

PSYCHOLOGY

Study Why Men Succeed

A new institute has been established to assess the personalities of candidates for highly skilled jobs. Emphasis will be on why people succeed.

►PSYCHOLOGISTS at the University of California are preparing a unique approach to the study of man: they will try to learn why men succeed instead of why they fail.

To carry out this task, an Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, funded by \$100,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation, has just been established on the Berkeley campus.

Head of the new institute is Dr. Donald W. MacKinnon, a key figure in the wartime personality assessment program of the Office of Strategic Services, which was famed for its methods of selecting men for specialized and hazardous overseas missions in World War II.

The new institute, of course, will not be concerned with picking spies and saboteurs, but rather with assessing the personalities of candidates for highly skilled occupations. Many of the O.S.S. techniques will be used.

Dr. MacKinnon points out that the attention of psychologists has been directed primarily at the sick and abnormal. Little attention has been devoted to learning why

other men, who may have been subjected to just as many psychological difficulties as the sick and abnormal, are able to succeed and even to capitalize on their psychological problems.

"We hope to discover the factors that produce adjustment, happiness and effective living rather than illness, unhappiness and maladjustment," Dr. MacKinnon said.

The studies will be made in an "assessment community," where the "selectees" live with staff psychologists for a three-day period. Conditions in the community will be as natural and free of artificiality as possible, and subjects will be put through intensive evaluative procedures. The latter will include standard psychological tests, and situational tests in which the selectees can be observed as they react to environmental, social or occupational situations. In addition there will be psychiatric and personal history interviews and observation of day to day behavior.

Dr. MacKinnon and his colleagues will assess candidates for medical school, engineering curricula, and for other highly

skilled occupations. Selectees will be followed through school and their performance for a number of years after graduation will be studied in order to obtain information which may be helpful in the future in selecting candidates for the various professions.

The staff of the institute will represent a variety of skills in psychology and social science.

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ENTOMOLOGY

Insects Fed Micro-Doses of Poison with Microsyringe

►DOSES of DDT as small as a microgram (one thirty-millionth of an ounce) or even smaller can be fed to individual insects by means of a microsyringe devised by Dr. A. W. Woodrow, U. S. Department of Agriculture entomologist. The device consists of an ordinary medical glass syringe, with a screw-thread drive added to push the plunger by minute amounts.

Dr. Woodrow invented his microsyringe primarily for use in studying the effects of minimal doses of DDT on worker bees. It can, however, be adapted for other similar uses.

The new gadget is described and pictured in the journal, *SCIENCE* (Aug. 5).

Science News Letter, August 20, 1949

BIOCHEMISTRY

Analytic Device Measures Minute Elements of Cells

►GENES, the elusive heredity-determining chemical units whose existence has been mathematically proven but not visually demonstrated, may be among the minute cell-nucleus structures that will be tracked down by a new micro-analysis apparatus developed in the cytology laboratories of Columbia University, under the direction of Prof. Arthur W. Pollister.

The apparatus, though complex in principle, has been so simplified that any fairly well trained laboratory worker can use it under the higher powers of an ordinary microscope, Prof. Pollister declared.

The device operates by measuring, with ultra-sensitive photo-electric tubes, the amounts of light absorbed by various chemical components of the cell nucleus. One important compound, nucleic acid, has been shown to exist in a single cell in an amount less than one-trillionth of an ounce. Similarly "fantastically small" quantities of other chemical compounds can likewise be measured.

Research centers for the use of the new apparatus are being set up at Brookhaven National Laboratory, the Doctors' Hospital in Cleveland and a number of universities in this country, as well as at Mysore and Bombay universities in India.

Science News Letter, August 20, 1949



PROBING MAKE-UP OF CELLS—"Fantastically small" parts of individual cells can be studied with this photometric apparatus shown being used by Prof. Arthur W. Pollister of Columbia University, who directed the construction of the machine.