

Technique of the Course

These conferences are not formal lectures - they will deal with a subject not in any complete, exhaustive way, but in the tentative way of one who is trying to get the facts, sift, absorb them - whose ideas are still more or less ahzy. That is, there is nothing dogmatic; and if the conference is carried on as I conceive it should be, you will contribute out of your experience much to this material. That is, you must visualize what we are talking about ^{out} of your ideas and your experience. In order to get the most out of it you should feel very free - I think I might say that the oftener you stop me to ask a question, to challenge a statement, to contribute to the point I am trying to make, the better it will be for all of us. I have no fear of interruption. That will be the very life of the conference. If you do that freely I shall feel that you are not lazy-minded toward what I am saying, indifferent, that you really are trying to do as I am doing, get my ideas, my facts in orderly procession as the writer of a book must - get my ideas about the meaning of these facts clear. This habit of challenging what one hears, of trying to get it clear in mind - is one of the most important things in our intellectual development. Many pupils never give themselves that advantage either out of a lack of understanding of what is a fact, that inno other way is a mind made acute, sensitive, kept active. or indolence, ot shyness, or vanity - the fear of making a mistake. Don't be afraid of making a mistake. At the present moment I could make more mistakes on the subject matter of

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

