Psychology

Assignment # 1

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Methods in Psychology and their Applications

### **Method # 1. The Clinical Method:**

The clinical method is also called case study method. It is used by clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric social works and teachers in child guidance clinics or mental hygiene centers or in ordinary school situations. Generally, we use this method when we want to understand the causes and sources of people’s fears, anxieties, worries, and obsessions, their personal, social, educational and vocational maladjustments.

A couple of students in your class are showing poor scholastic achievements or some behavior problems. You want to understand the causes so that you may plan some treatment procedures. This method will be useful in such conditions. It may be noted that the clinical methods or procedures are not designed to discover general behavioral trends, laws or relationships. Rather ***they are concerned with a unique individual who is in trouble and the interest is focused on the immediate, practical question of how to best help him***. The starting point of a clinical investigation is an individual who needs or seeks help and the procedure ideally terminates with the better adjustment of the individual.

### **Method #**2. The Developmental Method:

This method, by laying emphasis on the developmental aspects of behavior, seeks to find out the causes of that behavior in its crude beginnings. It assumes that a full appreciation of such behavior patterns of an adult requires the study of simple behavior patterns in his childhood. These simple behavior patterns grow more complex gradually as the individual grows in age.

An understanding of an adult can be facilitated if we begin with the learning behavior in his childhood, go on to the study of such behavior in his preadolescence and adolescence. This back-ground should help us to arrive at some conclusions about the learning behavior in adulthood.

The same can be said about the development of imagination, thinking and reasoning. This method seeks to answer such questions as: How do we become what we are? What do we inherit? How is inheritance modified in childhood, adolescence and adulthood? What changes take place in thought and behavior at different stages of life? How does the perception develop?

### **Method # 3. Introspection:**

Introspection is one of the older methods and is peculiar to psychology. It means ***looking within***, looking into the working of our own minds and reporting what we find there. In order words, it is a method of “self-observation “— observation by an individual of his own mental states directly by directing attention towards a particular experience with a particular purpose.

This kind of self-observation, therefore, is not a vague, unsystematic or haphazard observation. For example, a student has been asked to answer a question. He has to recall certain facts learned by him to organize them in a particular manner and then to report what way he tried to recall, what he thought and felt when trying to recall. Thus, it is a method in which the individual observes, analyses and reports his own feelings, thoughts or all that passes in his mind during the course of a mental act or experience.

The method has many advantages. It enables us to understand one’s mental set at a certain time and thus throws light on behavior, which is reflective of mental experience. Mere objective and direct observation of a person is not enough. We need to know what is going on in the mind of that person. An artist is painting a picture. We observe him carefully and find that, he is sitting absorbed in a certain posture, that he makes certain gestures or that he is mixing such and such colors.

### **Method #**4. The Observational Method:

It is one of the most popular of methods used in psychology for collection of data. This method is also called the method of ‘objective observation’ as against introspection which is a method of self-observation. The individual’s behavior is observed by somebody other than that person himself. The behavior observed may be expressed in the form of bodily changes, bodily action, gestures, facial expression and speech.

The psychologist may sit down and take notes of the behavior of a subject under particular conditions. The method was used widely by child psychologists who would prepare running records of all that the child did during a certain period and in a certain situation. These observations enabled them to make certain generalizations about human behavior in general.

Psychologists found that they could not keep pace with the speed of subjects’ behavior and thought as expressed by them. This problem was solved to a large extent by the introduction of type-recording, photographic films or by employing a number of stenographers to record the behavior.