
An Analysis of the Treatment of "Jensenism" In Introductory Psychology Textbooks

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A sample of recent texts generally shows a rejection of Jensenism, but they offer a variety of interpretations of the issue.

The debate which began a decade ago with the publication of Jensen's (1969) article concerning the heritability of intelligence has been extremely prolific. For example, the 1975 *Social Science Citation Index* listed 338 citations for Jensen, ranking him 22nd for that year (Endler, Rushton & Roediger, 1978). The writers of introductory textbooks have had ample opportunity to integrate the discussion into their presentations. At the end of a decade, how do introductory psychology textbooks treat the issue of "Jensenism"?

Analysis. Twenty-one typical introductory textbooks were analyzed, all having copyright dates of 1976 or later. All the books utilize an interactionist position with regard to the general relationship between heredity and environment, stating that both factors are important contributors to development.

Five questions were asked about each book. First, its position with regard to Jensen's arguments specifically, regardless of its general conclusion about the development of intelligence. Five possible positions were expected: (a) no mention of Jensen, (b) no evaluation of Jensen but simply a report of arguments, (c) Jensenism remains an open or unanswerable question, (d) Jensen is right, and (e) Jensen is wrong. Each book was also examined concerning the variety of citations for Jensen's publications. The third question concerned the amount of research cited in support of the text's discussion of the issue. The categories were: (a) none, (b) little (less than five citations), and (c) fully supported (more than five citations). The fourth question concerned the existence in the discussion of some reference to the controversy surrounding twin studies data, such as Kamin's arguments (1974) concerning the adequacy of Burt's reports. Finally, it was noted whether or not the text makes use of historically important animal research on heritability. Specifically, does the book cite Tryon's (1940) selectively-bred rat experiments and the succeeding research (e.g. Cooper & Zubeck, 1958) which supported environmental enrichment.

Results. Table 1 presents a summary of the results. Question one concerning the presentation of Jensen's arguments showed these results: Seven books have no mention of Jensen by name or by specific reference, three books make no evaluation regarding Jensen, four books state that the issue remains an open or unanswerable question at the present time, no books specifically agree with Jensen, and seven books state or strongly imply that Jensen is wrong. Of the seven books which

do not specifically mention Jensen, three disagree with his position by implication in terms of their discussion of heritability of intelligence, one makes no evaluation regarding the relative contribution of heredity or environment, one states that it remains an unanswerable question, and two books have no discussion of the topic of intelligence at all. If these indirect positions are combined with the specific evaluations, then four books make no evaluation but simply report the existence of the debate, five state that it is an open or unanswerable question, 10 disagree with Jensen, and two do not discuss the topic. The examination of direct citations of Jensen showed that seven books have no such citation, ten cite only the original (1969) article, and four include citations to later publications, e.g. Jensen (1977).

The third question concerned the amount of research, and it was found that of the 19 books discussing the issue, two cite fewer than five studies, and 17 have well-supported presentations.

The fourth question concerned the presence or absence of discussion of Kamin-type criticism of twin-study data and showed that 13 books have no mention of such debate while eight directly discuss the issue. Of the 13 books not debating the twin-study data, nine report (or present in a figure) the standard chart of correlational analysis of IQ scores based on kinship, most frequently citing Erlenmeyer-Kimling and Jarvik (1963). A description follows of the unique features and conclusion reached in each of the books.

Baron, Byrne, and Kantowitz (1977) take the position that the 75 to 80 percent estimates of heritability of intelligence are accurate; but, in asserting that "it seems reasonable to conclude that racial differences in I.Q. are probably largely determined by environmental rather than genetic factors" (p. 524), they disagree with Jensen's position.

Belkin and Skydell (1979) use a neutral tone to present the topic of Jensenism but arrive at a conclusion which is contra-Jensen, that I.Q. tests "should not be used to compare innate intelligence across educational and cultural and social backgrounds" (p. 156).

Bourne and Ekstrand (1979) discuss Jensenism in an informally written section (on different colored paper) which follows the chapter on intelligence. (Such sections follow each chapter.) Their goal seems to be to present the argument of Jensenism and encourage the reader to explore it further, stating that "We cannot possibly present a thorough discussion of these issues" (p. 229). Their conclusion is mildly contra-Jensen, as they state "At the present time there is no clear evidence that the black-white difference in average I.Q. is genetically determined" (p. 232).

Braun and Linder (1979) report Jensen's arguments and those of his critics in some detail. Their conclusion is that "it seems impossi-

Table 1. Presentation of Jensenism in Introductory Psychology Textbooks

Author(s)	Jensen	Jensen's Articles ^a	Citations	Kamin?	Tryon? ^b
Baron, Byrne & Kantowitz	disagree	late	> 5	no	no
Belkin & Skydell	disagree	early	>5	yes	no
Bourne & Ekstrand	disagree	late	> 5	yes	early
Braun & Linder	unanswerable	early	> 5	no	late
Brennecke & Amick	no mention	none	none	no	no
Coon	disagree	early	> 5	no	early
Desiderato, Howieson & Jackson	no evaluation	early	> 5	yes	late
Fernald & Fernald	disagree	early	> 5	yes	late
Hilgard, Atkinson & Atkinson	unanswerable	early	> 5	yes	no
Kagan & Havemann	disagree	early	> 5	no	no
Krech, Crutchfield, Livson & Krech	no mention (unanswerable)	none	>5	no	early
Liebert & Neale	no mention (disagree)	none	> 5	yes	early
McNeil & Rubin	disagree	early	> 5	no	no
Mischel & Mischel	unanswerable	early	> 5	yes	no
Morris	no evaluation	late	> 5	no	late
Schlesinger & Groves	no mention (disagree)	none	> 5	no	early
Shepard	no mention	none	none	no	no
Smith, Sarason & Sarason	no evaluation	early	<5	no	no
Trotter & McConnell	no mention (disagree)	none	<5	no	no
Vernon	no mention (no evaluation)	none	>5	no	early
Wrightsmann, Sigelman & Sanford	unanswerable	late	> 5	yes	late

^a, "early" = 1969 article only; "late" = 1969 and later work; "none" = no references cited.

^b, "No" = no mention or citation; "early" = Tryon (1940); "late" = Cooper & Zubek (1958) or similar.

ble to gather definitive data" (p. 462), and that "any conclusions about hereditary racial differences are very difficult to evaluate" (p. 463) and cannot be used in predicting an individual's behavior.

Brennecke and Amick (1978) have no discussion of intelligence or heritability or I.Q.

Before specifically disagreeing with Jensen's conclusions, Coon (1977) states as a general relationship among heredity, environment, and intelligence the "rubber band" analogy (cited to Stern, 1956) that "a longer rubber band may be stretched more easily, but a shorter one can be stretched to the same length if enough force is applied" (p. 422).

Desiderato, Howieson and Jackson (1976) present a neutral discussion of the arguments of Jensen and his critics in a separate box titled, "An Issue of Intelligence" (pp. 56-58). In their general discussion of heritability they conclude that "since intelligence is a complex behavioral trait comprising many different types of aptitude, it is probably influenced by many genes" (p. 56).

Fernald and Fernald (1978) state that for an individual there is always an interaction between hereditary and environmental factors, and that "It is impossible to study the *genetic basis* of group differences" (p. 385). They mention Jensen only briefly and discuss the issue on a relatively general basis, but imply that they disagree with his attempt to separate heredity and environment.

Hilgard, Atkinson, and Atkinson (1979) present cogent criticisms of major Jensen arguments concerning racial differences but conclude that the use of contemporary instruments means that "... no valid conclusions can be drawn concerning innate differences in intelligence between races" (p. 367). They also include a section which uses intelligence test estimates of group intelligence as a primary example of political bias in psychological history.

Kagan and Havemann (1976) do not refer to Jensen in their discussion, but do cite him as a reference (by number, not by name). They are implicitly contra-Jensenism because their conclusion is that most psychologists would agree that environmental influence would "account for differences that have been found in average I.Q. scores for different groups" (p. 430).

Krech, Crutchfield, Livson, and Krech (1976) discuss the issue in some detail but cite Jensen by name only as a critic of early intervention programs and not in relationship to the heritability of intelligence. They conclude that current methods and tests are currently inadequate to determine "whether group differences in intelligence can be accounted for (in any degree) by group differences in genetic endowment" (p. 314).

Liebert and Neale (1977) cite Jensen only as the source of correlational I.Q. data, but they do discuss the issue of heritability of intelligence. In a footnote (p. 201) they agree that a within-group estimate is not logically related to between-group differences, but their general conclusion is that the heredity of intelligence has been substantially demonstrated, with the warning that criticisms such as Kamin's "should, however, make us aware of the possibility of overstating psychological findings or using them improperly" (p. 202).

McNeil and Rubin (1977) adopt the position that there is a 50 to 80 percent heritability for intelligence but, contrary to Jensen, they argue that this is a within-group estimate and cannot be used to account for between-groups differences. They state that there is "evidence for the contention that black-white I.Q. differences are not inevitable" (p. 239).

Mischel and Mischel (1977) discuss the issue in a "controversial issue" box separated from the main text. After stating that "for now, at least, there is no way to answer the question" (p. 323), they conclude that the energies of scientists should be used "to remove the very biases from society that make the question both unanswerable and inflammatory" (p. 323).

Morris (1976) maintains a strong reportorial style, carefully presenting arguments and evidence for both the hereditarian and environmentalist positions but in a tone of neutrality and non-commitment. One of his most assertive statements is that "most of the participants, including Jensen and many of his critics, agree that both hereditary and environmental factors do have some impact on intelligence" (p. 268).

Although Schlesinger and Groves (1976) do not mention Jensen by name nor include him in the references, their general position on heritability is mildly contra-Jensen because they assume that "All traits—morphological, physiological, and behavioral—are determined jointly by genes and environment" (p. 44). Therefore, they do not wish to state the question as one of heredity versus environment, but rather as a question of the relative contribution of each combined with an interaction component. They favorably comment upon a conclusion by Jencks (cited for 1972, and probably *inequality*, but not included in References) that heredity would contribute 45%, environment 35%, with 20% interaction effect.

Shepard (1977) does not cite nor mention Jensen, heritability of intelligence, or group differences in intelligence. His only discussion of I.Q. tests is a brief mention in an appendix on statistics and standardized testing.

Smith, Sarason and Sarason (1978) utilize the reportorial style, presenting quotations from Jensen and from one of his critics as well as stating a compromise position; but they do not reach any conclusion of their own. They do not present any twin-study or other empirical data.

The topic of black-white differences in intelligence is not discussed by Trotter and McConnell (1978), nor is Jensen discussed or cited. They cite few references in their discussion of heredity versus environment as applied to individuals, and conclude that the question is meaningless when phrased that way because "intelligence is not a *thing* that is fixed or shaped forever at birth. Rather, your intelligence is an ever-changing *process*" (p. 277), a combination of nature and nurture. This would imply disagreement with Jensen.

Vernon (1976) does not cite nor discuss Jensen's arguments specifically. In a general discussion he favors high heritability, stating that the methodological criticisms (not a *la* Kamin) of twin-study data "just do not have the force necessary to totally negate the powerful relationships that have been established between the I.Q.s of related persons" (p. 195). Vernon goes on to suggest that some of the environmental influence may be reversible.

Wrightsmann, Sigelman and Sanford (1979) have a lengthy discussion of heritability and group differences for intelligence presenting all the important arguments and referring to most important research. They conclude that "the question of whether any innate racial differences in intelligence exist must be left unanswered at this time" (p. 341).

Discussion. The most obvious conclusion is that in introductory psychology textbooks there certainly exists no unanimity of opinion concerning the heritability of intelligence. While Jensen has no outright supporters, there is much variation in the tone of the discussions, ranging from an attempt at total neutrality or objectivity to a tone of earnest argument. All the books state that both heredity and environment are involved, but they differ in the relative merits of the two as they present the issue. What is clearly reflected in these books is that this issue continues to be an issue, but that the trend is toward implicit or explicit rejection of Jensen's hypotheses.

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Notes

1. This article is a revision of a paper presented at the American Psychological Association convention in New York, September 1979.
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