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appropriate name "Grammar", and I am sure that a regular dose of fairly formal grammar at this stage could only do good. At some stage it would appear that all children are told "Don't say 'Jane and me'; say 'Jane and I'." This seems to sink in although the reasons are not understood, and then inevitably we get, at a later stage, "He asked Jane and I out to dinner", and very often children are vaguely sceptical when you tell them that it is incorrect.

If all children had their seven years at a primary school under the guidance of seven enthusiastic and competent teachers of English, they would leave the primary school with the ability to read and speak fluently and correctly, and write up to a page or two of fairly entertaining English containing very few mistakes.

IF I HAD MY WAY

The Teaching of Biology

by ALAN G. WALPOLE, B.Sc.

THE harassed teacher sinks into his staffroom chair, turns to his neighbour and says . . . "If only I had my way . . ."

Of course, it all depends on the way he says it. If it is accompanied by a pathetic shrug of the shoulders and followed by a despairing sigh, there isn't much chance of him getting "his way" is there? But there is hope, however idealistic his ideas may be, if he is conscientiously trying to improve his own teaching methods and approach to the subject.

I hope that no teacher is so self-satisfied with his or her work that they never feel frustrated in some way or another. It is precisely this feeling of frustration which goads us on to take active steps — however small — towards the eventual attainment of successful teahing.

Biology should be a living subject, vital, pulsating with interest and activity, theoretical and *practical;* not divorced from everyday life; nor confined between the pages of a textbook, to be opened at the beginning of a period and closed at the end.

Difficulties

But what do we find? Overcrowded classrooms, inadequate text-books, charts and models, lack of equipment and above all lack of *time* and facilities to allow pupils to carry out individual research, as we are bound to an overwhelming matriculation syllabus and hampered by that "hardy annual" the examinations.

The above are only a few of the trials we have to face, but they are the more important ones and if I had my way . . .

The number of pupils in a Matriculation class would be twenty. This would ensure that the pupils received individual attention and guidance during a lesson. Most of our troubles arise from the overcrowding of the laboratory. The most important one being the foregoing of individual, or even group, practical work, due to the cramped conditions and lack of equipment.

Biology as Science

It is the essential function of the Biology teacher to guide his pupils, to encourage them to think for themselves, to stimulate their inherent interest and curiosity in the wonder of Life, and above all to train them to reach correct conclusions and detailed observation, to correlate, compare and systematise knowledge gained from dissections, projects and other forms of research.

Also, Biology being a scientific subject, the pupils should be taught:—

1) The correct use and care of instruments used, e.g. Microscopes, glassware, dissecting sets, etc.

2) Various techniques of staining and mounting plant and animal specimens.

3) The use of preserving media.

Besides the guidance of the teacher a laboratory manual, dealing with the above, should be provided for each pupil.

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This is not the place for a detailed or critical analysis of the syllabus, which has obviously been compiled to include a large number of representative plant and animal types in order that the pupils become acquainted with various biological phenomena, but instead of the usual frantic rush to complete all the sections—which cannot be dealt with as thoroughly as one would like — more latitude would be given to allow for the type of practical and theoretical work indicated above. Naturally, continual vigilance would have to be exercised to avoid any real digressions from the broader outlines of the syllabus, and to ensure that time is not wasted on trivial and fanciful whims of pupils.

It is amazing to see to what lengths some pupils will go, if they are interested in a particular biological phenomenon and are given the right kind of stimulation and assistance.

Practical Considerations

A method, as far as assignments go and one which I would recommend to encourage extra reading and research, is to compile a list of related topics on a particular section of the work, and then to allocate these to individual pupils or to groups of three or four. The pupils then prepare a lesson which the leader of the group will give to the remainder of the class. (Drawings on the blackboard can be done by another member of the group). At the conclusion, time is given for discussion and selection of the more important facts dealt with, and the compilation of notes and drawings. This would take up three of the six periods allocated per week to biology. The remaining three would be used for 'normal' teaching.

From the above it is clear that teachers would have to have the minimum of an Honours degree before they could hope to achieve success. There are far too many unqualified teachers of the Sciences due to the dire shortage of trained and competent science graduates.

It is only fair to say that the former teachers are doing their best, but they will be among the first to acknowledge the fact that they cannot guide pupils in the scientific method, because of their lack of background study and training.

Aspiring teachers should be encouraged to read for their Honours degree, and to those who are already teaching, I would say that every effort should be made on their part and on the part of the authorities, to allow them to have that extra year of study.

IT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

Social Studies

IF I HAD MY WAY

Much Ado About Nothing

by a "PARENT"

SO it is here to stay — an integral part of the syllabus of the T.E.D. — Social Studies — the bane of my leisure time.

Of what use educationally is this for my child? It is supposedly a means of combining both History and Geography, but all it has done for me (whilst helping out) during the past year and a half that is has been in operation has been prematurely grey hair and an urge to commit mayhem.

As I write this I can see on the table a group project for Social Studies dealing with Gold and Gold Mining. A quick glance through this imposing album and what do I see? Lovely pictures of various aspects of Gold production. Unlovely pictures of eroded sand dumps and some not so very beautiful examples of penmanship from the pupils — a faithful copy of what was explanatory text in the original brochures.

Brochures — wilfully but necessarily — cut to pieces for the purposes of the project. Nothing original from the children concerned. I lay claim to the finest collection of mutilated publications in the Transvaal. I buy liquid paste in bulk and have two pair of scissors — one in use and the other being re-ground. My life is spent on the continual prowl for magazines with pictures — particularly those appertaining to gold mining. My friends and relatives have also been brought into the act and telephone calls bring me the news that they have found something that may be of some use. I have spent hours in various