

**UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING,  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY;  
BULLETIN NO. 3; THE WILL-PROFILE, A  
TENTATIVE SCALE FOR MEASUREMENT  
OF THE VOLITIONAL PATTERN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649258734

University of Wyoming, department of psychology; bulletin No. 3; The Will-profile, a Tentative Scale for Measurement of the Volitional Pattern by June E. Downey

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**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

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**BULLETIN NO. 3**

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

**THE WILL-PROFILE**

**A Tentative Scale for Measurement  
of the Volitional Pattern**

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**BY**  
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Professor of Psychology  
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**LARAMIE, WYOMING:**  
**THE LARAMIE REPUBLICAN COMPANY**  
**PRINTERS AND BINDERS**  
**1919**

LB1131  
D627

TO WHOM  
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## PREFACE

In the following pages I am presenting a tentative scale for measuring a number of character traits, chiefly volitional traits. The scale is a very simple device, but throws into relief such a variety of reactions as to give me great confidence in its value.

I am presenting it in tentative form, with little elaboration, and almost no literary references, for two reasons:

(1) I am anxious to secure criticism on the various tests utilized and (2) I should be very glad to have it tried out by other investigators.\*

Specifically, I am anxious to get more records on the following groups of subjects: (a) Persons of low grade intelligence (dull or borderline cases); (b) Subjects of inferior education, but normal intelligence; (c) Successful business men of only average intelligence, and (d) So-called moral defectives or unstable individuals who are not intellectually deficient.

I have tested or had tested under my direct supervision some two hundred individuals including a group of thirty patients at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital.† The records obtained from psychotic subjects and those from my first group of thirty subjects have not been utilized in obtaining my final norms. The one hundred fifty subjects whose reactions I have utilized were largely college students and instructors, or adults from various professions. As soon as I can accumulate sufficient material I hope to be able to estimate the effect of age, sex, education and intelligence on the results of the tests.

LARAMIE, Feb. 20, 1919.

\*I shall be glad to furnish blanks to any psychologist willing to test a number of subjects and return the blanks to me.

†I am particularly indebted to Dr. Josephine Foster for help and for courtesies extended to me while working at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In practical work with the intelligence scales one is constantly impressed by the need of supplementing them by some form of character-rating. Quite possibly, as has been stated by Thorndike and others, there exists a high correlation between character and intelligence, yet in the narrow range within which one works in, say, a college community, the achievement which one may expect from a student of average or superior intelligence, is determined largely by such traits as persistence, energy, aggressiveness, and self-confidence. All teachers have at times seen the hard-working student of good though not brilliant intelligence outstrip another more facile in comprehension, but less assiduous in effort, a statement not meant, of course, as an assertion of any general incompatibility between quick and brilliant intelligence and capacity for prolonged study nor of any necessary connection between slowness and industry. All forms of combination exist and it is *just such patterns* one needs to have outlined for aid in educational as well as vocational guidance.

Particularly significant in such connection is the freedom of reaction. James's classic chapter on the Will has made us familiar with the distinction between the obstructed and explosive wills and their practical significance. "An explosive Italian," he writes, "with good perception and intellect will cut a figure as a perfectly tremendous fellow, on an inward capital that could be tucked away inside of an obstructed Yankee and hardly let you know it was there. \* \* \* \* It is the absence of scruples, of consequences, of considerations, the extraordinary simplification of each moment's mental outlook, that gives to the explosive individual such motor energy and ease \* \* \* \*" (Psychology II, p. 538). Only occasionally, of course, does one find extreme examples of such types, but an inclination toward one or the other is usually evident, and introduces a factor definitely influencing the use one will make of such intelligence as he may possess.

Probably, however, no one would question the value of tests of the volitional pattern; the point of uncertainty is the location of such tests. The testing of a variety of functions without too penetrating analysis of what they are functions of has led to such valuable results in the way of at least crude indexing of intelligence that it encourages an attempt to plunge *in medias res* with respect to character classification also.

It may be taken for granted that will-functions must be tested largely through some form of motor reaction. Whatever

form might be utilized its dependence upon training would be urged in a *a priori* criticism. Perhaps even more emphatically than in the case of intelligence, environmental factors would seem to determine the form of reaction. But such apparent dependence should not be allowed to keep one from actual trial of its possibilities.

The motor activity required for the present purpose should be a common one and one which leaves behind it a permanent record. The one I have chosen for exploitation is handwriting; I have introduced modifications of it such as speeded, retarded, blocked, disguised, and automatic writing. The results have more than confirmed my expectations. Some very characteristic reactions have been obtained from subjects whose make-up I know well enough to pass judgment on with confidence. Moreover, I have obtained characteristic reactions from such definitely typical make-ups as the manic-depressive, both manic and depressed forms.

In addition to the writing activity I have included tests involving choice in which the intellectual factor is subordinate to the impulsive one and I have utilized one of these decisions in giving a contradiction test, the results from which are very enlightening and quite easily scaled.

The choice of particular tests has been motivated largely by previous experimentation on handwriting and, to a lesser degree, on muscle-reading. Now is not the time to attempt a justification of each choice. I am aware that many would urge that speed and size and quality of handwriting are almost wholly determined by system of writing learned and by amount of practice. That the variational factor in handwriting is actually very significant I am convinced, although conditioning objective factors should never be ignored. *It should, however, be emphatically stated that the present exploitation of handwriting makes little use of graphic individuality and no use whatever of graphological assumptions. It utilizes the writing movement merely as convenient method for study of complications of motor impulses.*

Scoring is largely on a time basis. Whenever it was possible I have utilized a ten percentile grouping. The time factor is subordinate in scoring imitations and disguised hands, and in scoring test IV it is associated with certain spatial requirements. In scoring automatic writing, shift in size from the normal is the main consideration and time secondary. The scoring of the Contradiction Test and of the Opposition Test is largely on a qualitative basis, although some attempt has been made to so graduate divisions as to include an approximately equal number of reagents. Details with reference to scoring will become clearer as the discussion proceeds.

Results of the test are presented in the form of a profile: a score in points may also be given, a possible total of 100 being