

## General Maxims of Teaching by A. Bronson Alcott

### By which to regulate the instructor's practice in instruction

*From the original journal of 1826*

- I. To teach, with a sense of accountability to the profession
- II. To teach, with reference to eternity
- III. To teach, as an agent of the Great Instructor
- IV. To teach, depending on the Divine Blessings for success
- V. To teach, as the former of Character and the promoter of the collective happiness of Man
- VI. To teach, to subserve the great cause of philanthropy and benevolence
- VII. To teach, distinct from all sinister, sectarian and oppressive principles
- VIII. To teach, with charitable feelings toward all rational and animal beings
- IX. To teach, distinct from prejudice, from veneration of antiquity, and from excess of novelty
- X. To teach, to improve the science of instruction and mind
- XI. To teach, duly appreciating the importance of the profession
- XII. To teach, awed by the clamours of ignorance, yet governed by the dictates of wisdom
- XIII. To teach, nothing from subservience to custom
- XIV. To teach, with unremitting solicitude and faithfulness
- XV. To teach, appreciating the value of the beings to whom instruction is given
- XVI. To teach, regarding the matter as well as the manner of instruction
- XVII. To teach, that alone which is useful
- XVIII. To teach, in imitation of the Saviour
- XIX. To teach, by exact uniform example
- XX. To teach, in the inductive method
- XXI. To teach, gradually and understandingly, by the shortest steps, from the more easy and known, to the more difficult and unknown
- XXII. To teach, by the exercise of reason
- XXIII. To teach, illustrating by sensible and tangible objects
- XXIV. To teach, by clear and copious explanation
- XXV. To teach, by strict adherence to system
- XXVI. To teach, by simple and plain unambiguous language
- XXVII. To teach, by short and perfectly obtained lessons
- XXVIII. To teach, by encouragement
- XXIX. To teach, but one thing at the same time
- XXX. To teach, interestingly

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- XXXI. To teach, principally a knowledge of things, not of words ~ of ideas, not names
- XXXII. To teach, by consulting in the arrangement of lessons, that proportion of variety which is adapted to the genius and habits of the young mind
- XXXIII. To teach, by keeping curiosity awake
- XXXIV. To teach, nothing that pupils can teach themselves
- XXXV. To teach, as much as possible by analysis
- XXXVI. To teach, by exciting a laudable ambition for excellence, guarding against its opposite
- XXXVII. To teach, endeavouring to make pupils feel their importance by the hope which mankind placed in their conduct
- XXXVIII. To teach, endeavouring to preserve the understanding from implicit belief, and to secure the habit of independence of thought and of feeling
- XXXIX. To teach, endeavouring to invigorate and bring into exercise all the intellectual, moral, and physical powers
- XL. To teach, attempting to associate with literature the idea and perception of pleasure
- XLI. To teach, attempting to induce the laudable ambition of progressive improvement
- XLII. To teach, by consulting the feelings of scholars
- XLIII. To teach, with animation and interest
- XLIV. To teach, by furnishing constant, useful, and as much as possible, pleasing employment
- XLV. To teach, treating pupils with uniform familiarity, and patience, and with the greatest kindness, tenderness, and respect
- XLVI. To teach, by cultivating the collective happiness of the school
- XLVII. To teach, by consulting the collective happiness of the school
- XLVIII. To teach, by persuasion, not by coercion
- XLIX. To teach, by comparison and contrast
- L. To teach, by allusion to familiar objects and occurrences
- LI. To teach, without indolence and discouragement
- LII. To teach, pupils to teach themselves
- LIII. To teach, by intermingling questions with instruction
- LIV. To teach, with relation to the practical business of life
- LV. To teach, endeavouring to fix things in the understanding rather than words in the memory
- LVI. To teach, without bringing pupils in comparison with one another, or touching the spring of personal emulation
- LVII. To teach, with reference to habit
- LVIII. To teach, with Independence