

READING.—The “look and say” method, or reading without spelling, produces far better results than any other when Maori children have to be taught to read. Of course the reading lessons have to be supplemented by separate spelling lessons.

Teachers are successful in teaching reading just in so far as they show their pupils how to read properly, and insist on their imitating exactly the examples set before them. During a reading lesson a teacher should never consider a sentence or a paragraph as done with until it has been read by the class in the way that he himself has read it for their imitation—that is, of course, when a lesson in what may be called elocutionary reading is being given. And, generally, the teacher will find it highly advantageous to make his reading lessons partake of the character of singing or drawing lessons as far as possible—to present models for the imitation of the children, and to cause these models to be imitated as closely as may be.

As a rule, it will be found convenient to keep instruction in “elocution” separate from instruction in “comprehension.” Half of the time devoted to a reading lesson might be given to each of these branches. It is generally advantageous to make the comprehension precede the elocution. In many of our schools comprehension is very well taught,—in some, so well that there is really nothing more to be desired in this respect.

SPELLING.—This subject should always be taught separately. If too many things are introduced into the reading lesson, sufficient attention cannot be paid to the elocution and the comprehension. Spelling may be well taught from the black-board. The teacher should write words in print or script characters, and the children should be required to copy, spell, and pronounce these words as they are written down. Towards the conclusion of the exercise the knowledge of the children should be tested, by means of words given them to spell orally or on their slates.

As soon as the children can write fairly on slates great use should be made of the exercise called transcription. If great neatness and absolute correctness in the work are insisted upon, this is one of the most valuable of school exercises. By means of it children improve their writing, learn to spell, and gradually acquire a useful stock of words and phrases. Dictation may be occasionally given, but the piece dictated should have been previously prepared by the children, unless, indeed, the teacher merely wishes to test the spelling of a class. This testing, however, should not be done too often, as a pupil will often repeat a mistake that he has once made in writing a word, in spite of the most careful attempts of the teacher to efface the wrong impression.

WRITING.—This subject is but seldom taught in schools. Copy-books with engraved head-lines are set before the children, who are required to write beneath them the same words or letters as are contained in the head-lines. The children are generally left to do the best they can according to their light, which is necessarily limited. The duty of the teacher is, as a rule, thought to be confined to criticizing the pupils’ performances. It would be well if all teachers would give their children the amount and kind of assistance recommended by Vere Foster. Excellent directions for teaching writing will be found on his copy-books. The teacher cannot do better than follow these directions closely.

The junior class should be taught to write on slates in the same way as they will afterwards have to write in copy-books. In many schools children are allowed at first to write *anyhow*. When this is the case, habits are contracted which have afterwards to be corrected. There is thus caused an expenditure of time and trouble that might easily have been avoided. Nearly all Maori children have great natural aptitude for writing and drawing. When the writing of a school is bad it is almost certain that the master of the school has neglected this very important part of his work.

ARITHMETIC.—The formal slate work at Native schools is nearly always good. It is not unusual to find all the sums set for a class under examination in Standard II. or Standard III., done by the whole class without a single mistake. This is of course very satisfactory. Nevertheless, there is much room for improvement in the teaching of this subject. It often becomes manifest, in the course of an examination, that children who have shown themselves able to work formal set sums in the first four rules with absolute correctness have no clear idea of the nature of the operations they have been performing. For instance, children that can work correctly a difficult set sum in subtraction, would be utterly puzzled by such a question as “How many sheep would remain, if 398 were taken from a flock containing 1,407?” or even by such a one as “There are 90 sheep in the paddock, 304 outside, and 22 in the stock-yard: how many are there in all?” Their perplexity would not arise from their being unable to understand the terms in which the questions are stated, but from their not really understanding in the smallest degree the *uses* of addition and subtraction. To correct this sort of thing, all that is required is that the teacher should give his pupils a great deal of practice in working extremely easy problems on the black-board. If this practice be preceded and supplemented by questions to be worked mentally, the children will soon get to understand the nature and use of the work they are doing on their slates. They will then not only be provided with tools, but they will have been taught how to use them. Much improvement is needed in “tables,” and in the formal mental arithmetic of Native schools. It is only occasionally that Second-Standard children are sufficiently versed in the tables to be able to answer questions on them smartly. This is especially the case with the subtraction tables. Many teachers seem to think that while it is necessary that pupils should be taught the multiplication tables, the information contained in the addition and subtraction tables comes to them by