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INFLUENCES ON LEARNING OF TESTS COMPOSED OF TRUE AND FALSE STATEMENTS AND DIRECT QUESTIONS

E. O. FINKENBINDER

Eighty points in psychology were written in each of the four types of questions, mentioned in the title, and presented to 92 college students at three different times within six weeks to see which type of question would be attended by the greatest amount of learning and also which would be retained best. There were four groups of students. Each had all four types of questions, but no two groups had any one of the questions in the same type. If one group had a true statement of a given question, another group had that same point presented in a false statement, a third group had it in a question whose correct answer was "yes" and another had it in a question so stated as to require a "no" for its answer. These four statements and questions will serve as illustrations:

1. "Psychology is one of the younger sciences"; 2. "Psychology is one of the older sciences"; 3. "Is psychology one of the younger sciences?" 4. "Is psychology one of the older sciences?"

At the return to the student of the corrected test papers the questions were discussed briefly. Each student had an opportunity during the half hour to study his errors. After that the papers were collected again by the instructor.

Two tests, identical with the first, were given later, the one after four days and the other after six weeks.

In-so-far as there was no check made against change of attitude on the part of the students, particularly with reference to their becoming aware of the fact that they had, during the 1st or 2nd test, marked about 20% too many of their statements or questions "true" or "yes," it will be advisable to compute the gains from test to test on the composite score of both the true and false statements, and also on both the questions to be answered by "yes" or "no."

The second test showed a higher score than the first by 22.38% \pm P. E. 4.41 on the true and false statements; whereas on the direct questions the gain was 32.51% \pm 2.52. Here we see the "yes"- and "no-questions" had a greater gain by 89.95% \pm 2.78 than the true and false statements had.

The third test showed an even greater superiority for the direct questions. They were at that time answered better than the statements by 178.20%. This means that the forgetting for the statements was much greater than for the questions. The statements were at the end of six weeks only 10.14% better answered than on the first test but the questions were 28.20% better answered, showing a greater gain after six weeks than the statements showed after four days.

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