

**AN INTRODUCTION TO
EXPERIMENTAL
PSYCHOLOGY IN
RELATION TO EDUCATION**

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An Introduction to Experimental Psychology in Relation to Education by C. W. Valentine

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BY
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PREFACE.

IN this little book an account is given of a number of psychological experiments which bear directly upon educational problems and on the work of the teacher in the school. All the experiments described can be carried out without any apparatus except such as can easily be made with pen and paper. The need for such a book has been for some time felt by many teachers and by those engaged in the training of teachers.

There is an unfortunate impression abroad that experimental psychology necessarily involves complicated and expensive apparatus. For some types of experiments this is of course the case. But, fortunately for the educationist, many of the experiments which are of the greatest interest and value for his special work have no such need.

No text-book can take the place of a living teacher, yet it is hoped that this book will be of value to the private student. He should be able to carry out all the experiments here described in his own room, and, after gaining an intelligent grasp of the principles and methods discussed, he will be able to apply many of them also in the schoolroom, with results interesting to himself, and very illuminating as regards the mental characteristics of his pupils. Anything of this nature which helps to keep a teacher from becoming a slave of routine, and which enlivens his interest in the mental life of each individual pupil, is to be welcomed as a means of raising the whole level of his work.

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I have tried to avoid assuming a previous knowledge of psychology, but the reader who has no such knowledge is strongly advised to read in connection with this book some general introduction to psychology.¹ Without this many points must necessarily remain obscure. Frequent suggestions for appropriate reading will be found throughout this book.

Whilst I have constantly kept in view the private student or the school teacher, it is hoped that this book will also prove serviceable as a handbook in connection with class work.

In the course of some years' experience in teaching experimental psychology to Training College students, the writer, like others in similar positions, has felt the lack of a suitably small and simple text-book. The crowded time-table of the modern Training College does not as a rule admit of a long course in experimental psychology, and during the hours which are available it is desirable that the students should be occupied, as far as possible, in the actual carrying out of experiments in class under the oral instruction of the teacher, or in discussing their results. The dictation of elaborate notes, as to the full significance of the methods and results of the experiments, and of the theory underlying them, may leave inadequate time for the carrying out of the experiments themselves. Yet without some supplement of oral instruction the most careful student may fail to master the problems at issue. Given a suitable hand-book, the student's own note-book can be kept for the results of the actual experiments in which he takes part, and for his

¹ For example: G. F. Stout, *Groundwork of Psychology*; Loveday and Green, *Introduction to Psychology*; Lloyd Morgan, *Psychology for Teachers*; B. Dumville, *Child Mind*; L. Bræckenbury, *Primer of Psychology*.

observations upon his own mental processes and characteristics.

Most of the experiments described here are such as have been found suitable for classes of from twenty to thirty students.

I venture to suggest that the book may also be useful to students who are undergoing a course in general psychology but who are receiving no instruction in experimental psychology. The importance of some experience of experimental work as a supplement to the study of theoretical psychology is now widely recognised by the highest authorities. Some indeed contend that the study of psychology should begin with a course in experimental psychology.

The special value of experimental psychology for teachers will be more fully discussed in the introductory chapter.

In a book of this nature the writer inevitably owes much to other and earlier workers. I am indebted to many of those to whose writings references are made in the footnotes and in the bibliography, and especially to the training received under my former teachers at Cambridge, Dr. C. S. Myers and Dr. W. H. R. Rivers.

My best thanks are also due to my former colleague, Dr. J. Davidson, Master of Method in the Training College, Dundee, for a critical reading of the typescript, from the point of view of the school teacher.

C. W. V.

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