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PSYCHOLOGICAL METHODS
OF TESTING INTELLIGENCE**

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by William Stern

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WILLIAM STERN

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CONTENTS

Author's Preface.....	v
Translator's Preface.....	ix
Introduction: Nature and Problem of Intelligence Testing.....	1
1. Intelligence and Intelligence Testing.....	1
2. Practical Problems of Intelligence Testing.....	5
I. Single Tests and Series of Tests.....	13
1. Single Tests.....	13
2. The Inadequacy of the Single Test.....	18
3. Series of Tests.....	23
II. The Method of Age-Gradation (Binet-Simon Method).....	29
1. The Principle of the Method and the Tests Employed.....	29
2. The Resultant Values (Mental Age, etc.).....	36
3. Results with Normal Children.....	42
(a) General Distribution of the Level of Intelligence.....	43
(b) Different Age-Levels and Nationalities.....	46
(c) Children of Different Social Strata.....	50
(d) Intelligence and School Performance.....	57
(e) Sex Differences.....	65
(f) Repeated Tests with the Same Children.....	68
4. Abnormal Children.....	70
(a) Mental Arrest and Retardation. Mental Quotient.....	70
(b) Relation to the Several Tests.....	85
(c) Intelligence and School Ability.....	90
5. Points of View for the Reorganization and Improvement of the Gradation Method.....	91
(a) Selection and Appraisalment of the Tests.....	92

(b) The Composition of Series for the Several Years.	99
(c) The Extension of the System.....	101
(d) The Computation of the Final Values.....	104
III. Estimation and Testing of Finer Gradations of Intelligence (Method of Ranks).....	109
1. The Problem.....	109
2. The Teacher's Estimation of Intelligence.....	118
3. Estimated Intelligence and School Performance.....	127
4. Rank-Orders of Intelligence Obtained by Tests.....	135
<hr/>	
Bibliography	147
Appendix I.....	155
Appendix II.....	158
Index	159

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I undertook for the last German congress of psychology, held at Berlin, April, 1912, a general review of the psychological methods of testing intelligence. As I had only an hour at my disposal in my address, I could at that time do little more than outline certain of the main features of this very broad field. It seemed to me, however, hardly desirable to publish the address in the form in which it was given. I felt, on the contrary, that in view of the now ever-increasing interest displayed in the theme both in Germany and elsewhere and in view of the extraordinarily scattered nature of the literature—much of which, by the way, is difficult of access—that an exposition of the topic on a wider scale was demanded. So I have tried to elaborate my original review to this larger scale. I have treated in it three main topics: single tests, the serial method (after Binet-Simon) and the methods of correlation and estimation.

In the form of my treatment, also, I have overstepped the bounds of the mere "general review." I have not confined myself to setting down what now exists, but have myself taken an attitude toward the problem, have offered criticisms of the methods and

made proposals for their modification and development. In making these criticisms and suggestions I have been able to use the experience that has come from the tests of intelligence which have been in progress at Breslau for some years past. Many of these experiments, in which psychologists, educators and physicians have coöperated in a gratifying manner, have already been published; others are still in progress. Yet, thanks to the courtesy of these workers, I am able to make a preliminary report of some of these as yet unfinished investigations. I have also taken the opportunity to incorporate some minor contributions to the problem that have originated in the exercises of the Psychological Seminary at Breslau.

The subject under discussion is limited to some extent by the circumstance that tests of intelligence have been almost always restricted to children and youths. But it is just the peculiarity of the psychological methods of intelligence testing—psychological in the narrower sense, in contrast, *e. g.*, to the psychiatric methods—that they take their start from the mental life of the child, though later, of course, the attempt is made to carry them over into test methods for adults. On this account I have treated in some detail the results that accrue to pedagogy, and not only to the pedagogy of auxiliary classes and of the subnormal child, but also to the pedagogy of the normal child.

In my judgment, intelligence testing is one of the most promising fields of *applied* psychology, using that term in the strictest sense. For this reason I wanted to make this survey of it accessible to wider

circles of readers outside the psychological profession, especially to teachers of normal and of backward children, to school administrative authorities, to school physicians, to specialists in nervous and in children's diseases, and to those engaged in child welfare work. This special edition, accordingly, has been arranged. I hope that it will demonstrate to the workers in these circles the great importance and fruitfulness of the psychologist's methods and at the same time show them the difficulties and the gaps in the present status of this work, and that so plainly as to prevent overhasty attempts at practical application.

W. STERN.

Breslau, October, 1912.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

This translation of Stern's *Die psychologischen Methoden der Intelligenzprüfung* has been undertaken because the monograph, though dealing with a different topic, aims, like my previous translation of Offner's *Mental Fatigue*, to collate, systematize and appraise a mass of scattered and to most readers inaccessible material that bears upon a problem of unquestioned importance.

Professor Stern was one of the pioneers and most active expositors of the investigation of the psychology of testimony, for the furtherance of which he instituted a new periodical, *Beiträge zur Psychologie der Aussage*, which was later enlarged to cover the wider field of applied psychology in general (*Zeitschrift für angewandte Psychologie*). Stern is likewise well-known for his contributions to individual psychology, notably for his important work on individual differences (*Ueber Psychologie der individuellen Differenzen*), published originally in 1900 and completely rewritten in 1911 under the title, *Die differentielle Psychologie*, and for his numerous significant contributions to the psychology of childhood. From his Psychological Seminary at Breslau have appeared many researches, some of which are re-