

On November 4, 1915, a test of fifty words taken from the Ayres scale was given, to get some notion of our comparative rating in spelling. As shown in the first column of the table, this test revealed a rather deplorable deficiency in spelling achievement. The grades fell from 14 to 58 points below the standards for the grades, with an average deficiency of 35 points. The low scores were not due to poor teaching necessarily. The school was newly organized, and ninety per cent of the pupils were foreign children who had extreme difficulty with English, and who for the most part spoke a foreign language, usually Italian, in their homes. During the next few weeks a study of the spelling conditions were undertaken. It resulted in the elimination of some of the uncommon words from the speller, the suggestion of the plan of teaching and checking here described, and some changes in methods of teaching. The two changes of importance were the first two mentioned. The plan was left open for adoption by the teachers, and two teachers agreed to try it for ten weeks. A second test similar to the first was given on January 26. To the surprise of probably all concerned, the two teachers who used the plan came out far ahead of the rest. As shown by the starred figures in the second column of the table, one teacher reached the standard, and the other fell just 5 points below, while the average of the school was 18 points below the standard. A similar test was given in April before which the IVB teacher had taken up the use of the plan. Then the third grade teachers, who fell furthest below the standard, tried out the plan for the next eight weeks with results indicated under June 1916. The beginning of the term 1916 was delayed because of an epidemic of small pox, and considerable confusion resulted. The spelling test was finally given on December 16. It was found that only two of the teachers had been using the plan consistently from the beginning of school that fall. The results show comparatively substantial gains as compared with the standing of the school a year previous. The average rating had been raised from 35.3 to 22.6 below standard. It is understood of course that the words of the scale were not studied

as such. In the main the prescribed course of study was followed.

While the results of later tests are not as striking as the improvement after the first test in the case of the fifth and sixth grades, where the plan was first used, led us to hope, yet the results seemed to be sufficiently favorable to warrant us to continue our work, and the type of work described above became a common feature of the spelling instruction. The various elements entering into the situation were not sufficiently controlled to warrant calling the work a scientific experiment. It is offered as a suggestive type of procedure that gave positive results in one instance.

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AN IMPROVED COMPOSITION SCALE

The appearance of the Hudelson English Composition Scale (First Revision)¹ will be welcomed particularly by teachers of English composition who have already made use of the scale as it appeared in the second volume of the Virginia Education Commission's report on the educational survey of 1919. The Hudelson scale was also published in 1921 by the World Book Company in a fifty-page pamphlet.

The chief defect of the pamphlet and the circumstance which militated against its general use was the arrangement of the sixteen samples in the scale each on a separate page. To use this composition scale, then, it was necessary for the teacher matching compositions to leaf through the book constantly or else depend on his memory of the various samples.

Since one of the chief values of a composition scale for use in scoring compositions is to reduce to a minimum the subjective element in the grade, it appeared to some that the mechanical process of turning pages operated to defeat the purpose for which the composition scale is intended.

In the First Revision, just published, this defect has been cared for by an arrangement

1. World Book Company, Yonkers, New York, 25 cents.

of all sixteen samples on a single sheet which, open, is the size of two sheets of standard type-writer paper. The type has been reduced to eight point.

The publishers have retained a very valuable feature of the earlier pamphlet, thirty sample compositions for practice in rating and a clear statement of how to use the scale and how to train the scorer. A key of median scores of ninety-four judges is appended so that a teacher may first have practice with the sample compositions, then later compare his judgments with these authentic scores.

The fact that eleven of the sixteen sample compositions were written by Virginia children in the first year of high school perhaps makes it especially fitting as a scale for Virginia teachers to employ. One advantage that the Hudelson scale enjoys over Trabue's "Nassau County Supplement of the Hillegas English Composition Scale"—probably the most generally used of composition scales—is that the first eleven samples in the Hudelson scale all deal with the same subject, "The Most Exciting Ride I Ever Had." The five upper samples in the scale are selected from studies by Prof. E. L. Thorndike. Another advantage claimed for the Hudelson scale is that its steps are all equal, the samples thus being valued at 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.5, 6.0, 6.5, 7.0, 7.5, 8.0, 8.5, 9.0, and 9.5, whereas the steps in the Nassau scale are irregular, advancing from 0 to 1.1, 1.9, 2.8, 3.8, 5.0, 6.0, 7.2, 8.0, to 9.0.

Hudelson's recent contribution to the literature of this subject (*The Twenty-Second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education; English Composition—Its Aims, Methods, and Measurements*) is ample evidence of the careful workmanship which went into the Hudelson English Composition scale. While the "typical composition ability scale" there presented is probably the most reliable English Composition scale now available, it is believed that the scale made from Virginia compositions is as accurate as the "maximal composition ability scale"; and for Virginia teachers it is safe to assert that the Hudelson English Composition Scale in the revised form will give entire satisfaction.

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POPULARIZING HEALTH THROUGH HOME ECONOMICS

A wideawake teacher found herself in charge of the Home Economics Department of a high school in a manufacturing town with a population of about thirty-five hundred. The building did not differ widely from the familiar type found in the small community where the factory whistles divide the day into relentless periods and the smoke of tall chimneys modifies the color scheme of existence. Beyond the conventional course in hygiene and biology, there was no equipment for physical education and no provision for such instruction. The effort in this direction was limited to the comparatively brief periods in the fall and spring when there was a more or less successful attempt to carry out the athletic schedule for that particular season. This teacher's achievement in grappling with the situation and demonstrating a health program which opened the way for the enlistment of every department was recently brought to the attention of the American Child Health Association Committee on Scholarships, and is a striking record.

Two factors already existed in the life of the school which could be utilized directly in the working out of a program of health education—athletics and home economics. These features occupied a large place in the interest of the students because of the opportunity offered for self-expression in actual living. Boys know that size and strength help in sports and games. A place on the team, or the winning of a medal or a ribbon is proof of individual achievement and secures the public recognition which is as much relished by a schoolboy as by a politician. To a girl, an appetizing meal planned and cooked by herself offers the satisfaction of immediate utility, and confers skill which can be exercised under the admiring observation of friends and relatives anywhere. The fact that wholesome food and an intelligent observance of certain simple rules of living are as significant to every man, woman and child as they are to the aspiring athlete is commonly ignored in the exigencies of daily life, but when this truth is demonstrated in some impressive way, the athletic coach and the teach-