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Speech Sounds of Preschool Children

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THE PROJECT METHOD IN LABORATORY
PSYCHOLOGY

R. H. SYLVESTER

Of course every experiment is a project, literally, but usually there are two outstanding weaknesses. One is the failure to connect the study closely with other courses and to bring general lecture and text-book material to bear upon the experiments. The other is the tendency to follow directions literally with eyes and hands, with but little real cerebration.

In our efforts to bolster up our courses, we have fallen into a plan involving some features of Dean Seashore's project method in general psychology. At hand in the laboratory are some twenty textbooks in general psychology, and carefully prepared suggestive references on each experiment, to the books touching upon it. In addition to the encouragement thus offered, students are further stimulated toward real thinking by receiving special credit for the discovery of additional points and for original ideas of their own. They are urged particularly to use the text-books and their lecture notes of their earlier courses in general psychology. In this last feature, results have been particularly gratifying.

DRAKE UNIVERSITY,
DES MOINES, IOWA.

SPEECH SOUNDS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

BETH L. WELLMAN

Beginning in 1924 and extending over a period of four years the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, in coöperation with the Department of Speech of the University of Iowa, has been studying the development of preschool children in the ability to produce correctly the consonant elements, consonant blends, vowels and diphthongs of the English language. The project has involved the coöperation of a number of individuals from both departments.

The method consisted in having the child produce sounds spontaneously, without visual or auditory pattern. Toys and pictures were used to elicit conversation that would contain the desired sounds. The sounds were recorded in the symbols of the International Phonetic Association, and the position of each sound in a word, initial, medial or final, was noted.

The subjects were 203 children ranging in age from two to six years and attending the preschool psychological laboratories; the number tested on the different sounds varied from 91 to 202.

Highly significant differences were found between most of the age groups for the number of consonant elements and consonant blends given correctly, but not for vowels. There were significant differences in the diphthongs only between the two year group and the other age groups. At two years of age 75 per cent of the children gave correctly 68 per cent of the vowels, 57 per cent of the diphthongs, 40 per cent of the consonant elements, but only 11 per cent of the consonant blends.

The reliability of the test is being computed by correlating comparable halves. Correlations are also being computed between the number of sounds correct and chronological age, mental age, introversion-extroversion scores, a perforation test of motor control, weight, standing height, sitting height, the weight-height index, and Von Pirquet's pelidisi, or nutritional index.

STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA,
IOWA CITY, IOWA.

AN EXPERIMENT IN MENTAL REHABILITATION

(Report of a Method of Treatment of a War Psychosis)

PROFESSOR WALTER S. NEWELL

The report presents the case of Mr. H., a student in Coe College who volunteered for service in the World War and suffered a serious injury by fall of an air-plane.

Mr. H. recovered consciousness but had no memory and attempts to restore his lost holdings by showing him pictures of home scenes and by bringing him back to his college environment were only partially successful. The report gives something of Mr. H.'s background High school and College record prior to his injury.

An unfortunate personal episode in connection with his convalescence at Plattsburg is included in the report.

The writer's conclusion is that Mr. H. improved slightly under the method indicated and reached a stage in which he accepts the reasonableness of that past experience and admits that the events of his past experience are plausible but do not have the force of positive conviction. Mr. H. makes the usual comment, on hearing