Manual of Mental and Physical Tests. By G. M. Whipple. Baltimore: Warwick & York, 1910. Pp. xix+534.

This first systematic book on tests consists of a detailed description of the method of procedure and a presentation of the results which have been obtained from fifty-one specialized tests and three test series. Though some well-known tests have been omitted most of them are included. There is a selection among different methods of testing the same processes, but little selection of the kind of test based on its proven usefulness. A good share of the inconclusive results of some of the tests, the author attributes to lack of uniformity in method, and he aims to supply such uniformity as will standardize further tests. He has worked out the details of method with care, and in this respect the book performs substantial service.

There is much variety among the tests themselves in respect to the process or characteristic tested and to the aim. There are physical and mental tests, tests of function and of information, tests of simple and of complex processes. The aim is now to determine the bodily normality or abnormality, now to determine special or general mental capacity, and now to determine the degree of mental maturity or retardation. What each test is suited to is to be decided by an examination of the test itself, and the results of previous investigations with it. It is difficult to determine what the results in general are, since the conclusions of various investigators are presented with little criticism. For example, the difference between the cephalic index of American and South German children is presented without suggesting the explanation of a racial difference. Hence it would be difficult to use the book as a guide as to what tests offer reasonable prospect of success for any particular purpose.

In the introductory chapter the author gives a summary of the statistical methods for the interpretation of data obtained from the application of tests. This description goes far enough to enable one unacquainted with such methods to apply the formulae but does not give their mathematical derivation. For this one may consult the sources to which reference is made.

The notion of what constitutes a test seems to the reviewer to be vague and to require more precise definition. It seems to differ very little in some cases from the mere psychological investigation of a particular process. It usually includes also, it is true, the problem of individual psychology, that is, the correlation of different mental processes or mental and physical processes. But there is still a purpose implied in tests but scarcely differentiated from the one just mentioned, and that is individual diagnosis. A general, average correlation of .81 may be established, for example, between pitch discrimination and certain fundamental processes indicating intelligence. But this was found after making a correction of the original "raw" correlation of .59. Such correction can only be made on the results from a group of subjects. It would not, therefore, apply to individual diagnosis. This is one of the highest correlations found in the tests. It is obvious, therefore, that many of these tests contribute nothing to the solution of the problem of the individual diagnosis. They have a theoretical interest as bearing on the general problem of the correlation of mental functions, but would not serve as a means of grading or judging children. The book then has its chief value for the experimental psychologist, but would not well serve as a practical guide for the educator.

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