# AN OUTLINE OF INDIVIDUAL STUDY

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An outline of individual study by G. E. Partridge

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# G. E. PARTRIDGE

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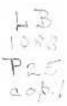
# AN OUTLINE OF INDIVIDUAL STUDY

#### BY

G. E. PARTRIDGE, Ph. D.

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### PREFACE

This manual of methods for the study of the human individual is intended to serve a practical and introductory rather than a scientific purpose. It is not intended for students interested in research, but is for those who wish a first guide in the study of individuals. It is in one sense and not another that it is called practical. It does not contain much about standards and results of experiments, by means of which one can safely compare individuals with the average or norm, for the purposes of an exact or scientific pedagogy. It is intended to be practical in the sense that it is hoped that by it the student can be led to observe individuals more intelligently and systematically, and thus be the better able to understand and serve them. Incidentally it is to be hoped that some insight into the nature of individuality and the scientific study of it will be acquired.

The book comprises for the most part a course of study that has been used several times in classes in a Normal School, each time with an increased conviction that some such work is the best psychology and pedagogy for these classes: for with the attention focused on the individual and his needs, general problems cannot fail to appear also, and practical questions are always within reach. This is the case method that has succeeded so well in the training of physician and lawver. That it has a wider application in the training of the teacher than has yet been given it, seems to be indicated. As a method of mind training it has some of the advantages of the intensive work of higher grades, and the value to the student of studying thoroughly one or a few individuals is believed to be great. The particular experiments made, and the scientific knowledge gained are of minor importance from this consideration, but the increased power to analyze the life-situation of another person that is acquired is of great value. To be led from a state of ignorant indifference toward an uninteresting person to a sympathetic and intelligent cooperation in his welfare is one of the best experiences that can come to any one, and particularly to a teacher.

In practice, work such as is outlined in this book can be given to students either before or after other study of pedagogy and psychology. The experience and observation of the writer lead him to the conviction that most so-called general psychology, even the most elementary, fails to affect the practical life of the teacher, and that more study of the kind that brings

the student into contact with children is needed in Normal Schools. It seems better to lead to psychology from practical questions that arise in actual teaching or observing of children than to try to apply psychology in advance to the work of teaching. Students do not readily apply psychology, and one successful training teacher whose experience extends over a period of twelve years declares that in all her acquaintance with practice teachers she has never known an instance in which any reference was ever made spontaneously by a student to any principle or fact that had been acquired in previous psychological work. Such testimony, if it is at all representative of the state of affairs in the Normal School, argues for closer contact, on the part of the psychological student, with the problems of the schoolroom and the individuals in it.

If some general psychology is to precede observation and practice it seems best that it should be largely genetic psychology; study in which the teacher-to-be is made to live again his own childhood, and to follow the course of his own mental development. If this is entered into with zest by the student it is difficult to see how study of systematic treatises on analytic psychology, in the time that is usually devoted to psychology, can add much to the practical result that is desired for the teacher. The experiments and methods of observation

that are described have been gathered from many sources, and no special effort has been made to give credit to those who have first suggested them, except in cases in which the results of research made by the method have been mentioned. The greatest single source of assistance has been the work of Binet. Many of his tests have been used, and some of them modified to suit present purposes. The experimental work of American writers has vielded others; some have been devised by the writer. Nearly everything in the book has been put to considerable trial in actual investigations. Some of the tests have been modified as a result of such use, or to avoid the use of apparatus: some are described exactly as they were tried. The purpose being to stimulate practical observation of individuals, rather than research, it has not been thought necessarv in some cases to describe the methods in full detail, but to leave something to the choice and ingenuity of the student. The investigations and observation of the writer upon which the methods are based are as follows: - Investigation of special topics such as control of the reflex wink and description of an imaginary animal made upon Worcester school children; study of two hundred East Side school children. New York, with H. S. Curtis, reported in New York School Board Reports 1898; physical examination of two thousand school children.