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## The New State Course of Study in Physics

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of the child is usually susceptible to the stimulating influence of either. Even supposing them to be more or less harmless stimulants, the part of wisdom would be to save that influence for a time when it is needed, rather than to have the body accustomed to them.

H. Earl Rath.

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### THE NEW STATE COURSE OF STUDY IN PHYSICS

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The new state course of study in general science was reviewed by Dr. Lantz in the April number of the Science Bulletin. The state course in physics, also just recently published by the State Department of Public Instruction, is likewise an important contribution to science teaching.

The authors speak of their outline as "a first attempt to get teachers to think more constructively in terms of what should be good physics teaching", and anticipate the time when a more complete edition can be prepared. Notwithstanding their own modest estimate of the value of their work, they are to be congratulated on the high degree of success they have achieved in the difficult task of setting up proper aims, selecting the most valuable material, and suggesting the most efficient methods for the course in physics.

One is interested first of all in the general objectives. "The pupil is to acquire" various abilities. The first of these is perhaps the most important. For the majority of pupils it is also the most difficult. The pupil is to learn "to think on his own account about the hows and whys of the physical world in which he lives". This ability to think constructively is without doubt one of the most important acquisitions to be gained from the study of science. The next objective mentioned is a worthy second. "To observe phenomena and to organize his observations and information into coherent units of under-

standing". A third objective, placed well along in the list, is of like importance: "To adopt a scientific attitude which reveals itself in the presence of a new situation". To achieve only these three objectives would be well worth a year's effort. But in the attainment of these the pupil will naturally attain many other objectives, both general and specific.

The general teacher procedures suggested are in line with the best modern practice. There is no better pedagogical generalship anywhere to be found than that contained in the first two suggestions. The first of these directs us to "Determine by pre-test the extent of pupil's present knowledge of each unit about to be studied". How, except by finding out as exactly as possible the pupil's present attainment, can the teacher move intelligently in directing his further activities? The next suggestion follows naturally. "Devise ways to relate the pupil's advance to new knowledge to previous experience and grasp of knowledge relating to the unit". The remaining general teacher procedures are less fundamental. They are, however, quite general, and applicable to all the units.

The pupil activities suggested are well calculated to enable pupils to acquire the abilities mentioned in the general objectives. Likewise the evidences of mastery are well suited to reveal the extent to which the objectives have been attained.

In the choice of specific objectives in the various units, in the teacher procedures, in the pupil activities, and in the evidences of mastery, the authors have shown marked care and excellent judgment. If in some instances they have given prominence to material that seems to the present writer to be of relatively minor importance that does not in any way detract from his high estimate of the value of the course as outlined.

W. H. Kadesch.