

T H E S I S .

Subject, *Interest as a Controlling Factor*

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A well disciplined school is a source of much pleasure and enjoyment to both teacher and pupils, while on the other hand, a poorly controlled school is often the cause of a great deal of uproar and discontent among pupils and dissatisfaction among parents. The teacher, capable of controlling a school easily and well is, usually, successful in her teaching, while the one who finds it a difficult matter to maintain order and gain proper control over her pupils, as a rule, does not accomplish much good in the profession of a teacher.

There are very many and widely different ways of con-

trolling a school, but the part that interest plays in this drama is not to be ignored.

It is a commonly acknowledged truth that something new and unfamiliar excites an interest in us, and the desire to investigate and find out the nature of this thing often becomes very strong. The desire to make research and discover for themselves should be awakened in all pupils; but the interest aroused may be of an impetuous and passionate character, or it may be a quiet, steady, and entire absorption of the mind in the thing before it. It is the interest of the latter character that is desirable on the part of

the pupils. When such an interest pervades the mind of the child it is easily seen that perfect order and control must necessarily follow, and the commands from the teacher for the obedience of broken rules are unnecessary.

While the child is engaged in some work of which he is proud, and in which he is deeply interested, he has no other motive than to do his best in the work before him, and is not prompted by any other motives to create a disturbance or get into mischief. So the teacher who gives the child such material to work upon which has an attraction for him and which he has an

interest in because of its attractive content, finds little trouble in controlling him and rigid discipline is unnecessary.

The interest aroused only for the purpose of securing attention is not of much benefit to the child; but that deep interest which comes from within devoid of any conscious effort on the part of the pupil to attend, has more marked and lasting effects.

Interest is a great controlling power in all instruction, and stands out prominently as the great motive that prompts all desires to gain knowledge of any sort whatever. For do we not learn a thing more readily and with more ease when we

are deeply interested in it, and our desire for knowing something about it is very strong, than when we are uninterested, and feel no inclination to learn anything about it?

As desires follow interest, so does an action of the will follow a desire; and, if there is a strong desire on the part of a child to learn something new, there will be a will action tending toward the accomplishment of that desire. So should it not be the aim of the teacher to have her pupils become deeply interested in the work which they are to do, knowing that if this is the case they will accomplish something? Is it

not true that where interest is lacking in a class, the attention is poor and what the pupils hear, in a listless way, from each other or from the teacher takes no effect, and, if they had absorbed anything at the time, it is soon forgotten by them?

Interest prompts the child to ask questions, and thus gain knowledge through his own desire for knowing. It is this interest which has developed many of our present school studies and made them so instructive; this especially true of science.

The moral character of a child is determined by his interests. The child who is inter-

ested in the welfare of his fellow companions and sympathizes with them, when sympathy is necessary, displays a much more lovable disposition than he who does not feel for his playfellows, but who is interested in his games and his own selfish affairs.

Through interest, the desires which terminate in will, action are instrumental in performing good or evil acts. These acts usually result in habit. And so whether good or evil, the habits determine the character. As it is the object of every faithful teacher to develop moral character in her pupils, what better way can she find for doing

this than through their interests?

The interest which one has in regard to events that relate to his own well being and success does much to determine the course of his career in later life.

Prof. W. E. Wilson of Providence, Rhode Island, holds that interest is not merely the best motive for learning, but it is itself among the primary ends of education. He says, "Learning itself is not more important to the man than becoming interested in what is worthy."

Drill work has its place in the school room; but why not make interest the great controlling factor, as far as possible in all instruction, and so arrange

the presentation of the subject
that it will appeal to the child's
feelings and arouse the deepest
interest?

Bibliography

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