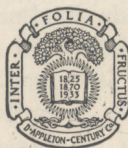


Educational Psychology

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PREFACE

Textbooks of educational psychology fall into several categories. Those of one group are primarily introductions to elementary psychology for students chiefly interested in teaching. They survey the general topics of human psychology, illustrating them so far as possible by school examples. In a second group fall books devoted primarily to the psychology of the school subjects, elementary or secondary. These tend to be reports of educational experiments in the special fields of teaching or discussions of special methods. Books of a third group are closely restricted to educational themes but assume a general introductory knowledge of human psychology. The emphasis is on the application of psychological principles to educational problems, and a preliminary knowledge of psychological principles and terminology is taken for granted.

Choice between these methods should obviously be determined by the use to which the text is to be put. The present volume remains close to educational topics, after presenting in an untraditional way, in Part I, such general psychological principles as seem specifically to underlie the processes of teaching and learning. It would be an advantage if educational psychology could cease to be an assemblage of miscellaneous and unrelated topics, so that prospective teachers might come to view their work in at least as unified and systematic a way as the facts justify. The present text is written in the conviction that the human mind is really coherent; that the principles of learning and teaching are actually simple and capable of intelligible generalization, on the basis of observed facts.

It is believed that the main principles of cue reduction, scope or control, motivation, and individual differences reviewed in Part I are the fundamental ones for the teacher to know. The

application of these principles to all aspects of education ought to assist in bringing the work of teaching and learning from a rule-of-thumb level to a plane inviting artistry and encouraging scientific analysis.

References to material used in the text are given as footnotes. Additional references, given for each chapter, are mainly the better known and more easily accessible ones, usually books. The exercises for each chapter are intended to serve as supplementary topics for class discussion, demonstration and thought. Useful bibliographies on similar educational topics, and an array of problems, cases, and questions for discussion will be found in Watson and Spence, *Problems in Education for Psychological Study* (The Macmillan Co., 1930). This volume or Whipple's *Problems in Educational Psychology* (Public School Publishing Co.) will be found useful as a supplementary syllabus in a course in which the present book is used as the basic text.

The author has found a useful plan for a three-hour weekly course to be one hour considering a chapter and the accompanying exercises; one hour devoted to a lecture expanding the topic or introducing supplementary material or considering another chapter; and one hour given in alternate weeks to (a) practical problems discussed in small groups after the method of a "staff meeting," and (b) demonstrations, brief experiments, or written tests and reviews. Special topics, collateral in character, investigated by class committees or reported by individual students, can easily be introduced also as a part of the third hour section. Another useful method is to substitute for the third hour a two-hour laboratory period in which experiments on learning, transfer, memory, mental measurement, individual differences, and motivation are developed by the technique common in experimental psychology.

H. L. H.

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PART I

PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of education. Education, as part of an individual's experience, is one of the major features of life. As an organized social activity, it is one of the most elaborate of human enterprises. In a sense every creature receives an education; even a wild animal has much to learn about the world into which it is born, and profits from its experience. In the case of domesticated creatures education plays a still more important rôle. Training is administered by others, with deliberate reference to the wishes and needs of others, as well as to the fortuitous impulses of the individual. Human creatures are highly domesticated, that is, civilized, and this is largely due to the educational shaping of the young human being.

The ultimate aim of such education may be said to be a double one. On the one hand it is the desire to save the individual from troubles which he might encounter if left with only his native resources; on the other hand it is the desire to save other members of the social group from those troubles they would have to endure from untrained individuals. Briefly, the aim of education is to make human life happier for all those concerned with it. Agriculture, industry, navigation, mining, are ways of reducing or preventing human distress. So also is education; socially conceived, it is an organized technique for reducing human misery.

Experience is the only teacher. There is an old saying, often quoted with much seriousness, that "Experience is the best teacher." As is the case with so many of these common sense maxims, the doctrine does not stand up well under close examination. The element of truth in it is so broad as to