
How we think

Dewey John

Title: How we think

Author: Dewey John

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HOW WE THINK CITY

BY

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PREFACE

OUR schools are troubled with a multiplication of studies, each in turn having its own multiplication of materials and principles. Our teachers find their tasks made heavier in that they have come to deal with pupils individually and not merely in mass. Unless these steps in advance are to end in distraction, some clew of unity, some principle that makes for simplification, must be found. This book represents the conviction that the needed steadying and centralizing factor is found in adopting as the end of endeavor that attitude of mind, that habit of thought, which we call scientific. This scientific attitude of mind might, conceivably, be quite irrelevant to teaching children and youth. But this book also represents the conviction that such is not the case; that the native and unspoiled attitude of childhood, marked by ardent curiosity, fertile imagination, and love of experimental inquiry, is near, very near, to the attitude of the scientific mind. If these pages assist any to appreciate this kinship and to consider seriously how its recognition in educational practice would make for individual happiness and the reduction of social waste, the book will amply have served its purpose.

It is hardly necessary to enumerate the authors to whom I am indebted. My fundamental indebtedness is to my wife, by whom the ideas of this book were

inspired, and through whose work in connection with the Laboratory School, existing in Chicago between 1896 and 1903, the ideas attained such concreteness as comes from embodiment and testing in practice. It is a pleasure, also, to acknowledge indebtedness to the intelligence and sympathy of those who coöperated as teachers and supervisors in the conduct of that school, and especially to Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, then a colleague in the University, and now Superintendent of the Schools of Chicago.

NEW YORK CITY, December, 1909.

CONTENTS

PART I

THE PROBLEM OF TRAINING THOUGHT

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	WHAT IS THOUGHT?	I
II.	THE NEED FOR TRAINING THOUGHT	14
III.	NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT	29
IV.	SCHOOL CONDITIONS AND THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT	45
V.	THE MEANS AND END OF MENTAL TRAINING: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THE LOGICAL	56

PART II

LOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

VI.	THE ANALYSIS OF A COMPLETE ACT OF THOUGHT .	68
VII.	SYSTEMATIC INFERENCE: INDUCTION AND DEDUC- TION	79
VIII.	JUDGMENT: THE INTERPRETATION OF FACTS . .	101
IX.	MEANING: OR CONCEPTIONS AND UNDERSTANDING .	116
X.	CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT THINKING	135
XI.	EMPIRICAL AND SCIENTIFIC THINKING	145

PART III

THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT

XII.	ACTIVITY AND THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT . . .	157
XIII.	LANGUAGE AND THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT . . .	170

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIV. OBSERVATION AND INFORMATION IN THE TRAINING OF MIND	188
XV. THE RECITATION AND THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT	201
XVI. SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	214