

Educational Psychology

edited by

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Preface

“**E**ducational Psychology” is an elementary textbook intended for students of education and teachers. It is the result of a coöperative undertaking in which twenty-five psychologists and educators from twenty-two different colleges and universities participated. The psychological viewpoint is eclectic. Structuralism, Functionalism, Behaviorism, Purposive and Hormic Psychology, Gestalt Psychology, Organismic Psychology, and still other so-called “schools” have contributed something to this volume. The collaborators, while reflecting somewhat different points of view and emphases, may be considered on the whole as open minded in their psychological outlook. Both subjective and objective methods are appreciated. There is emphasis on mental and conscious processes and the superior adjustments of the organism which they make possible. The growth aspect and the genetic method are stressed. The organism is viewed as a whole; but while emphasis is on the organism functioning as a whole, there is no objection to a recognition of simple and complex behavior segments or small “integrated units” that appear secondarily as a result of individuation. In brief, the contributors have “garnered wherever the pastures were greenest.”

The editor of the volume is primarily responsible for the selection of the topics, or chapter titles, their arrangement into what seemed to be a logical pattern, and the choice of the staff. No contributor had the privilege of seeing the other chapters in advance, and each one was free to develop his own chapter as he saw fit.

The editor set as the goal a volume that would be functional and dynamic in aim and content; that would be creat-

ive and social in viewpoint; and that would give emphasis to the development of fundamental principles, attitudes, and standards of value. It was decided, furthermore, that the volume should be replete with concrete, workable illustrative examples from the classroom. To this statement of aims and objectives each of the contributing authors tacitly assented.

Major emphasis has been placed on such "master ideas" as *continuous growth, goal seeking, intelligent self-direction, pupil purposing, creative experiencing, and social functioning*. The child is regarded as a *growing and functioning* organism. The attempt is made to regard him as a whole personality.

There are provided with each chapter a few well-selected references and a number of thought-provoking questions, problems, and exercises which may help the student of education to attain mastery and insight in organizing knowledge and in applying it to the solution of educational problems of a psychological nature.

A knowledge of educational psychology is worth just the difference it makes in the learner's living, learning, and teaching. In turn, the difference it makes in his teaching is reflected in the living, learning, and conduct of his pupils. The benefit which the student derives from the study of educational psychology depends not only upon the content and organization of the textbook used but also upon the method of instruction and the personality of the instructor. While there is no one way to teach, it is common knowledge that each instructor of educational psychology may improve the quality of his instruction if he will apply the facts and principles of his own subject to his teaching. The alert instructor knows both the ultimate cultural and professional conduct objectives of his course and the more immediate objectives—the abilities, insights, and purposes that his students are expected to acquire or develop as a result of participation in the appropriate learning activities. He takes

the proper measures to stimulate, encourage, and direct his students. The instructor aims to direct the learning and adjusting activities of students so that their learnings will function not only here and now in the classroom but in subsequent life situations wherever they be encountered.

The subject matter of educational psychology is most effectively mastered when it is learned in connection with other professional subjects, especially with the observation of superior demonstration teaching and one's own teaching.

Obviously, the worth of educational psychology, or any other subject, depends largely upon its transfer to other fields. The instructor, by understanding the conditions of transfer and utilizing them in his own teaching, can greatly enhance the effect and functional value of student learnings. So in the learning of educational psychology it becomes imperative that students (1) apply each "master" ability in a variety of contexts, (2) strongly want the subject matter under consideration to help in solving the problems of education, and (3) acquire the "habit" of conceptualizing and generalizing experiences.

CHARLES E. SKINNER.

New York University
July, 1936

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C. E. S.

ARY

lated to help the individual in solving the conditions that most frequently elicit anger or fear in modern, civilized life."²¹

6. What are some of the many factors that may contribute to the development of a child's fear of the dark? His fear of death and corpses? Of failure and ridicule?

7. Illustrate the "graded approach" method and the method of promoting specific skills as means of helping the child to overcome fear.

8. Why is it that a policy of ignoring the child who is timid and afraid at school and of "doing something" about the child who is angry and rebellious may have the result of aggravating the tendencies which each child already shows?

9. If you were dealing with a person who is exceedingly shy and had to make an exclusive choice of opportunities in the following two directions—(a) probing into his past life to resurrect and clarify to him the conditions that contributed to his shyness, or (b) cultivating various skills, such as dancing, sports, card-playing, etc.—which would you choose, for what reasons, and under what conditions?

10. What are some of the conditions or happenings in daily life which suggest that human beings are instinctively sympathetic toward their fellow-men and what reasons may be found to support just the opposite conclusion?

11. Assume that you are rating your acquaintances (children or adults) on their tendency to experience and to express sympathy for others; choose the two who rate highest and the two who rate lowest and in each case analyze the factors in the individual's endowment, upbringing, personal experience, and general environment which you believe to be significantly related to the presence or absence of sympathy and the manner in which sympathy is expressed.

12. On what grounds could it be argued that a general increase in sympathy might be harmful to the race? What would be the answer to these arguments?

13. Give your opinion regarding the merits and the limitations of the following proposition: "The major slogan in education should be, 'Where there is a skill there is a way.'"

14. What are some activities (in the form of sports, or games, or school subjects, or daily tasks) in your own experience or in the behavior of others whom you have observed, which at first were uninteresting and uninviting but became attractive after some competence had

²¹ Cannon, W. B., *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage* (Second Edition), New York, Appleton-Century, 1929; and Jersild, A. T., and Thomas, W. S., "The Influence of Adrenal Extract on Behavior and Mental Efficiency," *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XLIII, No. 3 (1931), pp. 447-456.

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