

General Plan.

When practicable, I dispense with books and give oral instruction, in order that the boys may learn as much as possible by the ear. The junior classes practise repeating after me short sentences forming pieces of conversation, the meaning of which they have previously learned. The senior classes have oral exercises in grammar, and have to answer questions on what they have read, and in other ways attempt conversation. All classes read with me whatever books they study with the Japanese teachers.

Particulars of each class: Number and Length of Lessons each Week, Books used &c.

Primary School 5th & 6th Years, and Middle School 1st Yr.
Two lessons of 25-minutes each. Nombushō Conversational Readers, Nos. 1, 2, & 3.

The boys open their books and read, each in turn, a sentence after me. They then close the books and repeat the sentences after me. Sometimes I repeat ^{the} questions and the boys give the answers. The proportion of reading compared with repeating increases as the pupils advance. I also teach a few new words (generally names or qualities of objects in the room) and phrases. The two higher classes have to prepare a sentence or two for dictation. These classes learn from me only pronunciation. The result is fairly satisfactory. The 25-min. lesson is quite long enough; a longer one wearies both teacher and pupils.

Middle School, 2nd Year.

One hour ("hour" really means 50 min.) and two half-hours. Monbushō Conv. Reader No. 3. Reading occupies most of the time. The same lessons are read several times. The Conversation Lessons are most read but are not repeated, the sentences being rather long. As Dictation I give short easy sentences which form pieces of conversation. These the boys learn to repeat.

Mid. School 3rd Year.

Two hours. Monbushō Conv. Reader, No. 3 (No. 4 will soon be begun). Dickens' "Child's History of England," "Easy Grammar Lessons."

This last book was begun in the preceding year. In this class and in all the higher classes the boys are questioned in the course of their reading on grammatical points there exemplified. Dictation as in the preceding Class.

Mid. School, 4th Year.

Three hours. Franklin's Autobiography, Easy Grammar Lessons, Wyckoff's Composition. The Grammar is finished, the boys being well drilled in the verbs. Wyckoff's Composition is used once a week, and is translated ^{orally} at sight. This book I find very useful, for it gives the boys, who have just finished elementary grammar, plenty of practice in using ^{words} correctly, thus forming simple sentences. A portion of Franklin is prepared for dictation. Repetition is abandoned. I now try to talk to the boys and to make them talk.

Mid. School, 5-th Year.

Three hours. Appleton's Fifth Reader, More Grammar Lessons. Sentences or short stories are given for Translation from Japanese into English. Dictation is as in the 4th Year. There is now more talking.

Mid. School, 6th Year

Three hours. Vicar of Wakefield, Swinton's Studies in Literature, More Grammar Lessons. Stories are translated from Japanese. Sometimes I tell (in English) a story, and the boys afterwards write it for me, or tell it to me. Original compositions are rarely written. Dictation & Talking.

Improvements Needed.

The class-rooms are bad. Doors and windows are left wide open and consequently sounds from one class-room enter others and seriously disturb them. Even with doors and windows shut, the sounds may penetrate the thin walls and cause disturbance. Besides this source of disturbance, there is also the noise of the singing, and sometimes ^{there are} noises from drill or play in the playground. As regards drill and play the annoyance has been much decreased on my representing the facts to Mr Machida (who is always attentive and ready to help me). Some of the rooms, especially those of the 2nd and 4th years are badly constructed. The boys have difficulty in hearing me, that is, in hearing the inflections or unaccented syllables of words, and un-emphasised words, and I have difficulty in hearing the boys so as to correct them properly. When one boy reads or answers me

the others hardly hear him, even though I may manage to do so. If I say to one boy, "Correct that so-and-so's error," the reply is generally, "I couldn't hear him!"

Absolute silence is necessary. When the boys were in Hongō, there was little disturbance.

Books.

I regard the Nombushō Conversational Readers as the only really suitable books. They are not, however, perfect. Since they were first written, they have never been subjected to revision, so necessary in most newly-published school-books. Nos. 1 & 2 might be made smaller, lighter (an important thing for little boys) and cheaper, by avoiding excessive repetition. The sentences which compose a lesson may be read over and over again, without having them printed repeatedly. The pictures are ill-drawn, and ~~some~~^{many} of them misleading (e.g. a tumbler is put for a cup). A few trivial verbal alterations are needed. Nos. 3 & 4 are interesting books. But the conversation in No. 4 and some in No. 3 is too difficult ^{to learn by heart}, and ought to be re-written. Pictures are also faulty. Slight alterations of another kind are also needed. In No. 5 - the conversation is also difficult. In the second part some of Lamb's sentences are very long and involved.

All the other books are unsatisfactory. Franklin's Autobiography is interesting and is written in an easy style, and Macaulay's Essays, which are sometimes used, are of course valuable models of English. But such books ought to be specially edited for Japanese students.

A "reader" for Japanese students should have the following qualities.

- 1 The matter should be interesting.
- 2 The language should be such as may serve as a model for composition, and accordingly extracts from ancient authors and poetry should be sparingly introduced.
- 3 In extracts from ancient authors, the differences from modern usage should be pointed out, and thus the boys should be warned against using obsolete words or grammatical forms.
- 4 In poetry the metre should be explained, and the deviations from the usual order of words and various poetical usages should be pointed out.
- 5 Difficult passages should be explained in foot-notes, so that the boys should not spend over much time in puzzling over what is beyond their attainments.
- 6 Historical and other references should be briefly explained.

Such a book as Swinton's Studies seems to have little to recommend it, except that it contains English which, without being bad, is difficult for the boys to understand.

Grammar & Composition.

I have said above that I find Mr. Wyckoff's book useful. It has a large circulation, and is I believe the only moderately successful book of elementary composition yet published. The boys, I think, might begin to write

exercises much earlier than they do. For this it would be necessary for them to know some grammar. But they may succeed in writing English, without knowing grammatical terms or usages in the abstract. If they learn a number of sentences of the same grammatical structure, as in the *Nombushō Conv. Readers Nos. 1 & 2*, they may be taught new words and set to compose similar sentences. I should think too, that the teacher of the "reader" might with advantage draw attention earlier to grammatical usages.

Spelling.

By having to prepare portions for dictation, and by reading, I find the boys become able to spell pretty well, without having any special spelling lessons. A few rules for spelling are of course given in the grammar lessons.

Writing.

I don't teach this. I observe that many boys who can write well in their copy-books take no trouble when they write at other times. They seem utterly careless about the quality of their writing.

I don't like the Spencerian system. The *m's n's & u's* are not sufficiently distinct, and the writing is (like German) difficult to read. Perpendicular writing, which is insisted on in the ^{English} civil service and in most mercantile houses is much plainer.