

# **THE MOTIVATION OF SCHOOL WORK**

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The motivation of school work by H. B. Wilson & G. M. Wilson

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**H. B. WILSON & G. M. WILSON**

**THE MOTIVATION  
OF SCHOOL WORK**



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# THE MOTIVATION OF SCHOOL WORK

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## PREFACE

Two forces have combined in stimulating the preparation of this volume. One force is personal, the experience of the authors; the other is general, the growth of an educational theory demanding motive and interest in all school work. In the twenty or more years of their experience in rural, grade, and high schools, both as teachers and superintendents, the authors came to see clearly the large gains in the speed, thoroughness, and scope of the work when pupils were trying to do things of personal concern to them. From these experiences, they gradually accumulated a large body of concrete results secured under perfectly normal schoolroom conditions. Through presentation of these data to teachers and superintendents in educational meetings, in college and normal school classes, and through educational magazines, a demand arose for a more complete and organic statement of how to motivate the pupil's mastery of the various school subjects and of the results which have been secured from such motivated work.

The fundamental theory of motivation is not new. Glimpses of this theory appear here and there throughout the history of education. Rousseau, half consciously, was one of its first popular exponents. In recent years, Dr. John Dewey has given it clear statement and a large following. But teachers find difficulty in carrying theory into practice even when clearly understood and appreciated. Teachers and superintendents, alike, have been seeking help in putting the theory of interest and motivation into practice under schoolroom

conditions. A demand for a collection of the best practices of the best schools has grown increasingly insistent.

The present volume, therefore, seeks to satisfy personal obligations and a growing professional need. It recognizes that the largest daily task of the teacher is the detailed planning and preparation of the various lessons to be taught. The most difficult phase of teaching is not acquiring the necessary information nor controlling the class, but it is discovering problems and motives for the work that will make it appeal to and interest the pupils. This book is designed to furnish concrete help of a fundamental kind in solving this daily problem of every teacher.

While giving some attention in Part I to a clear and comprehensive statement of the theory of motivation, the main body of the work is devoted to concrete illustrations of the practical working of the theory in teaching the subjects of the common school curriculum in the classroom. The general plan of the book is easily comprehended from the table of contents.

While a more complete and thorough grasp of the technique of motivation may be secured from a careful study of the entire volume, it is organized in such a way that each chapter dealing with one of the school subjects may be readily understood and used without reference to the other chapters. Any teacher whose time does not enable her to read the entire volume will find it easy to get the spirit and purpose of the authors and to secure the help she wants by reading chapter II and then turning to the chapter treating the subject in which she needs special help.

The indebtedness of the authors, particularly to their associates in public-school work during the last decade,

is so great that individual acknowledgment here would require the printing of a long list of names. Where possible, credit for illustrations used has been given in the body of the text. Due acknowledgment is likewise made to those leaders in education to whom the authors are heavily indebted not only for guiding principles, but also for inspiration.

The authors acknowledge gratefully the courtesy of *School and Home Education*, *American Education*, *The Elementary School Teacher*, *The Midland Schools*, *The Educator-Journal*, and the *Atlantic Educational Journal* for permission to use freely portions of certain chapters previously published in these educational magazines.

Among those to whom the authors are deeply indebted for helpful constructive criticism of certain portions of the manuscript in the various stages of its formulation are Miss Frances Jenkins, Mr. George A. Brown, President John R. Kirk, Assistant Superintendent K. J. Hoke, Professors T. W. Galloway, J. W. Searson, J. Fleming Hoscic, C. R. Mann, L. D. Coffman, Thomas H. Briggs, George D. Strayer, W. C. Bagley, and E. L. Thorndike.



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