

THESIS.

Subject: *Language Teaching*

Name: *Eva L. Patterson*

Language is a medium of expression of which the person ought not to be conscious.

The wide discussion of recent years of that great principle, of learning to do by doing, has been very helpful in bringing into prominence this view of language work and in banishing from our schools the old-styled sort of Language Lessons, or primary technical grammar.

A child, before taking up the study of English Grammar, must be well trained

to speak and write correctly and fluently by practice; here the parents may lend a helpful hand. Being the first teachers, they lay the foundation on which the teacher must subsequently build, for in the early period of childhood much more is accomplished in acquiring knowledge and in forming the character and disposition, than in any number of subsequent years.

Grammar, we may say, sustains the same relation to

language that logic sustains to reasoning.

A person learns to reason by reasoning and after this studies logic, as something worth knowing for its own sake; in this way must a child learn to speak and write by speaking and writing, and if he ever studies grammar, he should study it as a science of language that is worth knowing for its own sake.

The study of logic will make him a keen critic of

an argument, but will scarcely secure to him the power of arguing; so the study of grammar will enable to detect errors of speech which might perhaps escape his notice, but will not give him the power of either speaking or writing fluently.

Undoubtedly, English Grammar should have as subordinate a place in elementary education as is now assigned to logic.

What is most needed to develop the powers of the

use of language, as well as a good literary taste, is not mere technical grammar, but a vast amount of practice in speaking and writing and a great deal of reading of good models of literary compositions.

In the past, too much time has been spent in parsing and not enough in reading good literary works, and to actual speaking and writing.

Parsing can do but little in aiding us to un-

derstand and appreciate the
master pieces of English
literature.

Language must be acquir-
ed by practice.

Really the only instruction
needed to guide this prac-
tice must at first come
from correct models and
later from the criticisms
of the teacher.

Language is to the child
only a means of expression,
the stimulus must be the
thought behind it.

It is a child's delight to

talk as long as he is allowed the liberty of expressing his thoughts, but as soon as he is required to make sentences for the sake of the sentences he dislikes it.

The acquisition of language should therefore be made as much as possible an unconscious process.

If the teacher at first succeeds in getting the mind of the child saturated with thought on any subject, there will be no diffi-

culty about getting expression from him; it will be a pleasure to him to talk and write of that of which his mind is full.

It is a great mistake to suppose that all of the child's errors of speech must be corrected.

He will outgrow a great many of them, if he is simply made to talk and write and is always required to do his best.

The teacher should carefully select books and read

them to the children.

These books should be well written and must be interesting as well as instructive to the pupils.

After a child can read intelligently, in a third or fourth reader, he has learned the art of reading, getting thought from the printed page — and should read mainly for information.

Reading is the most important branch of language work.

The chief work of the pri-

major department is to teach reading.

For the first few years say three or four of the child's school life other studies should be subordinate.

Someone has said a good reader possesses the key to every department of learning, and as may be seen, most of the unsatisfactory work of the language is due to the inability of pupils to read and understand readily the books placed in their hands.

The teacher must make
the work suit the children.

Her ultimate method
ought to be her own.

Each teachers motto should
be: Rely on yourself!

For whether the prize
be a ribbon or throne.

The victor is he who
can go it alone."