Arthur R. Jensen (1923– )
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Arthur Jensen has been on the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley since 1958, and in 1994 he became professor emeritus of educational psychology. A graduate of Berkeley and Columbia University, he served his internship in clinical psychology at the University of Maryland Psychiatric Institute and was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry at the University of London, where he studied with and was strongly influenced by Hans J. Eysenck.

Jensen turned to the study of differential psychology after a decade of research on classical problems in verbal learning. In 1969 he argued that genetic, as well as environmental and cultural, factors should be considered for understanding not only individual differences, but also social class and racial differences in intelligence and scholastic performance (Jensen). This hypothesis, that both individual and racial differences in abilities are in part a product of the evolutionary process and have a genetic basis, created a storm of protest from scientists and educators. The subject is still a sensitive one and has been explicated by Jensen in several books such as (Educability and Group Differences), (Bias in Mental Testing), and (Straight Talk about Mental Tests). The controversy has also led him to two other areas of research: the study of culture bias in psychometric tests and the investigation of the nature of g (the general intelligence factor).

Jensen presently views the g factor as (a) reflecting some property or processes of the human brain manifest in many forms of adaptive behavior in which individuals (and probably populations) differ; (b) increasing from birth to maturity and declining in old age; (c) showing physiological as well as behavioral correlates; (d) having a hereditary component; (e) being subject to natural selection in the course of human evolution; and (f) having important educational, occupational, economic, and social correlates in all industrialized societies. Jensen’s theories and prolific empirical research on the nature of human mental ability are comprehensively explicated in his latest major works, The g Factor (Jensen), and “Thirty Years of Research on Black-White Differences in Cognitive Ability” (Rushton & Jensen).

Author of over 400 publications, Jensen has been a Guggenheim fellow (1964–1965), a fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (1966–1967), and a research fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health (1957–1958).

Related Articles
See also Cultural Bias in Tests; g Factor Theory

References


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