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## THE BROADER PROBLEM OF METHOD

*A condensed report of an address delivered  
by Dr. W. H. Kilpatrick, of Columbia  
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THERE are three types of learning situations, each requiring its own treatment. The first and simplest involves typically skills and information. The second has to do with purposeful activity, where an "inner urge" or purpose supplements and indeed makes best for the element of satisfaction demanded in the first type. The third type represents the problem of broader versus narrow method, whereby concomitant or associated learnings supplement the learnings of information and skill and oftentimes outweigh them in importance.

1. *Where the learning has to do with acquiring such simple matters as skill and information.*

In this the will to learn is a principal factor. To learn such requires practice and satisfaction with success, and annoyance with failure. Where there is the will to learn there will be practice, and if the learner can see the results of his practice there will be satisfaction at success and annoyance with failure. For instance, a boy facing last Saturday's football scores has the will to learn, he will practice, it will annoy him if he goes wrong. We accordingly find that he will learn a dozen football scores far more readily than he will learn a dozen dates in history. The general feature of all learning therefore is practice with satisfaction, that is, continued satisfaction.

2. *Purposeful activity.*

Here there is a mind-set-to-an-end and with it accordingly an inner urge, with readi-

ness to do whatever will attain the end and unreadiness for whatever thwarts. The end defines success and if success is attained there will be satisfaction in the degree that the purpose was strong, and also, it may be added, in the degree that hindering obstacles are successfully overcome. And this satisfaction, by the kind of learning we have just discussed, fixes in the purposer exactly those responses that brought success, better organization of means to end, and better learning.

For example, if one is angry he listens to one who urges violence, not one who suggest another way out. Or suppose Mary has obtained her mother's consent to make herself a dress. Not only when she goes down town to decide upon and buy the materials but wherever she is, perhaps even in church, she has an "inner urge" that leads her to think about and plan for the dress. Sarah, on the other hand, who does not want to make a dress but who is told by the home economics teacher that she must do so, if she wishes to pass the course and in due time secure her diploma, has only an outer urge. It would take a great deal of outer urge to disturb Mary's inner urge, but very little inner urge to disturb Sarah's outer urge. With Mary there is satisfaction at each stage. If by chance she makes a mistake, making both sleeves for the right arm, then comes annoyance. In all learning, it is true that the stronger the satisfaction, the better the learning. A strong purpose means a better organization of steps to the end, better learning what to do and what not to do. The school cannot afford to neglect to develop and utilize strong purposes.

3. *The total learning situation.*

There are two problems of method, the conventional and the broad. In the case of the conventional problem of method, the question is how best to learn and consequently how best to teach any one thing, simple or complex, as, for example, how to add, or how to learn to spell. This is pri-

marily a psychologist's problem. He abstracts out from a total situation this one problem and pays well nigh exclusive attention to it.

But it is not so with the teacher. The teacher faces what I have called the broad problem of method. Consider a boy learning a poem. During the half hour that he spends on this poem he is learning many other things; for instance, more or less of how to memorize, how to attack his task; he is fixing in himself certain habits of study, perhaps of alertness, perhaps of the opposite; he is building more or less of an appreciation of the poem, either a like or a dislike, and similarly for literature itself and also for the teacher and the school; he is also building in himself the presence or absence of self-respect and confidence. The experience of studying a poem thus includes many more learnings.

Now these concomitant learnings are often more valuable than the thing directly sought. Moreover they are absolutely inevitable. A boy does learn, for good or ill, to like or dislike teacher, school, books, duty, and the teacher is responsible, as far as the teacher by taking thought can change the results. It is strange and a misfortune that we grade children and ordinarily promote them on knowing the poem which may be the least important of all learnings. So far as we are able to say, purposeful activity promises best to bring us these attendant learnings. From every point of view, then, the presence of purpose means the best of learning, whether we consider any item of learning taken separately, whether we consider any complex instance of learning, whether we consider all of the manifold learnings that accompany it. The purpose, in the degree that it is present, enlists the whole boy and means most in all the possible learnings. This broader problem of method is one that you and I as teachers must face and face squarely. On no other basis can we measure up to our duties and our possibilities.

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Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation. — JOSEPH ADDISON.

## THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE HOME

*A vision of the finer quality and enlarged quantity of mental accomplishments that might result from a helpful collaboration of parents and teachers in the training of the child*

AS a result of economic and social conditions, the average American home plays a small role in the formal education of the children. They are sent to school as soon as they reach the required age and too frequently come under the tutelage of young and inexperienced teachers, who use the class-room as a means of livelihood to bridge the time between maidenhood and marriage.

Education naturally begins with the relation of parents to children. The human infant is physically and mentally the most helpless of all creatures and has in proportion thereto the longest period of infancy. Children are born with minds as a "tablet rassa,"—all of the knowledge of language, of science, of social customs, and even of ethics and morality must be acquired by the individual. The infant begins life in total ignorance, having only a potentiality for acquiring knowledge, and in some way that potentiality must be transformed into actuality. That is really the function of education—to harmoniously develop all the inherent powers of the individual to the end that he may become masterful in his environments and aid in the formation of a good character.

The home naturally becomes the source from which the infant first obtains his knowledge; and because of the long period of infancy, the pedagogical relations between parents and child are of vital importance. It is inevitably true that a child learns more of fundamental value in the first six years of life than in all subsequent years. The simple rudiments of living, the axiomatic truths of life, and the basis of morality, which are inculcated during these first years, will remain with the individual and shape his character for all his remaining years. The child regards the tenets of its own parents as infallible truths. What children learn in the