

THE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING BASED ON PSYCHOLOGY

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The Principles of Teaching Based on Psychology by Edward L. Thorndike

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ON PSYCHOLOGY**

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BY

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PREFACE

The aim of this book is to make the study of teaching scientific and practical—scientific in the sense of dealing with verifiable facts rather than attractive opinions, practical in the sense of giving knowledge and power that will make a difference in the actual work of teaching. It follows the example of the better books on education in basing principles of teaching upon the laws of psychology; it makes use of modern scientific psychology and especially of recent investigations in genetic and dynamic psychology; it seeks to make use also of the direct studies of teaching itself which have been made by qualified experts; it is arranged as a manual to guide the student in applying principles himself rather than as a series of discussions to be thought out or, more often, to be simply absorbed.

The book demands of students knowledge of the elements of psychology, particularly of dynamic psychology. The references entitled 'Preparatory' (or their equivalent) will fulfill this prerequisite. These references are to the author's *Elements of Psychology*, which is in a sense an introduction to the present volume, but any standard course in psychology which gives due emphasis to the laws of mental connections will supply the preparation needed.

Scientific principles are the back-bone of knowledge of teaching but concrete exercises are its flesh and blood. For the work of the student of teaching is to get practical control of principles by using them. The author offers no excuse for using over a third of his pages for such

exercises; indeed, they should occupy more than two-thirds of the student's time. They aim in some cases to test and increase the student's knowledge of principles; in others to insure the habit and power of application of general principles to the particular problems of the school-room; in others to give training in judging the theories, methods and devices which each year's output of educational literature brings to a teacher's attention. In all cases they aim to make thought about teaching more logical and scientific.

The references for further reading are of two sorts. The first, given at the end of each chapter, are to readings designed to extend the knowledge given in the text or to suggest useful comparisons. These readings are all included in ten books so chosen as to give students an adequate view of the present status of knowledge and expert opinion about teaching, and to form the nucleus of a teacher's professional library. They are:--

- J. Adams, *The Herbartian Psychology Applied to Education*, 1898.¹
A. Bain, *Education as a Science*, 1887.
J. Dewey, *School and Society*, 1900.
C. W. Eliot, *Educational Reform*, 1898.
E. W. Hope and E. A. Browne, *A Manual of School Hygiene*, 1901.
W. James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*, 1899.
E. A. Kirkpatrick, *The Fundamentals of Child Study*, 1903.
J. MacCunn, *The Making of Character*, 1900.
C. A. McMurry and F. M. McMurry, *The Method of the Recitation* (revised edition), 1903.

¹ The dates give the edition to which the reference applies. Any edition will serve, however, except in the case of the McMurrays' *Method of the Recitation*, where the edition should be 1903 or later.

H. Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical* (the references fit any edition).

The second sort of references, given at the end of the book, are designed to aid students in such studies of special topics as they may profitably undertake.

In the text there are ninety-seven quotations, mostly of passages requiring critical comment in the *Exercises*. Since the student should in such cases make his judgments uninfluenced by the source of the passage, the sources are not given in the text. For the sake of anyone who may need to know the source of any such quotation a number in brackets follows each and, in the SOURCES OF QUOTATIONS at the end of the book, the reference is given for each number. When it is proper that the source of a quotation should be known at the time that it is read, the reference is given in the text itself also.

Teachers College, Columbia University,
December, 1905.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

§ 1.	<i>The Teacher's Problem</i>	1
§ 2.	<i>Psychology and the Art of Teaching</i>	7
§ 3.	<i>Exercises</i>	10

CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

§ 4.	<i>The Care of the Body</i>	12
§ 5.	<i>Remedying Defects</i>	14
§ 6.	<i>The Prevention of Defects</i>	16
§ 7.	<i>Exercises</i>	17

CHAPTER III

INSTINCTS AND CAPACITIES

§ 8.	<i>Natural Tendencies in General</i>	21
§ 9.	<i>Instincts</i>	24
§ 10.	<i>Capacities</i>	29
§ 11.	<i>Exercises</i>	34
§ 12.	<i>Self-Activity</i>	39

CHAPTER IV

APPERCEPTION

§ 13.	<i>The General Law</i>	42
§ 14.	<i>Detailed Applications; Exercises</i>	43

CHAPTER V

INTERESTS

§ 15.	<i>The Meaning of Interests</i>	51
§ 16.	<i>Interests as Ends</i>	52
§ 17.	<i>Interests as Means</i>	54
§ 18.	<i>Exercises</i>	59