

The Virginia Teacher

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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

ENCOURAGING THE EXPRESSION OF OPINION: AN OBLIGATION IN THE TEACHERS COLLEGE

PUPILS of various ages should have opportunity to discuss freely so-called controversial topics. Everyone needs practice in presenting his own belief, not with the idea of compelling others to agree, but with the purpose of stating his reasons for holding a given opinion. The ban on discussion of many subjects in school is caused in part by the crude work of teachers who, consciously or unconsciously, try merely to substitute one dogma for another. Free and open discussion, particularly in the social studies, will have to develop gradually. It will not be such a terrifying problem when the public realizes that teachers are not trying to sneak up on it with a collection of wild, impractical theories, but that they are trying to build in the pupils habits of critical judgment which are essential qualities of a good social personality. We must produce students of problems, not champions of causes; or possibly, *then* champions of causes. Is it possible for us to reach a state of development in which

purpose and intent of the citizens proceed from such information as they are able to assimilate? Intelligent use of sound scholarship and of the principles of educational psychology in the preparation of teachers would render this task of reversing prevailing practice less formidable than it at first appears.

The attitude is the thing. Honest skepticism on the part of students and honest inquiry are symptoms of social growth and of acceptable teaching. How is such an attitude to be built? Easy! (To teachers) Teach! Don't act like walking exhibits of your own knowledge. Shed the halo of authority at once. In your own private thinking practice methodological doubt, as Balfour called it. Learn to question, not for memorized facts only, although these have a place, but for living opinions. Use leading-on questions, stimulating questions, logical questions. Get conversational. Get curious. Encourage the pupils to talk, to work, to read. Open up the avenues with well-planned units of study. Pupils will be delighted to explore them. This may seem at first to overemphasize the teacher's function. Truly it cannot be over-emphasized. Pupil-centeredness means a decided reduction in teachers' preaching and reciting and general pomposity, but it calls for greatly extended powers in conducting discussions and activities. The scientific selection and education of members of the teaching profession is therefore a social obligation of constantly increasing importance in a progressive democracy.

EBER JEFFERY

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS FOR CLASSROOM USE

THE National Geographic Society, of Washington, D. C., announces that publication of its illustrated Geographic News Bulletins for teachers will be resumed early in October.

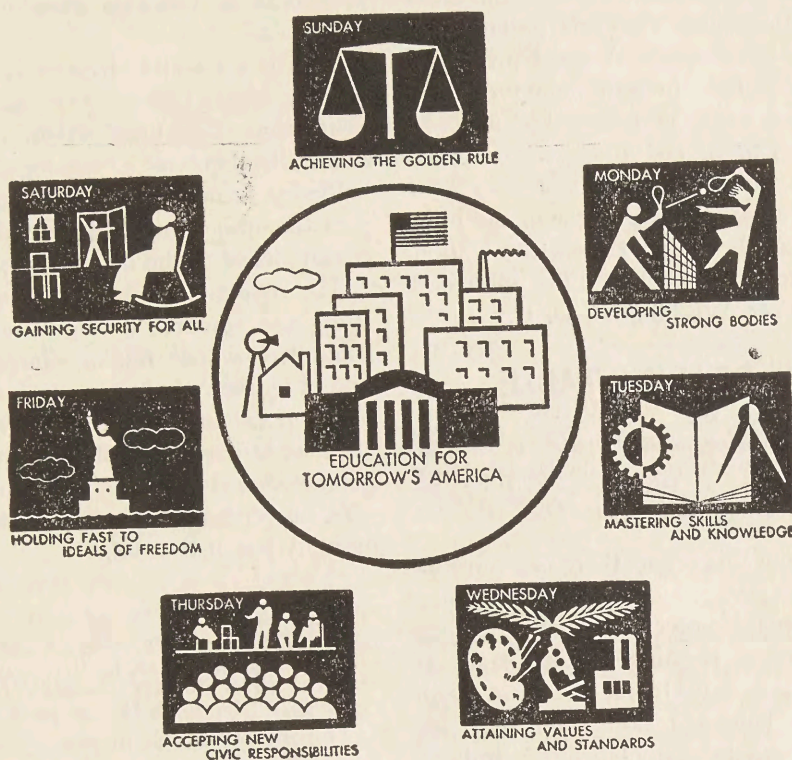
These bulletins are issued weekly, five

bulletins to the weekly set, for thirty weeks of the school year. They embody pertinent facts for classroom use from the stream of geographic information that pours daily into The Society's headquarters from every part of the world. The bulletins are illustrated from The Society's extensive file of geographic photographs. Obtainable only by teachers, librarians, and college and nor-

mal school students, they give timely information about boundary changes, exploration, geographic developments, new industries, costumes and customs, and world progress in other lands. Each application should be accompanied by twenty-five cents to cover the mailing cost of the bulletins for the school year.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

NOVEMBER 6-12 1938



EDUCATION FOR TOMORROW'S AMERICA

"Education for Tomorrow's America" is the theme for American Education Week which will be observed November 6-12. Every school in America will want to present today's education to the citizens in its locality in order to demonstrate how it is designed for tomorrow's America.

The daily topics suggested by the National Education Association are:

Sunday, Nov. 6—Achieving the Golden Rule.

Monday, Nov. 7—Developing Strong Bodies and Able Minds.

Tuesday, Nov. 8—Mastering Skills and Knowledge.

Wednesday, Nov. 9—Attaining Values and Standards.

Thursday, Nov. 10—Accepting New Civic Responsibilities.

Friday, Nov. 11—Holding Fast to Our Ideals of Freedom.

Saturday, Nov. 12—Gaining Security for All.

Although the observance of this Week is

sponsored nationally by the National Education Association in cooperation with the United States Office of Education and the American Legion, its success in each community depends upon the people who are entrusted with education there. Teachers, superintendents, teacher organizations, boards of education, and children in the schools are the ones who can effectively interpret to the lay public what is going on in the schools.

"Let the products of the school speak for themselves" remarked a teacher this summer in discussing the interpretation of schools to the public. A good product is the first requisite in any public relations program but it may go unseen and unappreciated if no organized attempt at interpretation is made.

Helpful suggestions, programs, and other materials can be ordered from the National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

THE READING TABLE

EMOTION AND THE EDUCATIVE PROCESS: A Report of the Committee on the Relation of Emotion to the Educative Process. By Daniel Alfred Prescott, Chairman. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education. 1938. Pp. 323. \$1.50.

Throughout this report there is a constant challenge to the educator. For instance, "The patterns of effective behavior shown by children are certainly as important as their number knowledge, eye-movement habits, and language skills; yet they are widely ignored by school people" and "A basic ignorance of the influence of affective factors on learning still exists even among psychologists."

The main objective of the study is to discover the degree to which the school shall concern itself with the three aspects of emotional experience—feelings, emotions, and attitudes, including "value concepts," inasmuch as the emotional life lies at the root of all behavior and is involved with the "most elemental physiological process-

es." It offers no brief for the reorganization of school systems in relation to their administration in the development of "basic affective phenomena," but it does draw significant conclusions and arrives at implications that are not to be ignored.

A whole chapter is devoted to the affective problems of the teacher, indicative of the fact that, as far as the school is concerned, the emotional status of the teacher is probably the most important environmental factor in the development of fine personal and social attitudes on the part of the children.

This is a scientific treatise brought to the reading level of the average member of the profession. One finds citations of theories from all schools of psychology, though the tendency seems toward organismic and gestalt thought. However, the study does not confine itself to the bounds of psychology.

The report is the result of four years of study and research by eight members of a committee whose findings have been integrated by their chairman. It does not claim to be an exhaustive study, but exploratory, and has utilized not only literature already published, but much in experimental findings, as yet unpublished. A valuable bibliography lies at the end.

B. J. L.

LATIN—FIRST YEAR, by Magoffin and Henry, and
LATIN—SECOND YEAR, by Berry and Lee. New
York: Silver Burdett Company. 1938. Book I.
465 pp. \$1.48. Book II. 526 pp. \$1.80.

The illustrations in the Latin Climax Series have always been a significant feature. They are not only works of art, but they contribute definitely to the pupil's understanding of the way in which the Roman people lived, worked, and played. In many instances the readings are definitely related to the illustrations.

The organization of these two books is based upon the reading of Latin as a major objective. From the very beginning, the student reads Latin. The stories are connected and really have meaning for the stu-