



Notes from the Classroom: Suggestive Ways of Teaching Place Geography

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(2) An analysis of this book is made by Marion I. Newbigin in *The Problem of the South Slavs (Yugoslavs)*, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. 35, 1919, pp. 1-15.

(3) Dr. Newbigin's own book *Geographical Aspects of Balkan Problems*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1915, is the chief source in English.

(4) There are two important chapters on the Balkans in Leon Dominian's *Frontiers of Language and Nationality in Europe*, American Geographical Society, New York, 1917.

(5) The following articles dealing with the Balkans have appeared in the *Geographical Review*:

The Balkan Campaign. By D. W. Johnson. July, 1916.

The Ethnography of the Yugo-Slavs. By Milivoy S. Stanoyevich. February, 1919.

The Balkans, Macedonia, and the War. By H. Charles Woods. July, 1918.

Albania and the Albanians. By H. Charles Woods. April, 1918.

The Awakening of Albania. By G. P. Scriven. August, 1919.

(6) The series of base maps and block diagrams published by the American Geographical Society includes several of the Balkans, among them a block diagram of the Balkans, wall size (41½" x 107"), which will be found particularly helpful for teaching purposes.

NOTES FROM THE CLASSROOM

SUGGESTIVE WAYS OF TEACHING PLACE GEOGRAPHY

By FRED K. BRANOM

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Undoubtedly most geography teachers are agreed upon the necessity for a knowledge of locational geography. There is a certain number of places which an educated person should be able to locate just as there are certain words which he should be able to spell. Our pupils should leave school with such an equipment. With its content we are not here concerned. Upon this probably no two teachers will be in exact agreement. Each must have his own standard, but the differences are not likely to be fundamental.

Place geography, properly considered, is largely a matter of the "map habit." Too many lessons are conducted with no maps before the pupil. Early in life he should begin to use maps. He should use both those that are on the classroom wall and those that are in his book and atlas. He should be trained in the practice of constant reference to them. If a place is worthy of mention it is surely worthy of location. In the teaching of locational geography drill is necessary, but not the old-fashioned kind where the pupil keeps repeating a thing in the same old way innumerable

times. Due emphasis may be given by more intelligent methods. Regarding such the following suggestions are offered.

THE JOURNEY LESSON

The (imaginary) journey lesson, which appeals to the play instinct, offers excellent opportunities for the teaching of place geography. Such a lesson may be used in all grades and it may occupy one or more periods. The length of time is not nearly so important as the enthusiasm of the class.

Journeys may be taken from the home city to various parts of the world. Routes should be determined by railroad and steamship folders and other sources. The classes of the writer, for instance, have gone from Chicago by water around the world. They have traveled by rail and water to various parts of North America.

Various means of arousing the interests of the pupils may be used. Some of the pupils may represent salesmen, some may be explorers, some government officials, while others may go for a pleasure trip. Letters may be written from various places and a diary kept. The pupil may trace his route on a wall map, he may put it on an outline map, or on a rough sketch map. The important places passed through or near are located. Sometimes, to vary the journey, trips may be taken north and south on the meridian and east and west on the parallel passing through the home city.

THE REVIEW LESSON

Another way of teaching locational geography is found in the review lesson. Recently a class was visited which was having a review on wheat. In the preceding lessons, among other points, the pupils had discussed the places where wheat is raised and the various parts of the world to which it might be shipped either as wheat or as flour. One of the problems which were given to the pupils was to trace the wheat from the regions where it is grown to the places where it is consumed, and to name the important places passed through. As wheat is raised in many parts of the world, many routes were pointed out and a large part of the world was covered. Some of the pupils traced the routes by rough sketch maps which left no doubt the places were firmly fixed in their minds. This is one way of drawing maps and in many cases a rough sketch is better than an elaborate drawing.

THE PUPILS' OWN LIST OF ESSENTIALS

Another plan has been used with much success. The pupils are told to write the names of all places mentioned and pointed out in class each day. Near the end of the term or at certain intervals, each pupil makes a list of those places which he considers of enough importance to locate. Then the lists are compared and discussed in class and from all the lists a list is made which the class thinks is essential. The importance of a place has to be shown clearly before it is put on the list. A list of places made in some such manner appeals strongly to the pupils because they have made it.

Occasionally it is a good plan to give a blank map to the pupils and have them locate a few places. Five or ten minutes spent in this way at certain times will stimulate the pupils, and the teacher can ascertain whether he is successfully teaching place geography.

MEETING OF WISCONSIN NORMAL SCHOOL TEACHERS
OF GEOGRAPHY, MADISON, JANUARY 23, 1920

It is a rare thing for normal school teachers to hold a separate and distinct educational meeting, but it was done in Wisconsin, January 22 to 24, 1920. Over 250 teachers attended. One section was devoted to geography. Several papers and lively discussions made up an interesting program. A committee was appointed and funds provided to carry on a state-wide campaign of education for the purpose of stimulating interest in the study of geography.

Following is a list of questions submitted for discussion:

Questions Submitted for Discussion at the Madison Meeting of the
Wisconsin Normal Teachers of Geography

FUNCTION

1. What is the central organizing thought in Geography?

VALUES

2. What is the bearing of the study of Geography under modern citizenship?