

PSYCHOLOGY

Brain Sorts Memories

► THE PART OF THE BRAIN in which a memory is stored depends upon the type of memory. If an incident involves sight more than the other senses, the memory is stored near the brain part responsible for visual sensation.

Dr. Wilder Penfield of McGill University, Montreal, Can., reported in a lecture at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., that he had electrically stimulated the temporal lobes, or interpretive cortex, in the brains of epileptic patients during operations.

He found not only that the storage place depends upon which of the five senses was used most for the original experience, but also found that electrical stimulation during an operation can evoke only certain types of experiences.

The times of hearing music, of watching or hearing the action and speech of others are the experiences recalled most frequently when the temporal lobe is electrically stimulated.

Other types of memories are absent.

Incidents of doing things for oneself, of speaking or of writing messages or adding figures are not recorded. Nor are times of eating and tasting food, sexual excitement or experience, periods of painful suffering and weeping.

"Modesty does not explain this silence," Dr. Penfield said.

His conclusions are based on 39 selected operations for epilepsy during which the patient's temporal lobe was electrically stimulated, and on 55 similar examples of recall by epileptic patients during temporal lobe seizures. All patients were subject to temporal lobe epilepsy, which made response to stimulation easier.

No one has tried to produce temporal lobe responses in normal individuals, and Dr. Penfield said he hoped no one every would try.

It is clear enough from these observations, he said, that "we are activating a normal mechanism of the brain. We should try now to understand how the mechanism is employed in normal living."

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PSYCHOLOGY

Studies Teachers' Traits

► THE SIGNIFICANT PERSONALITY traits of teachers are probed in an eight-year study just published by the American Council on Education entitled "Characteristics of Teachers."

The author, David G. Ryans, collected information on the traits of 6,000 teachers in 1,700 elementary and secondary schools while he was professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles.

In one of the major studies, Mr. Ryans, who now heads the department of educational psychology at the University of Texas, found that teachers who rated high in their classroom performance, generally thought well of other people's behavior and motives.

They also showed strong interest in literature and the arts, participated in school and outside activities and considered themselves ambitious and initiators.

By contrast, teachers rated low were on the average more critical of others, emphasized exactness and "practical things," and preferred activities that did not involve close personal contact.

Comparing the characteristics of women and men teachers in secondary schools, Mr. Ryans found that women tended to be more friendly, responsible, stimulating and democratic, whereas the men were more stable emotionally.

Single teachers, both men and women, rated higher in responsible, business-like classroom behavior and verbal intelligence than their married colleagues, but lower in emotional stability and stimulating teaching.

Mr. Ryans' study is the first comprehensive investigation of teacher behavior. But,

he warns, the results apply mainly to groups of teachers rather than individuals and must be taken with a large dose of caution.

Whether a teacher is considered good or poor depends not only on his classroom behavior, Mr. Ryans insists, but also on the student's objectives and attitudes, the expectations of the particular community, and on the grade level and subject matter taught.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Antarctic for Men Who Want to Be Alone

► HALF THE MEN who go to the Antarctic do so to get away from women.

About 20% take this means of escape consciously; the remaining 30% are motivated subconsciously, Capt. E. E. Hedblom, MC, U. S. Navy, reported.

Capt. Hedblom reported to the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States in Washington, D. C., on medical problems encountered in the Antarctic. He is medical adviser to the Commander, Naval Support Force, Antarctica.

"Too much of this much-touted togetherness gets sticky," Capt. Hedblom said, in explaining why such a high proportion of the men who go to the womanless Antarctic are seeking an escape from women. He believes there is a psychological advantage to be gained from occasional separation of the sexes, even among married couples.

Men serving on the ice have seven times more neuropsychiatric difficulties than

other Navy men. Hazardous environment and isolation are the explanation, Capt. Hedblom said. Apparently, getting away from "togetherness" has its penalties as well as its advantages, he acknowledged.

There is an absence of acute upper respiratory infections in winter in Antarctica, except for rare occasions, records show. Capt. Hedblom said these occurred invariably, in his experience, when a box of clothing from the mainland was opened, "particularly if it contained any furs."

Snow blindness, once a problem in the snow-covered continent, is now a thing of the past. Properly prescribed snow glasses have prevented this problem. Capt. Hedblom said that no incidence of snow blindness in his experience had ever resulted in permanent eye damage. Sight generally was restored in from 24 to 48 hours. The only effect, and that was temporary, he said, was "a greater photosensitivity to light."

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PSYCHOLOGY

Tension's Danger Signals Described in Pamphlet

► DOING SOMETHING for somebody else benefits a tense person whose attention has been dangerously fixed on himself.

"Tensions—and How to Master Them" is the new 25-cent pamphlet published by the Public Affairs Committee in New York. In it, Dr. George S. Stevenson and Harry Milt of the National Association for Mental Health point up the danger signals, causes and remedies when tension gets out of hand.

If feelings of inferiority, inadequacy and doubt become frequent and severe, they say you are suffering from needless tension. In addition to doing something for somebody else, these suggestions are offered to relieve a moderate case of tension.

Talk it out, escape for a while, take one thing at a time, get rid of your anger, stop driving for superiority and, even when you are right, give in sometimes.

The authors say that anxiety and tension are often felt together because anxiety acts as a trigger that sets off the tension. They define anxiety as the uneasy feeling you get in anticipation of a threat, whereas tension is the disturbed and upset feeling you get when your body mobilizes to deal with a real or imaginary threat.

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MEDICINE

General Practitioners Perform 60% of Surgery

► MORE THAN 60% of the surgery being done in the United States is by men who are essentially general practitioners rather than trained surgeons.

Dr. I. S. Ravdin, University of Pennsylvania professor of surgery and incoming president of the American College of Surgeons, assailed the practice that permits a state medical license alone to qualify large numbers to do surgery without adequate training.

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