

PSYCHOLOGY

Keep Wits Sharpened

Mind ages less if used regularly. Self-hypnosis as cure for ulcers, faster reading after training program reported to psychologists' meeting.

► **DETERIORATION** of the mind with age is much less for intelligent individuals, Dr. Milton S. Gurvitz, of Hillside Hospital, Glen Oaks, N. Y., reported to the American Psychological Association meeting in Chicago.

Evidently brighter people find more opportunity to practice their intelligence and keep their wits sharpened than do those who are less well endowed, he told the meeting. Dr. Gurvitz found, in testing over 4,000 persons that those with an initial IQ of only 65 lost 80 points in tests scores between the ages of 20 and 54. The drop for those with an IQ of 135 was only 26 points.

The decline begins early in life, scores of those in the late twenties being lower than those between 20 and 24.

Loss of intelligence with age is also greater for those with less education. College graduates lose less than high school graduates, but those with high school training decline less than those who left school during their grammar school days.

Figures showing decline of intelligence with advancing age have probably been misleading, Dr. Gurvitz pointed out, due to the fact that educational opportunities were less for the older population.

Word Recognition

College students need training in recognition of words, three members of the Counseling Center, University of Maryland, Baltimore, told the meeting.

Although word study is usually taught in the fourth or fifth grades, if at all, tests taken by 1,500 new students at the University of Maryland showed so much variation that it is no wonder that some students read twice as fast as others, the scientists said.

Training in specialized vocabularies for students entering the various colleges was also urged by the investigators: Drs. Edgar D. Gates, Francis Oralind Triggs and associates.

Asphalt Barrier

An asphalt black top on some lanes of a highway acts as a barrier to keep motorists off those lanes. This was reported to the American Psychological Association by Dr. H. W. Case and R. Brenner of the University of California at Los Angeles.

Statistical study was made of motorists making use of the extra lanes added on to widen a three-lane concrete highway.

For a distance of two-tenths of a mile the added lanes were paved with a black top instead of concrete.

White lines marking off the four traffic lanes increased the number of motorists who moved over into the new second lane at the widened section. But at least half of the motorists who would have moved over did not do so when the new lane had a black top.

Even the presence of white lines did not change the barrier effect of the black top.

Reading Improvement

Air Force officers learned to read 64 per cent faster as a result of a voluntary 20 period reading improvement program, Drs. Thomas F. Staton and Ray C. Maize, of the Air Command and Staff School, reported to the meeting.

For 30 minutes of each period the officers read books of graded levels of difficulty, using a machine which uncovered one line of type at a time at a set rate of speed. After ten such periods, current affairs reading material in current news magazines were substituted for the graded reading. During the last five periods the officers read without the reading rate controller.

Although reading speed increased greatly, it was at no sacrifice in comprehension. In fact, understanding was increased just a little.

At the beginning of the course, all the students were slow readers, averaging 16 per cent lower in speed than did their entire class in the Command and Staff School.

Ulcer Relief

Self hypnosis works better than medicine for relief of peptic ulcer, Dr. Hamilton Moody, of the Long Beach VA Hospital and the University of California at Los Angeles told the psychologists.

The advantage of the hypnotic therapy is only slight, however, he found.

The conclusion is based on study of ten hospitalized patients with duodenal ulcer. These ten patients were taught, in 15 hours of special training, the technique of autohypnosis to produce relaxation. They received no medication at all.

These patients were compared with another group who received the usual medical therapy. The two groups were carefully matched not only from the point of view of severity of symptoms, but also on

the basis of age, sex, marital status and other social factors.

Although the results obtained do not necessarily indicate that the hypnosis permanently reduced the peptic ulcer symptoms, Dr. Moody pointed out, those who treated themselves with hypnotic relaxation were shown by X-rays to be benefited more than those who received the conventional medical treatment.

Time Intervals

How good are you at estimating when 30 seconds or a minute has passed by?

If you feel that your parents were dominating, the chances are that you will overestimate such a short time interval.

This is indicated by experiments reported to the meeting by Drs. Seymour Fisher and Rhoda Lee Fisher of the Houston VA Hospital and Houston Jewish Vocational Service, Texas.

The more dominating an individual feels his parents to be, they found, the more he overvalues time. He perceives it as precious, "doled out."

Underestimation of time intervals was not found to be significant, however.

Lazy Students

There is no such thing as a lazy student, the psychologists learned.

Indolence and industriousness are very specific for different activities, Dr. W. C. Krathwohl, of the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, reported.

If a teacher of English observes that a particular student is lazy in her class, that is no indication that the same student would be lazy in chemistry, mathematics or physics.

Dr. Krathwohl studied the work habits of engineering students in these four subjects and found almost no relation between industriousness in any one and in the others. A possible exception is between mathematics and chemistry where a very slight relationship was observed.

Study Communists

Psychological study of the top American Communists now in jail was urged at the meeting by Dr. G. M. Gilbert, of the Veterans Administration, who will soon be on the faculty of Michigan State College at East Lansing. Dr. Gilbert, as prison psychologist at the Nuremberg trials, made such a study of the top Nazis.

After the shooting is over in Korea, Dr. Gilbert predicted, the psychological warfare will go on probably for the rest of our lives. It is up to us to find out just what the appeal is that Communism makes, especially to the under-privileged. Otherwise Russia may defeat us in peace more readily than in war by lining up all of Asia against us through her propaganda and psychological warfare.

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