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called "Problem Method" is to give the pupils a clear conception of the problem and a desire to solve it, an excellent method is to have them represent the FACTS on a map or by means of a graf. The problem is then evident and the pupils can state it themselves. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that no problem should be formally presented that is not capable of grafic representation. If all others were discarded, it would go far toward clarifying the matter of the problem method for the confused teacher of the present. It would at least do away with two sorts of pernicious problems which are now flooding geographic literature; first, the freak problem, conceived by an adult mind and appealing to nothing within the child's interests or experience, and second, the problem based on false premises.

A SIXTH GRADE PROJECT IN GEOGRAPHY¹

MARY V. SMITH

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For several years I had had in my school what I liked to call projects but I knew that they were simply attempts and little better than the old problem method. One fall when returning to my school after an especially inspiring six weeks at summer school, I made up my mind to try some projects like those I had heard about.

One project had made an especial appeal to me. It was an Oriental exhibit. As worked out by the other teacher it seemed wonderful to me but I knew from past experiences with my schools that I could not hope to reach her height of success. Her school was made up of twenty-five American-born children from well-to-do homes whereas I had forty-five children from homes where little English is spoken. A school made up of Armenians, Finns, Swedes, Italians, Negroes and a very few Americans nearly all coming from very poor homes. The other teacher was able to co-operate with the drawing teacher, the sewing teacher and manual training teacher in decorating, in the making of costumes and in the building of booths. I knew that I could have no help from any of the special teachers in my city.

When I thought of all my difficulties the problem seemed large but I knew that there were plenty of other teachers placed just as I was so I decided to see what I could do with such bare prospects. The results surpassed my fondest hopes.

¹ Presented January 21, 1922, before the Massachusetts Branch of the National Council of Geography Teachers at Boston, Massachusetts.

GETTING THE PROJECT

My personal project was how to get the work initiated by the children for I had learned that to be a project it must be purposed by the children or if suggested by the teacher, whole heartedly adopted by them. I had to set the stage and then stimulate their minds to act.

We began our term's work with the study of Asia as a whole, taking up one natural region after another. I had begun to wonder if I was ever going to find the opportunity to launch the project when one day a child announced in class that the other sixth grade was not studying Asia. I thought I saw my chance so I said, "Couldn't we, as a class, do something to show the other grade what we have learned about Asia?" They became enthusiastic at once for they liked the idea of showing the other class what they had learned. The big problem then before them was how to do this. Different children mentioned keeping note-books, making charts or preparing speeches. None of those suggestions seemed to fully satisfy so the question was left over until another day.

At the beginning of the next lesson, I talked about the big exhibit of war trophies that was being held in the city. The children were telling me all sorts of things that they had seen when some one said, "Why couldn't we have an exhibition to show Miss Blank's class what we learn about China?" The class were wildly excited and thought it would be just the thing to do.

PLANNING THE EXHIBIT

For the next few days we spent every geography period in planning the exhibit. At first the class felt that they wanted to confine the exhibit to China but later decided to make it an Oriental exhibition so as to be able to show things from other countries.

We kept on the board a list of the suggestions as to what we might do, until it grew so large that we had to have a child keep a record of the suggestions in a note-book. Some of the ideas were discarded at once, others not until the project was well under way.

When the time was ripe, I advised organizing the material. The children grouped the things to be done under such headings as people, religions, homes, etc. They felt that they ought also to learn about the surface and climate, here they decided it would be best to study each country in an orderly way. The first lesson planned was to be on the position, boundaries and size of China. This was more or less of an ordinary lesson in geography except that the children had their

books open before them on their desks. As soon as anything new was discovered, that fact was put down to be used later. Many of the lessons from then on were of that type, books open while the children hunted for data.

Right at this point the question of getting those facts over to the other class was discussed and they finally decided to write compositions, so at once the language periods were used in composing compositions from the data collected.

During the first lesson I was tempted to recommend getting library books but I wanted the idea to be initiated by some one in the class. It wasn't long before a child said, "Couldn't we get some books about China from the library?" A group of children was chosen to go to the library. They came in the next day with eight or ten books.

As the lessons progressed and the compositions were being written, the class decided that it would make the exhibit more interesting if they were to mount all of the pictures that they could find to illustrate the facts learned. As each subject was studied, groups of children worked at mounting the pictures collected.

With such problems as that taken up the first day, the children decided that they could show position and boundaries better by making maps while others were writing compositions or mounting pictures.

When we studied the surface some one volunteered to write the composition, and another to collect and mount the pictures of mountains found in the Orient, and still another to make a surface map. Thus we went on from day to day writing our compositions and pasting our pictures.

COLLECTING EXHIBIT MATERIAL

About the time we began to talk about the people the children brought in a few little cups and saucers but they were so poor and unattractive that I began to fear we would not be able to have much more in the exhibit than the compositions, maps and pictures. I was wrong for when they found that each thing brought in was talked about they began to scour the neighborhood until we really had quite an interesting display of Oriental things.

Soon the children who hadn't offered to do any of the extra work began to wake up, they drew pictures of such things as the shoes worn in the Orient, the pillows they sleep on, and how eggs are sold in Korea, until we had a collection of free hand drawings to show.

At least one composition was contributed by each child, usually the first draft was read to the class and criticisms given for its improvement. When a lacquered tray was brought in the class decided that the subject of lacquering had better be looked up and a composition written. The same thing happened when the Chinese money was brought in. The money was sewed onto a card and an article written about money in China.

The pictures mounted were grouped under such headings as: How They Travel in the Orient; Scenes in Japan; Boys and Girls of the Orient; Rice; Tea or Silk Cultivation.

A collection of toys made in Japan led to compositions on the doll festivals, the games played in the Orient, etc. Most of the data had to be hunted up in the library books so good training in using indexes was gained.

We had collections of the products such as tea, rice, silk and cotton with compositions written about each.

One boy found in my set of pictures some flags from the Oriental countries. He mounted those and had a splendid title, well lettered. This led a little girl to the making of a Japanese flag. She made the white flag with the red ball in the center. Her sewing suggested to some of the girls that they might make dresses for dolls so we had a few dolls dressed in Japanese and Chinese dresses.

One child had charge of the newspaper clippings that were brought in. These after being read and discussed were mounted on card board and exhibited.

In the building was a Chinese boy whom the children persuaded to write his name in Chinese. That and a paper on which the neighborhood laundryman had written, "The Great Wall of China" were our choicest exhibits.

When the time for arranging our exhibit drew near, we used the drawing periods for making posters and signs. The posters said, "Have You Seen The Oriental Exhibit?" or "Don't Fail to See the Exhibit." The signs told what the different articles were, who had brought them in and if possible where they had been obtained. A favorite sign to be printed was, "Please Don't Handle."

At this time the spelling lessons were given over to learning such words as exhibition, oriental, lacquer, etc., while the reading lessons were used in getting information from the library books. For weeks before the exhibit every lesson except the arithmetic and history was motivated by the project.

It is impossible to describe here all of the things which the children did but the project moved along much as here outlined from early in September until Thanksgiving time when the "the big event came off."

Resulting satisfaction is one of the requirements of a project. I think you would have felt that there was satisfaction if you could have seen those children the day they were setting up the exhibit and writing the invitations to be sent to every parent and to each room in the building. One heard such remarks as, "That's mine. I did that."

THE EXHIBITION

The crowning joy was "exhibition day" when they took turns telling the visitors about the exhibit and showing the other classes around.

We exhibited the articles on tables in the long corridor and hung the compositions, maps, etc. on the walls. The corridor is rather dark so Japanese lanterns were hung over the electric light bulbs and with our one Japanese parasol spread open we looked very festive.

One in a doubtful frame of mind as to the value of project teaching might ask, "Did the children learn the essential facts about Asia?" To answer that question and to prove that this class had learned as much as former classes I made out and gave to them a set of old fashioned examination questions. The high marks from every child answered my question as to the knowledge gained.

LABORATORY WORK IN GEOGRAPHY

FLEMIN W. COX

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It fell to my lot, a short time ago, to grade a number of examination papers in geography. The papers were answers to a set of entrance examination questions of the University of Illinois, altho those taking the examination were not applying for entrance. The credit desired was equal to one entrance credit, and to secure this it was necessary for each pupil to present a laboratory notebook.

The notebook is supposed to show the character of the work done in the laboratory. It does this, and reveals to an even greater extent than does an examination, what kind of work the school has been doing. The notebooks presented varied widely. The greatest variation was not so much between the work of different pupils, as between the work of different schools. In fact, the lack of difference between the works of pupils from the same school was a cause of surprise, and it