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Mediation of individuation and psychological differentiation

Commentary to the film “Comparisons”

The instrument **Comparisons** focuses on developing spontaneous comparative behavior, therefore plays a key role in developing **relational thinking**. When comparing we need to look for various characteristics of the object, describe the object by using these characteristics and just then can we relate the object to another one. Clear and stable **perception** and **precision** are crucial. First, we look for the corresponding characteristics of the objects. If the objects are not identical, we look for differences. Once we are clear with similarities and differences, we can relate the objects to each other based on relevant characteristics. Systematic exploration is another important cognitive function involved in the process of comparisons, as it helps us to gather the wide range of data required for comparing.

In this video we can see the work on page 3 and 4, where students are required to indicate what is common to each pair of words and what are the differences. The modality is **verbal**, so the level of **abstraction higher**.

The role of a mediator here is **to broaden** the field of possible characteristics used in comparing two or more objects. She does it by initiating and encouraging discussion in which many different opinions get a voice, thus the complexity and variability of characteristics used for comparisons is increasing altogether with the mental field of the students. One of the students says: **“It has never occurred to me before that I could compare these two objects at all.”** We can also see the mediator initiating discussions on actual topics, this transferring the principles from the page to daily live.

The work on page 3 is finished by one very important question: *“Is there anything we should talk about and we did not yet?”* This question helps and supports a kind of reflection on what have been done and whether everything important has been done. On the other hand, the work on page 4, which is a natural continuation of the work starts with the question: *“Is there anything we should talk about more before you start working?”*

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Hand in hand with broadening the mental field and developing the skills to compare these two pages offer potential for **mediating individual differences**. Students have a space and time here to articulate what do they think and why and realize the individual differentiated self. The mediator pays attention to each opinion and supports the acceptance of the unique ways of perceiving the world around and legitimacy of the differences. She does it by offering calm and secure environment and comfort in interacting with others.