

How we think (IA howwethink00deweiala).pdf/216



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Any step may come first

induce search for new facts and a new generalization. Or the abrupt presentation of some fact or object may so stimulate the minds of pupils as to render quite superfluous any preliminary preparation. If pupils' minds are at work at all, it is quite impossible that they should wait until the teacher has conscientiously taken them through the steps of preparation, presentation, and comparison before they form at least a working hypothesis or generalization. Moreover, unless comparison of the familiar and the unfamiliar is introduced at the beginning, both preparation and presentation will be aimless and without logical motive, isolated, and in so far meaningless. The student's mind cannot be prepared at large, but only for something in particular, and presentation is usually the best way of evoking

associations. The emphasis may fall now on the familiar concept that will help grasp the new, now on the new facts that frame the problem; but in either case it is comparison and contrast with the other term of the pair which gives either its force. In short, to transfer the logical steps from the points that the teacher needs to consider to uniform successive steps in the conduct of a recitation, is to impose the logical review of a mind that already understands the subject, upon the mind that is struggling to comprehend it, and thereby to obstruct the logic of the student's own mind.

§ 2. *The Factors in the Recitation*

Bearing in mind that the formal steps represent intertwined factors of a student's progress and not mileposts on a beaten highway, we may consider each by itself. In so doing, it will be

convenient to follow the example of many of the Herbartians and reduce the steps to

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