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OFFICE OF
INDIAN AFFAIRS
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R. H. Pratt

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C. M. Sample.

Principal - of Ed.

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Miss Pratt

United States Indian Service,

TRAINING SCHOOL FOR INDIAN YOUTH,

CARLISLE BARRACKS,

Carlisle, Pa., Jan'y 25th 1882

Hon. H. Price

Com^r of Indⁿ Affs.

Washington D.C.

Sir:

When in your office last week I was requested by Miss Cook to give some exposition of our methods of teaching. On my return here I instructed my Principal of Educational Dept. to prepare data to guide me in giving the desired information. Her paper is so complete and admirable an expose of our methods and their successes, and difficulties, that I forward it to you as a whole, making it my answer to your request.

Very respectfully

R. H. Pratt
Sg. & Supt.

United States Indian Service,

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To Capt. B. H. Pratt Supt.

Sir.

In compliance with your request, I have briefly outlined the methods followed in the schools under my supervision. As you are aware, there has been some diversity in the details of the different sections. The difficulty of teaching is large a number of beginners in everything pertaining to civilized life, was so greatly increased by the babel of differing tongues, that it seemed necessary to allow teachers the largest liberty consistent with principles which we consider fundamental. Believing that the faculties of

The child nature develops in the same order, and without radical differences, whether in the Indian or the white race, we proceeded in their education accordingly, conforming to nature's order of development.

The chief mental characteristic of child-hood, is curiosity, and to a certain extent this is true of the uncultured adult savage.

"Children of a larger growth," their perceptive faculties are active, the eye quick and true, the reason and judgment undeveloped. Taking advantage of the curiosity which prompted to the study of the countries objects, new and strange, around them, we began by directing, and stimulating that faculty, presenting appropriate objects, and gradually, without set lessons,

and without compulsion, teaching their names and uses. In the same manner through observation, and imitation, the pupil was led to name and describe actions.

Believing also that physical training should accompany the mental — a principle which seems especially important in the education of Indians — frequent exercises in alternate rising, sitting, standing, marching, jumping, and later, free gymnastics and singing, formed a part of the daily school routine. Almost from the first, by the use of slate, and black-board, the pupils were taught to write and read the names of objects, or short sentences, using script — describing actions. "Harry ran", "Mattie ran", "Lena ran", with-

ten upon the board by the teacher, follow-
ing the action by the child, copied upon
the slate, at first almost illegibly, was
one of the first lessons given a class of
little Pueblos who came to us ignorant of
English, and without previous schooling.

No criticism was made, however, as to
ward the attempt at imitation. Running,
jumping, ball throwing, paper throwing,
drinking, eating, etc. afforded amusement
and exercise, alternating with the really
difficult first lessons in writing. To ac-
celerate the process of learning to write,
the sentences, or words, were written upon
the board by the teacher, and after being
almost erased, the little hands were guid-
ed in tracing the characters. This device,

and a judicious amount of commendation and criticism, secured success in the manual effort, which in this method presents the only real difficulty.* Drill in vocal gymnastics, as a means to correct enunciation, has been employed from the first.

The letters were taught only through their powers. The phonic method is employed to aid in the pronunciation and discovery of new words. This method—a combination of the phonic and word method—we find especially adapted to our Indian pupils. Difficulties in articulation which seemed insurmountable, have been effectually conquered. It is often necessary to show the Indian

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This is substantially the method pursued in the institution for deaf mutes at Hartford, Conn. under the superintendence of Dr. Keep and fully explained in his book "First Lessons for the Deaf and Dumb."

Although not followed in its details, the book contains many valuable suggestions, and has been very helpful for reference.

pupil the proper position of the teeth, tongue, and lips, and insist upon his imitation.

When he finds that it is possible to make the difficult sounds, a great deal is done toward success in English speaking.

It is a great mistake to use books at first.

Our previous experience, as well as that of Carlisle, confirms this opinion. Time spent in teaching the alphabet is worse than lost. The monotony of the old alphabet teaching is ten times more woeful, when the teacher, owing to ignorance of the child's vernacular, can do nothing through association or illustration to aid the untrained memory, or relieve the stupid, useless, worse than parrot-like repetition of unmeaning sounds. When, after

six or eight months, text books were put into the hands of our pupils. they readily distinguished words which they had already learned to write, and to read in script. Henceforth the lessons in Roman characters were copied in script, and read both from the book and the black-board. We found even then that reading, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, was impossible from the book. We did not insist upon it. The thought is the main thing; expression, inflections, emphasis, come much later. When we find a class stupidly drowsing over a reading-book, we throw the book aside, and take up objects. Tablets containing blocks, splints, and a variety of other

objects for counting, and Bingham, and other toys for purposes of illustration, were placed in the room. Measures, rulers, articles of food and household furniture, tools from the work-shops, pictures, and occupation Chromos, find place in the school rooms, and furnish material for lessons. To secure reviews, these lessons are entered by the teachers in note books subject to the inspection of the principal.

The sentences placed upon the black-board for the pupils' study, are copied by them into note books. In some cases lessons especially useful have been printed for subsequent reading.

The same principles are followed in the teaching of Arithmetic - although here, for various reasons, greater latitude has been allowed as to methods.

Grubb's leading idea - that of objective instruction - is insisted upon.

We have sought to keep down in numbers,

developing slowly, teaching addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, simultaneously, and by the use of objects.

A great deal of training with applied numbers is given, while the pure number is small. This allows both teacher and scholar to concentrate attention upon the statement. Arithmetic thus taught, aids, and sometimes waits upon the mastery of the English language, which is the main point. Little attention is given to geography in the lower grades.

The instruction is oral, accompanied by map-drawings, and is not given greater prominence than Natural History, which is also taught orally, from charts.

Form is taught in connection with industrial drawing in all the grades.

We use Hunt and Whitney's Language Lessons as a guide to oral instruction in language. In the primary school much use is made of pictures. An oral

Lesson is first given, when necessary, after which the child is required to write a description, or re-produce in writing sentences which have been drawn out by questioning. Pictures for this purpose are cut from magazines or illustrated papers, and pasted upon cloth or pasteboard. Diaries are kept in some of the sections. A few sentences only are written daily, corrected by the teacher and copied into books kept for the purpose.

The advantages of these exercises are too obvious to require mention.

We keep in mind the terse mottoes.

"Child Nature; desire to see, to do, to and to tell." Teacher's work; training to see, to do, and to tell."

Yours respectfully

C. M. Sample

Prin. & d. Depart.