

As important constituents of this reform there will be an abandonment of that school-room abomination, the concert conning of lessons, and the very sparing use of concert answering in the recitation—a sharper discrimination between study and recitation, and the assigning to each its own proper functions.

In order to reach some practical conclusions it will be necessary to look a little more closely into the relations of those two most important occupations of the school-room—study and recitation. And, first, it may not be without use to recall the definitions of these terms, and to bring clearly before our minds the ideas represented by them.

Webster defines *study* as “a setting of the mind or thoughts upon a subject; hence application of the mind to books, to arts or science, or to any subject, for the purpose of learning what was not known before.”

*Recitation* is the act of repeating; of telling over; or going over in its particulars what has been learned; relating; narrating.

These definitions set forth clearly that these are two essentially different and distinct occupations of the mind. However much they may overlap or be intermingled in the exercises of the school, they remain, in themselves, distinct.

As soon as the little child has voluntarily turned its attention to any object and has discovered any fact about it that he did not know before, he has as truly performed an act of studying as the philosopher, who, by protracted effort, has brought forth a truth that is destined to revolutionize a science. And when the little child has told in a simple way, to parent or teacher what he has learned, he has as truly recited as has the college student, when he has gone over the profoundest demonstration in mathematics. The difference is in degree and not in kind of activity.

I. With the youngest pupils these two occupations are practically blended—the same exercise being in parts study and in parts recitation. Under the immediate direction of the teacher, the little one, for a very brief interval, turns its childish thought to some object, and immediately tells the teacher what it has seen. The little one is learning, under wise and affectionate guidance, how to study. In a school of such pupils the intervals between the exercises are filled with such recreations, having more or less relation to their school progress, as the ingenuity of the teacher may enable her to devise.