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What is Critical Psychology?

Attendee Kim Loewen reflected on this workshop theme: "It is easy to get stuck going through the motions without thinking critically about what you are doing. This workshop opened my eyes. It was wonderful to hear from experienced psychologists who are thinking critically about what they can do to help people and also make progress on issues related to social justice."

Sloan proposes that a "critically examined" approach can foster healing – from the individual client, to community participation, to emancipation from "isms" (as in consumerism), to global mind change. The healing professions are best situated to contribute to a repertoire of practices for deep democracy and social innovations – and to evaluate them with action research. Sloan proposes practices that can "dismantle ideological rigidity, foster critical self-reflection, augment creativity and cooperation, and ultimately

lead to social transformation. *Imagine how things would look if psychologists were involved in deepening democracy rather than helping individuals adjust to life in postmodern society.*"

On Saturday, May 3rd, the **Center for Integrative Psychology** will sponsor a 7-hour workshop, **Critical Psychology: Rooting for Well-Being**, with Dr. Sloan and colleague, Fernando Castrillon from CIIS. Participants should be prepared to be challenged about personal views, practice and theory. Information on the event and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) is available online at www.integrativepsychology.net.



IN DEFENSE OF THE NARROW

What was elementary to Sherlock Holmes certainly was not obvious to Dr. Watson or to any of the millions of readers who have, over the many years, found themselves both stunned and stimulated by the famous detective's incredible abilities. In case after case, Sherlock would observe the minutest details, relate them to a knowledge base of connected data (seemingly trivial and not worth remembering) and form deductive conclusions that would solve the most puzzling of criminal problems. Indeed, Holmes possessed an expertise that was unique, that made him successful, and that provided him, alas, not with happiness, but with fulfillment, identity and respect. Expertise has always been a critical and valuable commodity in all cultures, and especially in ours. However, it is not very well understood.

Most people assume that expertise involves primarily a system of skills gifted by heredity that blossoms as the expert grows and becomes involved in life. Research suggests, in contrast, that expertise develops as a consequence of at least ten years of prolonged practice

By Richard A. Schere Ph.D., DABFM



and unrelenting motivation to push past apparent personal limits in order to continually improve one's ability in a given area of interest. Indeed, as expressed by Horn and Blankson,

"Adults come to understand a great deal about some things, to the detriment of increasing understanding of other things."

That is, developing expertise requires a *narrowing* of focus and a letting go of information less relevant to the concerns of a specialty.

Research also indicates that there are intellectual skills that are unique to the building of expertise. Rather than inductive fluid reasoning, the reasoning required in the application of expertise is knowledge-based and deductive (Charness, de Groot and others). In addition, expertise apparently relies on a very different memory system that is not explained by the current descriptions of, for example, short term, working, or apprehension and retrieval (SAR). Experts utilize a memory that holds large amounts of data in

immediate awareness for a much longer period than is generally held in working memory. This memory, *expertise wide-span memory (EWSM)*, facilitates creative problem solving as one deals with situations by using principles formed from past prior *experience*, often in a *rapid concrete* manner (de Groot, Ericsson & others). Right hemisphere activity is often involved as, for example, in chess or construction where experts rapidly analyze visible patterns.

As we consider the parenting practices and values currently emphasized with our children and teens, we would do well to consider the implications of this research on expert intelligence. We value broadening our youngsters' experiences and we push them into activities that will help them become "*well rounded*." Yet, Patrick, who would prefer to spend all of his time stinging our ears with his electric guitar and readying his band-members for imagined future gigs, and Gabriella, who can dance all night (and all day, too) may be delivering a message we should consider. Robert, who spends "much too much time with his

friends and not enough with homework and athletics" may be developing an expertise in understanding and managing people. Dan Goleman is smiling somewhere, for he has always asked us to consider why so many people with very high IQs work for others with IQs that are much more humble.

I am not suggesting that youngsters should not be encouraged to develop themselves in many directions and become well-rounded. However, perhaps we need to contain the broadening and allow for more preoccupation. Taylor does indeed play video games too much, but he loves the computer and has asked that, if he has to have a cap on the time allowed to play games, can he do other things on the computer instead. In defense of the narrow, perhaps his request should be considered.

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INTERVIEW WITH JEFF JONES, PH.D., '2007 PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR' FROM APA DIV. 51

By Jonathan Gale, Ph.D., Editor

Q: *There are many ways to measure the work of a practitioner. For which aspect of your practice have you been awarded the Practitioner of the Year award?*

A: In addition to my clinical work focused on men issues (via individual, couples and group therapy), I believe my work with expectant fathers (Basic Training for Dads-to-Be) and my father involvement programs (The Dads Club) set me apart as a psychologist. The 1994 APA convention in Los Angeles inspired me to take an active approach to applying some of the concepts and programmatic ideas to my work with men. Since the LA conference, I have been interested in reaching out to men in non-traditional ways and community building to expand men's informal support networks.



Q: *How did you become nominated for such an award?*

A: Last June, while attending the National Psychotherapy with Men Conference at CSU Northridge, Dr. Vic Frazao approached me about nominating me for the award. He felt my community work with men with an emphasis on father involvement was something unique or special. (Dr. Frazao is the 2006 recipient of this award and the membership chair of Division 51 of the APA).

Q: *Tell us a little bit about Division 51 and why you belong to it.*

A: "The Society for the Psychological Study of Men and Masculinity, Division 51 of the American Psychological Association, advances knowledge in the psychology of men