

Letters to the Editor

The Editor
Self & Society

Dear Editor,

I wonder if anyone else has discovered or had shown to them, or read about, a form of Bio-Energetics which I discovered for myself - in my bath. This consists of taking a cold bath (making certain it is as cold as possible at this time of the year) hyper-ventilating, pumping the arms and shoulders in a horizontal plane very vigorously, and as far as possible doing the usual well known hip movements on a small scale rapidly. Combined with the cold water it is very energising, releasing and relaxing, followed of course by a vigorous rub down. The usual bouyancy factor is of great assistance.

Yours faithfully,

John Ridpath
Liphook, Hants.

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Dear Vivian,

I read with interest the article on accreditation etc. and your ideas for founding an advisory committee on policy etc.

I've been involved in teaching/-researching in the humanistic psychology field for the last dozen years, and have been involved in various forms of assessment.

The problems of standardisation of training - or the setting of standards, and the possibility of a 'national' type of training course, to me seem inappropriate - if not in direct conflict with - the aims of an AHP.

I feel that any humanistic course should have the aim of facilitating the development of the participants, should they want to develop. The course should be one which the participants decide upon, and self directed. 'Tutors' can perhaps be used as sounding boards or even as - initially - reference sources to enable students to find the areas they would like to explore. This means that every course has to be different - similar to the Antioch MA structure.

We've run various courses at my current employers - Salford College - such as 'psychology for social workers'; and Certificates and Diplomas in Welfare and Counselling, as well as a counselling workshop. We've had syllabi for all bar the workshop, but the Counselling courses have largely been structured by the students after the first few sessions.

We've had assessments by practical

counselling sessions (role played), writing a 'mini-thesis' of the student's choosing, as well as essays etc. (with students able to choose their own topic).

I'm currently attempting a self and peer assessment with a group (similar to John Heron's) based on class participation: we discussed various methods of assessment such as the length of silences (pass was 10 minutes; credit 15 minutes silence etc); meditative/levitational attainments (pass was 2 feet off ground; credit 1 metre etc); nearness to self-actualisation on a weekend course (80 per cent there was a pass. . .) and so on. . .

Most of the methods seem far more appropriate than the traditional, but basically we've felt that assessment was inappropriate. Perhaps we need to be able to issue participants with a document saying that they have engaged in an experiential learning situation which seems appropriate training for working in the humanistic psychology field.

Our selection principles have always been the same: we have accepted anyone over 21 able to pay the college fee (and also, to be honest, everyone else who applied, including those unable to pay and under 21!)

We feel that it would be helpful if there was a national body who accepted that facilities for having an experience which should be useful/enjoyable to someone interested in humanistic psychology was available to Centre X, or through person Y.

Another alternative suggested -as the

above could mean students attending for a year yet learning nothing through personal barriers etc - would be an additional/alternative form of recognition of 'feelings' etc by participating in a weekend course - including group work, working with someone with a problem etc., where "national officials" could help in some sort of validation/assessment.

We approached the various counselling bodies when we started our first counselling course in 1975, and found no one willing to attempt validation. We've used the Institute of Welfare Officers as an 'assessing' body since then, but have our doubts about any organisation requiring formal presentation by students.

We also feel that any organisation which expects the course to be decided before the 'students' have worked together for some time is inappropriate - course content etc should be decided by all participants, in the 'here and now'.

We've worked with what seems to us an appropriate formula: setting a time limit to meetings and a minimum number of weeks, with an agreed-upon meeting place at least initially (practically, 1.30-9 for 30 weeks on College premises.)

Perhaps you can think about our experiences when looking at the problems involved in policy making on standards etc.

Fraternally,

Kevin Fleisch
Denton, Manchester