

**SPELLING IN THE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: AN
EXPERIMENTAL AND
STATISTICAL INVESTIGATION**

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Spelling in the Elementary School: An Experimental and Statistical Investigation by Oliver P. Cornman

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AN EXPERIMENTAL AND STATIS-
TICAL INVESTIGATION

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS series of monographs will embody the results of experimental research conducted for the most part, though not of necessity exclusively, in connection with the psychological laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania. These monographs will appear under the title of Experimental Studies in Psychology and Pedagogy.

The following report of the results of Dr. Cornman's investigation of the relation of the acquired habit of accurate written spelling to the method of instruction, the age and intellectual status of the pupils, and to other psychological and pedagogical factors, is presented as the first number of the series.

The second number, on *The Sensation of Pain and the Theory of the Specific Sense Energies*, appears simultaneously with this present monograph.

LIGHTNER WITMER.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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SPELLING IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

SPELLING not only has always held an undisputed place as a special branch of instruction in schools, but has been given great consideration as one of the most important and essential subjects of the whole curriculum. Indeed, in popular and also professional esteem, it has ranked as coordinate with the time-honored three R's. That we do not hear of four rather than three cardinal branches of the common-school requirements may probably be ascribed rather to the accident of alliteration and a popular appreciation of the perfection of the number three, than to any underestimation of the relative value of spelling as a fundamental of an elementary education. The failure to give it specific mention in the common formula is apt to be explained by a reference to its implicit recognition and estimation in the places assigned reading and writing.

The generally high appreciation of accurate spelling is evidenced not only in the prominence accorded the subject in elementary schools, but also in the frequent employment of relative accuracy and facility in spelling as a measure of the educational status of the individual. The badly spelled letter is apt to be regarded as an unmistakable sign of illiteracy, and even when internal evidences of culture exclude such a charge, the orthographical blunders are deemed at least significant of a partially defective education, or of a neglect of essentials that is almost morally reprehensible. It is true that one often