

**THE CHILD VISION; BEING
A STUDY IN MENTAL
DEVELOPMENT &
EXPRESSION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649224876

The child vision; being a study in mental development & expression by Dorothy Tudor Owen

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Cover @ 2017

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DOROTHY TUDOR OWEN

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PUBLICATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
MANCHESTER

EDUCATIONAL SERIES, No. IX

THE CHILD VISION

Published by the University of Manchester at
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS (H. M. McKECHNIE, Secretary)
12 LIME GROVE, OXFORD ROAD, MANCHESTER

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.

LONDON : 19 Paternoster Row

NEW YORK : 443-449 Fourth Avenue and Thirtieth Street

CHICAGO : Prairie Avenue and Twenty-fifth Street

BOMBAY : 8 Hornby Road

CALCUTTA : 6 Old Court House Street

MADRAS : 167 Mount Road

THE CHILD VISION

BEING A STUDY IN MENTAL
DEVELOPMENT & EXPRESSION

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MANCHESTER
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.

LONDON, NEW YORK, BOMBAY, ETC.

1920

PUBLICATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
No. CXXX

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PREFACE

COMPOSITION is the arrangement of parts in such a way that the meaning of the whole is expressed. The same meaning can be interpreted through different vehicles, *e.g.* actions, words, sound, colour. Whatever may be the term, it is the arrangement of concomitant parts that reveals the meaning. And however powerful may be the message, it will remain voiceless if the laws which govern all composition are disregarded. Thought itself is artistic in form and will only be truly expressed if its composition is understood.

The method of teaching composition as sketched in the following pages is intended to provide mental training which will not only enable children to handle their school subjects with greater efficiency, but will prepare them for the world by giving them a *method* of thinking and ease of expression.

Since life is ever growing more complex and crowded, more agility is needed to steer a successful passage if one is not to be swept aside in the stream of competition. It has been conclusively proved that even in physical prowess mind is the controlling force, and that in all branches of life speed and decision are the qualities that count for success.

From a practical standpoint, therefore, it seems that

however useful a training in specific subjects may be, none is so valuable as the moulding of the instrument itself, which distorts or perfects its material according to its condition and development.

To-day, more than ever before, no equipment is more necessary for practical life than a mind that thinks quickly, surely, and justly—a mind that can sift the true from the false, the essence from superfluities.

This power of *selection* is an essential quality of the successful man in whatever field his activities may lie.

In business life rapid decision, in moral affairs right thinking, in social intercourse quickness of perception, in artistic appreciation harmony of mind—such training of thought as is given by the method described in this book provides a boy or girl with the capacity for perceiving the essential in anything with which he has to deal, the relation of every experience to his own life, the individual to the community. And in the new democracy that we are hoping for, no less than in the stress that precedes it, such a preparation is what we owe to the coming generation, which will be called upon to restore order with justice.

The method of teaching composition suggested in this book was built up step by step during six years' practical experiment. This last year I put it on a psychological basis, presenting the result as a thesis for the degree of M.Ed. in the University of Manchester. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the Heads of those schools in which I was allowed to experiment, *i.e.* Miss Theodora Clark, in whose school at Croham Hurst, South Croydon, the first results were worked out;¹ Mr. Gordon Barr, who gave me complete freedom to develop my

¹ An account of these appeared in the *Journal of Experimental Pedagogy*, March 1915.

method into a systematic course for boys and girls between ten and fourteen years of age in the Secondary County School at Hendon ; and Miss Burstall, who allowed me to use it in the Junior Department of the Manchester High School. I owe much also to Professor Archer of the University College, Bangor, for his early support and criticism ; to Professor Bompas-Smith, who supervised my work for the degree of M.Ed. in Manchester ; and to Professor Pear, under whose direction I did some practical psychology in the Manchester laboratories and who gave me many valuable suggestions in his lectures.

I wish I could adequately express my gratitude to Professor Tout for his never-failing kindness and encouragement.

Messrs. Constable kindly confirmed Mr. de la Mare's permission to quote from *Peacock Pie*, and Messrs. Methuen have allowed me to give quotations from *A Draught of the Blue* by F. W. Bain.

I should like to thank Mr. McKechnie, Secretary of the Manchester University Press, for his interest and advice.

DOROTHY TUDOR OWEN.

January 1920.