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Guide to the University of Chicago Psychometric Laboratory Records 1944-1952



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.PSYCHOMETRIC
Title	University of Chicago. Psychometric Laboratory. Records
Date	1944-1952
Size	0.25 linear feet (1 box)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract	The University of Chicago Psychometric Laboratory Records include reports on aptitude tests and sample tests used in the isolating of mental abilities conducted through Psychometric Laboratory by L.L. Thurstone and his wife Gwenn Thurstone spanning 1944 to 1950.

Information on Use

Access

This collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: University of Chicago. Psychometric Laboratory. Records, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Historical Note

The Psychometric Laboratory at the University of Chicago was established and directed by psychologist L.L. Thurstone (1887-1955) in the 1930's. L.L. Thurstone was born on May 29th, 1887 in Chicago, IL to Conrad and Sofia Thurstone. He received his Engineering degree from Cornell University in 1912. Following two years of teaching drafting at the University of Minnesota, Thurstone enrolled as a graduate student of Psychology at the University of Chicago (1914) and received his doctorate in 1917. He married Thelma Gwinn in 1924. In 1952, Thurstone was hired by the University of North Carolina where he established a new Psychometric Laboratory. He died in Chapel Hill, North Carolina on September 29th, 1955.

Thurstone's primary interests were in the fields of test theory, psychophysics, and the measurement of aptitude, and he was among a core group of scientists who established the Psychometric Society and its journal *Psychometrika*, the first journal dedicated to the study of quantitative testing. In collaboration with his wife and colleague, Thelma Gwinn, Thurstone

created and conducted a series of tests that sought to quantitatively measure human mental abilities. These tests were later taken over by the Educational Testing Service (formed in 1948). His work in primal abilities has influenced in programs of personnel selection, and educational and vocational guidance and his larger work has had a lasting impact in quantitative measuring and methodology.

Through the Psychometric Laboratory at the University of Chicago, Thurstone designed and employed a significant number of quantitative tests to measure human mental abilities. Founded and directed by Dr. Thurstone, it is unclear how long the University of Chicago Psychometric Laboratory remained active, following his move to the University of North Carolina.

Scope Note

The collection includes The Mechanical Aptitude Study conducted under contract with the office of Naval Research spanning 1947-1950, sample tests used in the isolating of mental abilities, and a report on a code aptitude test. The collection reflects a small sample of the testing work completed by L.L. Thurstone during the later part of his tenure at the Psychometric Laboratory at the University of Chicago.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Thurstone, L. L. (Louis Leon), 1887-1955
- Thurstone, Thelma Gwinn
- Educational tests and measurements
- Psychometrics

INVENTORY

Box 1

Folder 1

Aptitude Tests, 1944-1949

- A Code Aptitude Test Report, January 1944.
- Mechanical Aptitude Tests II-IV 1949

Box 1

Folder 2

Mechanical Aptitude study of the Psychometric Laboratory 1947-1950

Box 1

Folder 3

Tests used in the isolation of Mental Abilities