

TACT IN TEACHING; ITS CONDITION AND EFFECT.

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Tact means fineness of touch. It then came to signify skilful handling of any business we undertake. Men in the broad sense may be said to possess tact who display efficiency in the discharge of whatever labors they may feel called upon to devote their lives. In this wide sense of the word, "tact" belonged to Newton in Astronomy; to Linnaeus in Botany; to Lyell in Geology; to Watt in Physics; and to Columbus in Geography. In Literature the same application may be made of the term in reference to Shakespeare, Scott, and Carlyle; in Art Raphael and Mozart were men of tact.

Tact in teaching signifies skill in furnishing the mind with knowledge for the intelligent, orderly, and sustained discharge of the duties of life. To impart knowledge with tact, a teacher, like a poet must be born, not made. Natural aptitude for teaching lies at the root of all successful performance of it. Application the most assiduous and theories of teaching, however intelligent and comprehensive, cannot remedy this defect. Every successful teacher must have the conviction within himself that, the end for which he was born, and the cause for which he came into the world, is to teach.

Let it not be supposed, however, that this innate qualification for teaching supersedes the exercise of patient study of the best methods of teaching and their effective application through the discipline attained by a matured and carefully discriminating experience.

Aptitude is to teaching what good seed is to agriculture, whilst pedagogy serves it as superior methods of farming do the labors of the husbandman. Both conditions must be fulfilled in either sphere of activity before the best and most abundant results can be secured.

The born teacher apprehends for himself and imparts to others truth in its real, living connections. His mind cannot rest in mere formalities of truth, however harmonious and attractive they may be. He translates the abstract into the concrete, and values the formal only as it puts him in living touch with the real.

Historical researches complete their services for him in so far as they enable him to live over again the life which animated the actors and distinguished the scenes to which they refer.

Geography passing beyond names and maps and setting him down amid real scenes of land and sea, mountain and plain, river and lake, amid wealth of forest and mine, amid varieties of human custom and pursuit, and extending thus more and more the bounds of his vision