The Classroom, as the Laboratory for Thinking

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The question is: How can we make pupils think? This sounds funny at least for those who believe it's nature responsible for it. Dr. Shaeffer, in **Everyday Psychology for Teachers** by Bolton, said, "You can't stop them from thinking!" If Shaeffer wah right, then why the necessity of teaching pupils to think? The answer is that even though they are bound to think, they do not always think effectively, nor do they always think worthwhile thoughts. Doubtless the second is the graver problem. Thinking, while not possible without facts, is not merely an acquisition of them. The more facts one possesses, the greater his wealth of experience and the better his reflection will be. While all thinking results in knowledge, the value of knowledge is subordinate to its use in thinking. At this junction, one should not confuse that when an individual has "in his head" many things, he is doing the right type of thinking. This is merely **loose** thinking, also called **chance** or **idle** thinking which type dullards generally resort to.

Article XIII, Sec. 5 of the constitution says: "All educational institution shall be under the supervision of and subject to regulation of the State. The Government shall establish and maintain a complete and an adequate system of public education, and shall provide at least free public primary instruction, and citizenship training to adult citizens. All schools shall aim to develop moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and vocational efficiency and to teach the duties of citizenship . . . . Universities established by the State shall enjoy academic freedom. The State shall create scholarships in art, science and letters for specially gifted citizens."

From the above, we can see what and how much is expected of schools by the State. To develop moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, vocational efficiency and duties of citizenship means both extensive and intensive training of the individual to think. No one can be possessed of any of those above-mentioned traits without first understanding to think effectively and independently. On personal discipline, to be specific, the individual, to exercise the trait, should know how to act rightly when confronted by any situation. As one possessed of strong discipline, he will, under trying circumstances, be able to act accordingly. As a private citizen, he must observe judgment and precision in the

exercise of his duties of efficient citizenship.

During the recitation, the teacher comes into his closest contact with the pupil at least 3 or 4 hours daily. The recitation is the place and time for directing reflection, which is similar to the Herbartian Method used by teachers knowingly or not.

Whether a recitation or re-citation, a pupil should be trained in whatever subject he takes, to judge the relevant from the irrelevant. He should be made to analyze insofar as it involves discernment, discrimination, marking the trivial from the important. He also should synthesize insofar as it leaves the mind with an inclusive situation within which the selected facts are placed. At this point the teachers should take note that **analysis** leads to **synthesis** or generalization; while synthesis perfects analysis. Scientific thinking, both analyzes and synthesizes.

Meaning is the central function of all reflection. So when a pupil thinks and judges, it is a healthy sign of growth and application of meanings. When a teacher demands understanding from the pupils, it is only a way to make them grasp meaning in its entirety because by so doing he develops their power to think effectively. Effective thinking as mentioned above, depends upon the possession of a capital fund of meanings applied readily when desired.

Right from grade I when a pupil is told to read with expression, the teachers implicitly work for meaningful reading. At the first time pupils are introduced their first reading lessons, the material is presented in complete sentences to be meaningful. We should give them time to think all the time to get hold of the significance of facts. There's no subject in the curriculum in which pupils are deprived to think well enough.

Every grade has its own level of thinking to develop each one depending on the fund of experience pupils possess. Dewey believes that a person who has the command of the practical and theoretical phases of thinking is of a higher order and that education should aim for this. Pupils in different grades coming from all levels of society take along with them all sorts of false beliefs the sum total of which finds its root in what is termed **empirical** thinking. This is the one thing the teachers should fight against; destroy the grooves through which thinking goes into non-scientific reflection.

Bonser's experiment (through tests) shows that a child can reason and that reasoning and thinking are conditioned by experience and range of information. Reflective thinking versus trial-and-error, enables man to learn by a process less wasteful of time and energy. This is an implication that whenever a scientific method is utilized, better learning results. Teachers should understand that training in thinking is not much a matter of what is studied as a matter of how studying is done, how the curriculum is administered by the teacher, and how the various school subjects are handled by the pupils. Like any subject fields, thinking is also measured by its value for directing or redirecting the thinker's behavior towards others, himself or his phys-

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