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## The Effect of Immediate Knowledge of Results on Motivation

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## THE EFFECT OF IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE OF RESULTS ON MOTIVATION

B. F. ZUEHL

A study of the effect of immediate knowledge of results on motivation in which two types of procedure were used. During a period of three months the traditional type of tests was used, this part of the study serving as a means of getting a general rating of quality of work which certain classes in college were likely to do under the traditional procedure.

Since a period of time generally elapses between the time of giving a written test and the time when results are reported to the student this factor was studied as to its effect upon the interest and general attitude of the student towards the tests.

During the second part of the study, objective tests were used which could be scored uniformly and which would permit only a limited range of correct answers. The teacher constructed these tests aiming to make them comprehensive and so they would represent a degree of difficulty about equal to the tests used in the first part of the study. The tests included the true and false, best answer, completion by one word or short phrase or description. These were given more frequently than the tests of the traditional type, and covered both review work and the specific lesson assignment for the day on which the test was given. They could not be answered from general knowledge and only in part from previous class discussions. Approximately one-half of the class period was used for the writing of the test. The number of questions varied from ten to twenty. When the papers had been gathered the discussion of the questions followed immediately and correct answers were given to all questions on which the class had just finished writing.

In drawing conclusions regarding the effect of immediate knowledge both the teacher and the students were asked to give their reactions. The teacher's observations indicated that the discussions were vigorous and active; many participated voluntarily who ordinarily needed prodding. Some defended their answers although it was shown that they were correct only in part. The daily preparation of students was decidedly more consistent when immediate information on correct answers was given.

The students stated that generally they favored getting immediate knowledge of results; 65% stated that they believed the plan was far superior as a means of motivation, 25% thought it of equal value with the traditional type of tests and 10% assigned less value to it.

The principal advantages seem to be:

1. Active participation which is largely voluntary during discussions.
2. Daily preparation well motivated.
3. Prompt check on daily preparation.
4. Prevents errors from being "stamped in."
5. Permits variety of methods for presenting subject matter.
6. Gives student immediate opportunity to react to corrected facts.
7. Takes advantage of interest aroused during the test.
8. Saves time and effort in scoring papers.

The difficulties encountered were:

1. Students do not write answers at same rate.
2. Tendency to defend answers whether right or wrong.
3. Tests have significance only within the class, since they are not widely standardized.
4. Discourages those who constantly receive low scores.
5. Requires wide knowledge on the part of the teacher to draw up proper questions which will be comprehensive and fair to all.

General conclusion: The period of time which elapses between the giving of a test and such time when results are made known to students, has an appreciable effect upon the attitude which students take towards their work; the shorter period is advantageous.

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