

Frederick Barton Davis

https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02291694 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Frederick Barton Davis

(1909–1975)

The death of Frederick B. Davis in March, 1975, was a serious loss to his many friends in the Psychometric Society. His careful work and distinguished contributions, always characterized by thoroughness, precision, and clarity, will be sorely missed. He showed little sympathy for the use of measurement and statistical methods that were not the best and most appropriate procedures. Although he was quiet, thoughtful of others, and always courteous, he never hesitated to indicate that an investigator had used a less than optimal approach.

Dr. Davis began his career in the field of measurement, statistics, and educational psychology by studying with Professors Truman Lee Kelley, Phillip J. Rulon, and Walter F. Dearborn at the Graduate School of Education of Harvard University. He received the degrees of Master of Education and Doctor of Education from this school. His professional contributions began with articles on the College Entrance Examination Board tests and the interpretation of scores from the Standford–Binet measures of intelligence.

After five years of teaching and serving as a school psychologist for independent schools, he joined the staff of the Cooperative Test Service of the American Council on Education in New York City. In this and later positions, he developed many types of tests of achievement, ability, and professional knowledge. His work on reading tests began here with the development of a new series of reading tests. His studies of what reading tests measure and his emphasis on separate scores for various aspects of reading remain an important contribution to the measurement of reading skills. During this period he also developed an interest in item-analysis procedures that led to a monograph on item-analysis and a chapter on "Item Selection Techniques" in the first edition of *Educational Measurement*, edited by E. F. Lindquist. These still represent the best available statements on these topics.

In 1942, Dr. Davis accepted a commission in the Army Air Forces as an Aviation Psychologist. His principal contribution ot this effort was the development of the series of tests used to select aviation cadets from civilian applicants known as the *Aviation Cadet Qualifying Examination.* This work was reported as Research Report, No. 6 of the AAF Aviation Psychology Research Reports under the title, *The AAF Qualifying Examination.* These reports were published by the U. S. Government Printing Office in 1947. Dr. Davis stayed on for a year from 1946–1947 as Assistant Director of the AAF Aviation Psychology Program. In addition to doing the final

https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02291694 Published online by Cambridge University Press

editing of the Research Report Series during this period, he completed a monograph published by the American Council on Education on *Utilizing Human Talent: Educational Implications of Armed Forces Selection and Classification Procedures.*

After leaving the U. S. Army Air Forces Headquarters in 1947, Dr. Davis accepted the first of a series of professorships, as Professor of Psychology and Head of the Department of Psychology at the George Peabody College for Teachers. After two years he accepted a position as Professor of Education at Hunter College in New York City, where he remained for fourteen years until 1963. During this period, Dr. Davis and his wife Charlotte Croon Davis developed the Davis Reading Tests. Mrs. Davis had been a fellow student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a fellow staff member at the Cooperative Test Service. She worked closely with her husband on many projects. He served for one year as Visiting Professor of Education and Director of Project TALENT at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1964 he accepted the position of Professor of Education and Director of the Educational Research and Service Bureau at the University of Pennsylvania. The year 1964 also marked the publication of Dr. Davis' textbook on *Educational Measurements and thier Interpretation.* At the time of his death he was working on a revision of this book. In 1970–71 he spent a year as Visiting Research Professor at Rutgers University and edited a book on *The Literature of Research on Reading.*

During these periods Dr. Davis was busy with a number of other activities. For about 20 years following World War II he served as the Director of Test Research Service, which he founded. This group conducted research projects for the U. S. Air Force and other sponsors. For nearly 30 years he served on the Board of Directors of the American Institutes for Research, where he was Secretary of the Corporation and also a frequent consultant on research problems. During the year 1957–58 he served as Fulbright Professor at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He then did consulting work for several years at the Philippine Center for Language Study in the Philippines. More recently he served for extended periods as a consultant in Rio de Janerio for the Ford Foundation and the Getulio Vargas Foundation. He edited the American Educational Research Journal for a three-year period and was editor of the monograph series for the Psychometric Society for several years.

Dr. Davis was President of the Division of School Psychology of the American Psychological Association in 1958–59 and President of the National Council on Measurement in Education in 1964–65. He was active in the professional affairs of many groups in the fields of psychology and education and served on many committees for these organizations. Most recently he served as Chairman of the Committee on Psychological Tests of the American Psychological Association. He received a number of honors for his outstanding

https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02291694 Published online by Cambridge University Press

contributions including the Legion of Merit for his work in the United States Army Air Force in World War II, and an honorary Master of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1971.

Dr. Davis enjoyed his teaching and his work with students at the graduate level. Both his students and his professional colleagues will long remember his willingness and effectiveness in helping others even at considerable personal inconvenience. His many friends in the Psychometric Society extend their sympathy to his wife and daughter.

American Institutes for Research JOHN C. FLANAGAN

https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02291694 Published online by Cambridge University Press