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BOOK REVIEW

Review of *Educating Intuition*

Robert Olsen

***Educating Intuition,* Robin Hogarth, 2001, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 335 pp.**

At first blush, the suggestion of "educating intuition" might seem like an oxymoron. This is because intuition is usually perceived as "knowing by feeling" and arising from unexplainable origins. However in this insightful and scholarly book which focuses on expert decision making, the author argues that most of what passes as intuition is "thoughts or opinions reached with little apparent effort and which arise without conscious awareness but which are actually based on previously learned facts or behaviors". While acknowledging that some intuitions may be based on instinct or physiological sensations, the author contends that most intuitions arise from the activation of memories of previously experienced situations or formally learned relationships. With time and repetition, previous learning has become "assumption", and opinions and behaviors based upon it have become automatic, much like driving a car. As he says, this is as it must be, for without such an acclimating process, life would grind to a halt under the weight of purposeful and deliberate action.

Throughout this book, the author carefully elaborates and supports his principal hypotheses that intuition is the dominant decision making process and that it is virtually impossible, if not undesirable, to disregard its influence. He bases these conjectures on five key ideas, each of which he develops in detail. The key ideas are (1) humans are one organism, but contain multiple overlapping information processing systems, (2) learning is shaped by experience, (3) there are two primary systems for learning and doing, (4) expertise is largely intuition and (5) the scientific method can be made intuitive.

Hogarth begins his analysis of the five key ideas by noting that humans contain layers of interconnected information processing systems, (circulatory, endocrine, digestive, etc.), which have been shaped by the evolutionary process of adaptation. Some principal implications are that emotion and affect will influence decisions, and that decision makers will focus on survival and satisficing rather than optimization. He then proceeds to explain how learning is shaped by experience. However he cautions that at times learned behavior can be a source of decision error. He explains that this situation is due to such conditions as the misperception of cause and effect, and because one cannot learn from what one does not experience. In short, learning is not always an unbiased source of information. The third key idea, that it is possible to conceptually identify two polar human decision making systems, has been investigated in detail by other researchers, and Hogarth presents an excellent review and synthesis of this material. He calls one decision system the tacit system, wherein all processes occur automatically, and the other system the deliberate system, wherein all processes require noticeable effort and attention. He argues that most decisions are simultaneously influenced by both systems to some degree. As to the fourth key idea, Hogarth suggests that intuition is the source of most expertise. However, this intuition or expertise applies only in the decision maker's sphere of competence. In this regard, Hogarth reviews the growing evidence on the influence of the particular decision domain for forecasting accuracy. Finally, Hogarth suggests that the principles underlying the scientific method can me made intuitive. He demonstrates how this might be done, resulting in more accurate learning and better "intuitive " judgment.

Professor Hogarth has written other well-received texts and numerous articles dealing with the behavioral aspects of decision-making. His expertise and experience are obvious in this well edited and researched book. The book contains abundant real life illustrations of the ideas discussed and it should be very understandable to the interested, non-expert reader. The writing style is not pedantic and the book contains many interesting sidelights, such as the observation

Robert A. Olsen is Professor Emeritus from California State University, Chico and a Research Fellow with Decision Research in Eugene, Oregon. He holds graduate degrees in Finance from the University of Oregon and the University of Massachusetts. Professor Olsen has business experience as a Financial Analyst and consulting experience with small business start-ups. Professor Olsen's research interests are focused on Risk Perception and Behavioral Finance.

Requests for reprints should be sent to: Robert Olsen, Decision Research, 1201 Oak Street, Eugene, OR 97401. Email: olsenbfin@msn.com

that students who attend elite universities are usually poorer at learning from life's experiences because of their more formal training. In my opinion, this is one of the more enlightened syntheses of the behavioral decision making literature to appear in recent years.