Departmental teaching in elementary schools

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DEPARTMENTAL TEACHING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
PREFACE

Ever since President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard emphasized the necessity of enriching the elementary curriculum through departmental teaching, there have been a number of efforts in various cities of the country to try out the suggestion.

Dr. William H. Maxwell, the chief exponent of departmental teaching in the United States, has encouraged its growth in New York City during the last seven years.

It has there become the prevailing method of teaching in the last two years of the elementary schools. Its success is pronounced. Numerous inquiries indicate that the leaders of other educational systems are greatly interested in the new departure.

In adding to the literature of the subject, I have written entirely from the standpoint of a teacher. I have spoken from years of experience, both in private and in public
schools. I have taught in schools where the departmental plan was not used and in schools where it was used. I have taught in large schools and in small schools. I have organized departmental teaching and have supervised it.

Out of all these years of experience has grown a positive conviction that a proper form of departmental teaching would bring a wealth of gain to any elementary school. But it must be effectively adapted.

The purpose of this little treatise has been to present the most effective plan of adaptation and use. An effort has also been made to base the plan upon well-known principles of school organization. These principles may seem commonplace, but they are necessarily fundamental.

I have never witnessed a failure in departmental teaching, but that I have marveled why it did not take place before it really did, as the mistakes in method were plainly apparent. This work has,
therefore, been made for the most part a practical text-book of method.

I have never listened to a speaker, or read an author, who argued against departmental teaching, but that I have observed that they objected to conditions and results which should not exist in a departmental system.

They have all voiced with unstinted zeal the shortcomings of the special teacher system as belonging alike to the departmental. This work has, therefore, been made argumentative.

They have all voiced with unstinted zeal opposed to the departmental, but it is even supplanted by the departmental plan.

The value of both the special teacher system and the one-teacher plan is preserved in the new common-subject plan of departmental teaching.

Van Evrie Kilpatrick.

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