
Voices From the Past

It is only too evident that every lesson must be made as interesting as is compatible with pedagogic soundness. Few people learn anything well unless they are interested in what they are learning. Hope of reward and fear of punishment are certainly stimuli to work, but very poor stimuli compared with that represented by interest. If the method is the machinery of language-study (or any other study for the matter of that), then interest is the motive power. Be the clock ever so well and ingeniously constructed, it will not go without some sort of mainspring; be the method ever so efficient as a method, it will not work unless the student is interested.

Harold E. Palmer, 1926

(The Principles of Language-Study. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company.)

Aptness to teach involves the power of perceiving how far a scholar understands the subject-matter to be learned, and what, in the natural order, is the next step he is to take so the mind of a teacher should migrate, as it were, into those of his pupils, to discover what they know and feel and need; and then, supplying from his own stock, what they require, he should reduce it to such a form, and bring it within such a distance, that they can reach out and seize and appropriate it.

He who is apt to teach is acquainted, not only with common methods for common minds, but with peculiar methods for pupils of peculiar dispositions and temperaments; and he is acquainted with the principles of all methods, whereby he can vary his plan, according to any difference of circumstances.

Horace Mann, 1840

In Lawrence A. Cremin (Ed.). 1957. *The Republic and the School: Horace Mann on the Education of Free Men.* New York: Teachers College Press.

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