING SCHOOLS

DURING the agitation for better geography teaching in elementary and secondary schools which has been going on now for more than a decade, but little attention has been given to the problem of geography teaching in normal and training schools. Inasmuch as these schools are the source of special training of a large proportion of the teachers employed in elementary schools, especially in cities, this neglect of attention has been most unfortunate. Teachers have been spurred on by new and revolutionary texts, by new and perhaps over detailed courses of study, by constant discussion in the pedagogical journals, and have been urged to make striking changes in their methods of teaching and in the choice of materials to be presented in classroom work, while little attention in a connected way has been given to the