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THE PROBLEM METHOD OF TEACHING IDEALS

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The purpose of education—human progress.—In his introduction to *Educational Values* Professor Bagley says that education is "a process of modifying conduct." He might have said that it is a process planned for the purpose of modifying conduct. An education which fails to modify conduct is not worth while. Furthermore education purposes to modify conduct in the direction of progress. The full aim of education is the improvement of human conduct.

Progress means moving toward some goal, attaining ideals. Conduct can be improved in one way only: by seeking to attain ideals. Education is therefore the means for teaching standards of value or ideals in order that they may be realized in conduct. The goals, standards, or ideals are changing from generation to generation, from year to year, even from day to day; but though they are changing, they are nevertheless genuine objectives of effort, and because they are striven for they show results in types of character.

Spartan education will illustrate the effectiveness of an ideal in producing results. The history of education describes the Spartan aim of giving to each individual physical perfection, courage, and habits of obedience to law. So carefully planned and regulated was the life of each child to produce this result that, as Monroe says, the Spartan man possessed "a bravery, power, endurance, and self-control that was often wanting, sometimes conspicuously so, in the

other Greeks." The Spartan, educated for courage, obedience, and physical perfection, was very different from the Athenian, who was educated for "virtue," beauty, and knowledge. The Spartan excelled in war, the Athenian in art, literature, and statesmanship.

The value of instruction in ideals has been exemplified recently in the nation-wide legislation to bring about prohibition. About thirty years ago Miss Frances E. Willard inaugurated a campaign to have the evil effects of alcohol taught in every school in America. The success of this instruction is just now coming to its full realization. That generation which was taught lessons in temperance is now managing the affairs of the nation. Thoughtful publicists believe that the physiology lessons of twenty-five years ago are today bearing fruit in legislation.

The history of the human race is an epitome of changing ideals, with school curricula changing to meet these progressive requirements. School curricula must embody the ideals which must be realized in order that the race may be made better. Children must learn to appreciate and use moral ideals, physical ideals, social ideals, practical ideals, and aesthetic ideals. The teaching of these ideals effectively is a vital problem in present-day technique.

In order to handle the problem of teaching ideals it is necessary to understand the experience of children in acquiring and using them. The first step in learning to teach ideals is the examination of the psychology of appreciating values. When we have discovered how values operate in the control of behavior, and the causes which produce them, the next step will be to inquire whether the production and development of values can be effected in the schoolroom. Can the teacher cause values and ideals to arise and function in the child's experience? Can the teacher help to produce moral, social, or aesthetic ideals which will be effective in governing the conduct of the citizen?

The final step will show how ideals may be taught. Methods of teaching ideals will then be the last topic to be discussed.

The psychology of appreciation.—It is not the intention in the present paper to indulge in finely drawn distinctions of terminology, and the terms used will be given no recondite technical significance.

Such words as value, interest, purpose, appreciation, and ideal will not imply anything more than they always mean in our everyday vocabulary.

A description, however, of that experience which we all have, and which we call appreciation, is essential. Appreciation is our feeling for the value of something. We appreciate things—pictures, music, good behavior, food, a lesson learned, a bird's nest, missing a tiresome caller, or catching a car.

Jerry needs some new shoes. He wants four dollars with which to buy the shoes. A druggist lends him four dollars on condition that he will deliver packages Saturday afternoons to pay it back. Jerry appreciates the money. He appreciates the druggist's generosity. He feels the value of the money which has been loaned. He appreciates the value of a kind-hearted man who finds ways to help needy boys.

May's problem in division is another illustration of an experience of appreciation. May could not remember how many times 71 goes into 200. She was anxious to finish the problem before the end of the hour but was held up until she could find the answer to her question. She tried 2 at random, and discovering her remainder less than 71 she proceeded with her solution. She appreciated her lucky guess because it enabled her to finish her work on time.

In these illustrations the thing which was appreciated was something which helped out of difficulty or furthered experience in directions which were interesting. Analysis of the illustrations shows that the thing which was appreciated solved some problem. Even the appreciation of a bird's nest involved the solution of a problem. Perhaps it was spring and we were looking for a bird's nest; the finding of one directly settled that activity satisfactorily. But perhaps the problem was more obscure. The bird's nest may have been discovered accidentally while we were thinking about something else. The bird's nest appears in our field of vision, and the trend of our thinking is interrupted by some such exclamation as, "Here then is where that old robin has hidden herself!" The nest solves some problem which occurred at some previous time, although it may not have been interesting enough to make us seek the nest.

Let us ask the question, Do I want to find a bird's nest? Do I want to hear music? Do I want to catch my car? Do I want to miss a tiresome caller who interferes with the things I need to do? *Want* means a need, a consciousness of lack of something. The something which we want, need, lack, is the value which, when attained, we appreciate. If there is a want there is an unsolved problem, an uncompleted activity.

We appreciate that which satisfies our wants. Appreciation occurs in our experience then when some want has been satisfied. When we *feel satisfaction* in the fulfilment of some need, the solution of some problem, we are appreciating.

This description of appreciation has involved its function in our experience; but perhaps a little more needs to be said about its function, or the effects it produces within our experience. Whenever we feel satisfied with a thing, or appreciate its value, we will be inclined to use the same thing again if we get into a similar situation. A satisfactory solution of a problem will be remembered, while all the unsatisfactory solutions will be forgotten. Appreciation of values enables us to use our past experience for the benefit of our present needs. Without appreciation of values there could be no learning, in the sense that past experience would then not teach lessons for present troubles.

Ideals always present and always changing.—Values are the object of appreciation. We appreciate a book: it is a value. Obviously, however, some values have had much more to do with preserving life and furthering vital activities than have other values. Also an ideal will appear of great value until it is realized; then another ideal will appear as the end to be striven for. Again, a realized goal often proves disappointing, and our values need to be readjusted in terms of the disappointment. Midas wanted gold more than anything else, until his daughter became transmuted. Then Midas realized that his gold was not the highest value for him.

When a thing is satisfactory and meets all the needs of experience it remains as a value; but whenever it is not completely satisfying it loses some of its value, and experience seeks for a new satisfaction. As long as the appreciation of "virtue" satisfied the Greeks they did not modify their education; but when urgent social

and practical problems arose their educational procedure had to be changed. The Romans used only parts of the Greek curriculum, because they had different practical and political problems to be solved. The early church used still less of the Greek and Roman values, because it had religious problems to solve and was working toward religious ideals.

The needs of our experience are diverse. We want food every day. At the same time we want friends, clothing, home, children, and work to do. These are all fundamental values. They are some of the elemental satisfactions for which one strives. One man will steal or kill for food; another man will sacrifice his own food to save his children or a friend. In Russia today men are sacrificing life itself for ideals of patriotism.

While our modern experience exhibits diverse and often conflicting purposes, ends, or ideals, one fundamental pattern is being woven. The deepest needs of living are survival for the individual and for the race. The parent will sacrifice everything for the child. The citizen will risk death to save his nation. These altruistic ideals often compete with and do not always overcome the individual's personal struggle for existence. The personal needs for food, shelter, avoidance of physical pain, etc., frequently come into conflict with the desire for the welfare of others.

Out of the heart of the struggle for existence have arisen these inherited values of experience. Food has been so valuable that nature has implanted a tremendous interest in it in every consciousness. Children are so essential to racial survival that love for them is instinctive in every parent. These instinctive values have assured the survival of the race. Without them individuals would not have preserved themselves and their offspring.

What values must be conserved?—The preceding paragraphs have described the effectiveness of the *fundamental values* of experience in the control of conduct. Out of the racial struggle have these values originated, and in the constant turmoil of living are they perpetuated.

Some values have been so necessary to existence that they have been transmitted from generation to generation as instincts. Illustrations of instinctive values are love for children, appreciation

of food, warmth, and protection, love of one's tribe or country, etc. Whatever values will satisfy an instinct are necessarily appreciated.

The school must take into account these "original satisfiers," as Professor Thorndike calls them. They are the raw material out of which all ideals must be built. The teaching of ideals cannot begin at the middle rung of the ladder (the elaborated values of adult life), but must begin with the lowest rungs, the inherited values. The earliest ideals are very slightly removed from the instinctive values.

The development of an ideal of food conservation will illustrate the point. Appreciation of conservation as an ideal must be built upon the instinct of sympathy. If sympathy with starving peoples is beyond the child's experience some other fundamental interest must be found. Perhaps love of display may be used, and buttons or window cards provided. If the child is anxious to possess a button or window card he will do the things required to obtain one. Or perhaps the deep-seated tendency to hero worship will induce a child to save food "because Mr. Hoover says so."

Acquired values.—Ideals are values which we seek to attain. These values are derived from instinctive values. Professor Thorndike says, "The power that moves the man of science to solve problems correctly is the same as moves him to eat, sleep, rest, and play."

The school aims to teach a great many values, none of which are inherited, but all of which must be linked to or derived from the inherited values. The child acquires a great many values outside of school. When he arrives before the teacher for instruction he has a fund of values and ideals which are inherited, and a fund of values and ideals which have been developed by his own experience out of his inherited values. The teacher's problem is to teach the child to appreciate the ideals and values contained in the subject-matter of the curriculum.

Here is grammar, for instance. It must be learned, therefore it must be appreciated; and this appreciation has to be taught by the teacher. Here is arithmetic. Johnnie may not like it, he may not want to study it, he may see no need for it; but he must learn it. It must acquire a value for him, although it is neither food