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EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY



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TORONTO

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY
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TO MY WIFE

PREFACE

The preparation of this book has been carried out according to two fundamental purposes: First, to present that material which seems to be most useful and relevant to the problems of educational psychology; and second, to maintain a strictly experimental, scientific viewpoint in discussing these problems. The result of these aims has been a considerable reduction in the amount of space usually devoted in texts on educational psychology to certain topics such as, instinct, fatigue, and imagery, and the inclusion of new topics such as tests of intelligence, studying, transference of training in school subjects, the assignment of marks, and much of the material in Part III which has as yet not found a place in text-books.

The space devoted to the discussion of instinct has been materially reduced for two reasons: In the first place, while the instincts are fundamental in human life, too much time has usually been devoted to their consideration for the amount of direct benefit gained. The actual use in school work that can be made of a detailed knowledge of instincts, which in our present stage of information is largely analytical and theoretical, is relatively small when it comes to dealing face to face with concrete school problems. In the second place, a great deal of experimental and statistical material has accumulated in recent years which is more immediately valuable in solving the problems of the psychology and pedagogy of learning.

It would have been desirable to include a discussion of the psychology of more of the high school subjects; but this is impossible at the present time. The discussion of the school subjects in Part III has been confined to tangible, scientific investigations. Obviously there is little or no material of this sort on most of the high school subjects. The consideration of educational tests in the chapters of Part III is perhaps brief; but a detailed treatment of the theoretical and statistical principles underlying their construction belongs rather in special treatises. Chapter XII on How to Study is not altogether satisfactory, because of the scarcity of definite or substantial material in this field. It was, how-

ever, included because the topic is exceedingly important in school work and because it was hoped that its inclusion would stimulate discussion of it by teachers and prospective teachers.

I take pleasure in expressing my obligations to the persons who have assisted me in various ways in the preparation of this book; namely, to Dr. Helen Hubbert Caldwell and Mr. A. O. Hansen, who have read the manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions, to Mr. W. R. Ames who has prepared the drawings, and especially to Dr. C. L. Hull who has critically examined every portion of the manuscript and has offered many suggestions which have been incorporated in the book.

DANIEL STARCH.

MADISON, WISCONSIN,
October 5, 1918.

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EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY,

CHAPTER I

PROBLEMS AND SCOPE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

What is Education? The problems and the scope of educational psychology are necessarily determined by our conception of what education is. If we conceive education to be primarily self-development, our problems will be of one sort; if we conceive education to be fundamentally social adaptation, our problems will be of another sort. In the former case, education would mean the complete training of the mental and physical capacities irrespective of environment; in the latter case, education would mean the training of those capacities which will adapt the individual most adequately to the social and physical environment in which he is to live. For our present purpose it is not necessary to define in complete detail the aim and meaning of education. It will be sufficient to state in the simplest terms what education is as a psychological process.

In the broadest sense, education is the production of useful changes in human beings.¹ These changes may be classified into three divisions: changes in knowledge, in skill, and in ideals. Through education the child is to acquire useful knowledge; he is to acquire skill, both motor and intellectual, in the use of his muscles and in the manipulation of ideas and concepts; and, finally, he is to acquire the right ideals of life which will actually function in his behavior. Probably all changes wrought in human beings which in any sense are educational, fall under these three heads. Obviously then, education is the most momentous, as well as the most essential, business of the human race; for the welfare of the race depends upon education as it depends upon nothing else.

¹ Thorndike has defined the purpose of education thus: "The aim of education is, as we have seen, to change human beings for the better, so that they will have more humane and useful wants and be more able to satisfy them." (12, p. 52.)

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