

BOOK REVIEW

Scientist-Practitioner Perspectives on Test Interpretation. Edited by *James W. Lichtenberg* and *Rodney K. Goodyear*.

Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998. 224 pp.

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Included in most graduate training programs in applied fields of psychology and psychotherapy is coursework in testing and assessment. Often, however, students feel overwhelmed with such training because of the abstract ideas and theories inherent in the construction of many tests and the psychometric principles that support their ultimate use. Encountering training in this area for the first- and sometimes the last-time, results in many students without a firm grip on some of the most important issues of test interpretation and their integration with psychotherapy practice. Some students may become discouraged and concurrently develop indifference towards testing in general and fail to explore the advantages of using appropriate and purposive tests. This book, authored by two of the most esteemed professionals in the area of testing in psychology, fills the gap between the administration of tests and their practical application to the treatment process.

This book is suitable as a supplement to texts in a graduate psychotherapy course. It reminds the reader of the most important considerations when interpreting and sharing test results with clients. It shapes a novice's perspective by offering practical suggestions for the process of test interpretation.

As Lichtenberg and Goodyear clearly state, the purpose of this book was not to ingrain a scientific perspective towards the entire psychotherapy process, but rather to challenge readers to adopt a scientific attitude when critiquing the utility a particular tests has for a client, as well as appropriately interpreting the results. The authors of the chapters cautiously refrain from technical psychometrics. They make distinctions between such terms as actuarial and clinical predictions, and synthesize the concepts they describe and how they relate to the core components of practice.

Each chapter addresses how the knowledge of science not only affects practice, but ultimately can change or shape the perspective of test interpretation by offering an overview of six landscapes of influence and application. One chapter brings to attention the ways in which perceptions of diverse individuals will inevitably shape test interpretations. In addition to being aware of this dynamic, the authors present recommendations when interpreting test results of women and members of minorities. A chapter on the usefulness of tests in clinical decisions presents a method for deriving the extent of confidence a practitioner may have in the diagnostic utility of a test as well as an organized method of clinical hypothesis testing. The chapter on inference and attribution errors may help serve as a basis for guidelines that may be developed to reduce distortions of test results by familiarizing the test interpreter with the common biases that may occur before, during, and after test administration. For novice readers of scientist-practitioner perspectives of test interpretation, one chapter is included to help demystify the common jargon, concepts of evaluation, and psychometrics surrounding the use of tests.

Another chapter, which describes a more theoretical approach to test interpretation and the application of social-cognitive construction principles, offers valuable examples of how test interpretation with clients can enhance therapeutic change and aid in revising personal theories. From a social influence perspective, one chapter is devoted to reminding the reader that a test can be as influential a message as the interactions between the client and counselor. Each chapter progresses cumulatively with respect to practical suggestions and an organized three-step model of test interpretation: (a) interpretation of test data; (b) communication of test interpretation; (c) understanding/application of test interpretation. This model aids in the development of guidelines for evaluating each test before it is administered, acquisition of accurate interpretations, and collection of information relevant to issues encountered in testing. This book is an informative read for those interested in the integration of tests in practice, but essential for practitioners who intend to use tests. Without such syntheses as Lichtenberg and Goodyear's *Scientist-Practitioner Perspectives on Test Interpretation*, students and practitioners are likely to form a perspective that neglects the most fundamental components of a sensitive perspective of test interpretation.