

PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION

The aim of education should be to raise the standard of thinking of the average man. A nation or a community can climb the scale of civilization only if its individual members are capable of a higher level of thinking to arrive at which the mind must be trained. "Education" is therefore another name for "mind-training".

The first step in this training of the mind is to direct the attention to focus itself on a particular subject of study. This may be painful at first but, by habit, becomes easier. Many students in the class room do not pay constant attention to what the teachers say because they are not habituated to it from an early age. They prefer to sit on the back benches. The focussing of attention on an uninteresting subject for an appreciable length of time is the first step of education. The teacher should insist that the students pay due attention to what is taught. What is uninteresting at first becomes more and more interesting with greater attention being paid. Interest is the creation of attention. When a subject becomes interesting it is learnt.

The large number of failures in the different University examinations is mainly due to the fact that many students have not acquired the capacity for prolonged mental exertion, although they may be physically strong. Here physical strength does not help us. This quality is to some extent inherent or hereditary but can be developed by habitual exercise. As schools and colleges now-a-days are crowded by students coming from all ranks in

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Beautiful and colourful poems may also be prescribed. This is the age to receive and store up in the mind whatever comes to his notice. Advantage of this receptivity of the child's brain should be taken so that he imbibes what is good and beautiful eschewing everything evil. He should be saved from seeing films where amorous scenes and situations are displayed. Exposure of the child's imaginative faculty to such pictures provokes undesirable propensities even before attaining maturity.

Extra curricular activities on which much importance has been laid now a days by the educational authorities, play a great part in distracting mind of the student community from their studies. These activities make the academic lessons comparatively dull and uninteresting. Because it is more easy for some of them to score marks on the play ground than in the examination hall. Games and tournaments should be held during the vacations. Much valuable time of a students' life is lost now-a-days in preparing himself for competitive games, in playing them at distant places from his home and in allowing the excitement to subside. The student should resort to games only as a creative diversion so that he may return to his studies with greater vigour.

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develop an analytical mind that goes directly to the root of a problem. Our Universities should recognize the great part played by mathematics in activating and sharpening the intelligence. This subject should be made compulsory for boys and girls alike in the matriculation standard. The girls should not be left to remain dull with undeveloped brains. For, dull mothers are not likely to beget intelligent children.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Next to training the mind the aims of education should be to put the student in possession of some facts about the world he lives in. For this purpose the subjects taught should be Geography, History and any two languages apart from the Vernacular. These should be sufficient for the secondary stage of education. To heap too many subjects at this stage will put undue strain on tender brains, without giving the student sufficient time to think over what he learns. His brain becomes crammed with ill digested ideas which he manages to forget as soon as possible.

In addition to the above subjects which should be made compulsory in the secondary stage, extra curricular instructions to widen their general knowledge should be given to the students of the upper three classes of the high schools, for one hour in a week. The materials can be culled from the "Book Of Knowledge" dealing with varieties of life on land and sea, heavenly bodies, adventures and travels, lives of great men and saints and martyrs, episodes from the epics, elementary science, a general description of the administra-

ed by habitual exercise. As schools and colleges now-a-days are crowded by students coming from all ranks in society, a rise in the number of failures is inevitable. The remedy does not lie in lowering the standard of examinations or in abolishing them altogether as some people suggest, but in training the mind to develop concentration of attention from early boyhood. Just as a limb gets stronger by constant use, so does the power to concentrate the mind which is another name for attention. The habit should be created from the sixth year of age and gradually lengthened. If neglected in early childhood it becomes more difficult as the mind grows more and more rigid with age.

Narrating stories to little boys and girls is a good method of developing attention. This age-old good custom of our grand mother has been much neglected of late. In addition to developing attention listening to a story excites the imaginative faculty. When the child is able to read let him be supplied with simple and interesting story books so that he voluntarily applies his attention to reading.

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In the upper classes of a High School, books other than simple stories should be prescribed with a view to raise the standard of thinking of the students to a higher level. Such books should contain much abstract thoughts such as essay books, biographies, poetical selections of a reflective turn. Sometimes books are read or hurried through only to reach the end. This should be discouraged. Difficult passages should be thoroughly understood in order to appreciate what the author wants to say.

At this stage the students imagination must not be confined to concrete things only. He should be helped to understand others' point of view and imagine other's feelings, so that the quality of sympathy may grow in him — a quality essential for a cultured person.

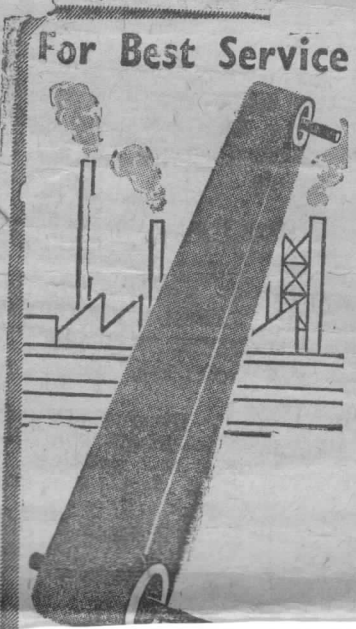
INDEPENDENT THINKING

The attention demanded of a student in reading a story or listening to a lecture is of a passive nature. But mental application of a more active kind should be fostered. The mind becomes actively attentive when it tries to explore an explanation to a certain problem or event. This mental activity is independent thinking, — a faculty that makes all the difference between man and other animals, and also for progress. Devoid of independent thinking a society or body politic remains static. Students who pass examinations by memorizing notes given by teachers, or synopses, catechisms etc do so at the peril of stunting their independent thinking and manage to forget everything as soon as the examinations are over.

Of all the subjects that are taught in the schools and colleges it is Mathematics alone that inspires the students to think independently. Moth other subjects taught are so much load on memory, and do not go to educate them in the proper sense of the term. Study of Mathematics should form the most indispensable part in

adventures and travels, lives of great men and saints and martyrs, episodes from the epics, elementary science, a general description of the administrative machinery and the Judiciary etc. The students should not be subjected to any examination on these subjects. Where there is no fear of an examination they will learn the subjects better even though slowly. But with the bugbear of an examination in the offing they commit to memory without understanding. Instructions on the subjects in selecting their future carrier and line of study. In the present system of education a student passing the Matriculation examination is quite at dark. His highest aim in life is to be the Headmaster of a school.

It depends upon the ability of the teacher to make these extra-curricular lectures interesting and attractive. He should be a man different from the teachers of the regular subjects. A change of face in the tutorial chair serves as a tonic to the student's mind. This hour should also be utilized by the teacher to impress upon the students the great importance of the moral aspect of life, the bliss and satisfaction and freedom from anxiety of leading a moral life. They should be told of the various vulgarism for refinement in taste and speech, falsehood for truth, cowardice for courage and lightness of heart for gravity. They should develop self-respect as a deterrent from meanness and dishonesty. Let them be proud without being disrespectful and courteous without being obsequious. They should be advised not to mix with each other in such close intimacy as will break the bounds of decency. They should develop strength of mind so as not to be led by other's persuasives. They should also be told not to read those bad short stories that are published in the periodicals and which teach immorality in the name of art and realism; although they are no more real than being the reflections of the



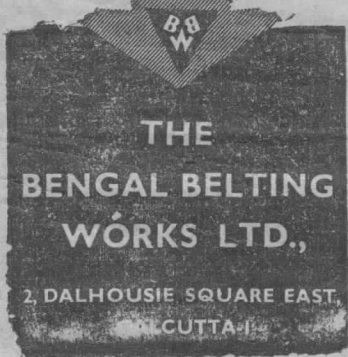


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to educate them in the proper sense of the term. Study of Mathematics should form the most indispensable part in a person's academic career. It not only provokes independent thinking but also regulates the process according to the dictates of reason. While Arithmetical problems stimulate the power of thinking, Geometry teaches us how to proceed deductively from one step to the other. Algebra teaches us to eliminate the irrelevant from the relevant in solving any problem. It helps us to arrive at new generalizations by the inductive method. The symmetry of Algebraical expressions stimulates speculation and opens the gateway to higher physics. Without a mathematical grounding a person does not become properly educated. It is for want of a mathematical background that people think in different ways and cannot agree on disputable matters. Mathematics teaches men to think logically. And logical thinking will always arrive at the same conclusion. Mathematics and Logic make a person impervious to slogans and periphra-- together

they are no more real than being the reflections of the writers' illicit thoughts and cravings. After all, a nation or community cannot survive muchless advance without a high moral standard. Woe betide the country where educated persons occupying positions of authority become corrupt and dishonest.

After going through a course of education as delineated above a person becomes fairly educated and cultured. In the next step, that is, in the college course the same subjects may be taught on a higher level, together with some other branches of knowledge, such as. Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Literature, Economics, Engineering, Medicines etc. The student should be given a wide range for selection of subjects according to his bent and ability. Those who do not go after a highly technical line such as. Engineering and Medicine may study Logic and Philosophy. They exercise the mind in abstract thinking, and help to realize what is really valuable in life and to live up to higher ideal.