

**AN INTRODUCTION TO  
THE THEORY  
OF MENTAL AND  
SOCIAL MEASUREMENTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649056057

An Introduction to the Theory of Mental and Social Measurements by Edward L. Thorndike

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**EDWARD L. THORNDIKE**

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MEASUREMENTS

BY  
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THE SCIENCE PRESS

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*Jan 1906*

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THE NEW ERA PRINTING COMPANY,  
LACROSSE, WIS.

## PREFACE.

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Experience has sufficiently shown that the facts of human nature can be made the material for quantitative science. The direct transfer of methods originating in the physical sciences or in commercial arithmetic to sciences dealing with the complex and variable facts of human life has, however, resulted in crude and often fallacious measurements. Moreover, it has been difficult to teach students to estimate quantitative evidence properly or to obtain and use it wisely, because the books to which one could refer them were too abstract mathematically or too specialized, and omitted altogether much of the knowledge about mental measurements most needed by the majority of university students.

It is the aim of this book to introduce students to the theory of mental measurements and to provide them with such knowledge and practice as may assist them to follow critically quantitative evidence and argument and to make their own researches exact and logical. Only the most general principles are outlined, the special methods appropriate to each of the mental sciences being better left for separate treatment. If the general problems of mental measurement are realized and the methods at hand for dealing with variable quantities are mastered, the student will find no difficulty in acquiring the special information and technique involved in the quantitative aspect of his special science. The author has had in mind the needs of students of economics, sociology and education, possibly even more than those of students of psychology, pure and simple. Indeed, a great part of the discussion is relevant to the problems of anthropometry and vital statistics. The book may with certain limitations be used as an introduction to the theory of measurement of all variable phenomena.





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