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**Abstract**

"What is known about the cognitive functions of other peoples that could enable extant psychology to become more comprehensive, to attain a 'universal' cognitive psychology?" This question was the focus of a 1986 NATO workshop held at Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario, Canada) whose working theme was "indigenous cognition and models of information processing." The primary goal of the present volume, which contains 13 papers, is to bring together evidence from "studies of cognition in those populations that have remained well outside industrialised society: the hunting people, the nomads, and the peasants of the contemporary world" (p. 2). The volume begins with a general section that includes papers dealing primarily with theoretical concerns in cross-cultural cognitive psychology and continues with four studies among African populations and with three among Native American populations.

**Disciplines**

Cognition and Perception | Cognitive Psychology | Comparative Psychology | Education | Educational Psychology | Multicultural Psychology | Psychiatry and Psychology

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Indigenous Cognition?

J. W. Berry, S. H. Irvine, and E. B. Hunt (Eds.)

Indigenous Cognition: Functioning in Cultural Context
Dordrecht, The Netherlands:
ISBN 90-247-3671-4; 90-247-2688-3
(series), $79.00 (£46.00; de 150,—,
The Netherlands)

J. W. Berry, professor of psychology at Queen’s University (Kingston, Ontario, Canada), is coeditor, with R. C. Annis, of Ethnic Psychology. S. H. Irvine, professor of differential psychology at Polytechnic South West (Plymouth, England), is coeditor, with J. W. Berry, of Human Assessment and Cultural Factors. E. B. Hunt, professor of psychology at the University of Washington (Seattle), is author of Artificial Intelligence. Daniel A. Wagner, professor of education and director of the Literacy Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), is editor of The Future of Literacy in a Changing World. Iddo Gal is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania.

What is known about the cognitive functions of other peoples that could enable extant psychology to become more comprehensive, to attain a ‘universal’ cognitive psychology?’ This question was the focus of a 1986 NATO workshop held at Queen’s University (Kingston, Ontario, Canada) whose working theme was “indigenous cognition and models of information processing.” The primary goal of the present volume, which contains 13 papers, is to bring together evidence from “studies of cognition in those populations that have remained well outside industrialised society: the hunting people, the nomads, and the peasants of the contemporary world” (p. 2). The volume begins with a general section that includes papers dealing primarily with theoretical concerns in cross-cultural cognitive psychology and continues with four studies among African populations and with three among native North American populations.

As the editors suggest, unlike research using ready-made, standardized Western tests presented in “Euroamerican laboratories, in which prime subjects are Anglophone adolescents whose responses are collected Monday to Friday during business hours, with two coffee breaks and a lunch hour during the day,” the notion of indigenous cognition suggests that psychological research attempting to understand people’s cognitive life should be informed by “their views and their understanding of what their cognitive life is about” (p. 2). However, as the editors also admit, indigenous cognition is not an easily defined term, because it may also refer to any instance of daily thinking, overlapping to some extent with the more popular notion of “everyday cognition” (Rogoff & Lave, 1984).

In the opening chapter, Berry elaborates his well-known framework for ecological analysis, highlighting the need to study “the set of cognitive goals which are collectively shared and towards which children are socialized in a particular society . . . since one cannot assess how far a person has gotten unless one understands where he is going” (p. 12). Several chapters present evidence dealing with indigenous conceptualizations of cognitive functioning and show how these may match or deviate from Western views. As is often the case with cross-cultural work, there are wide variations in the scope and methods of analysis. For example, Georgas provides a global ecological description of a single society: Greece. A linguistic analysis of proverbs is used by Irvine in his study of thinking among the Shona of Zimbabwe. Das and Verster use test scores to point to information-processing or reasoning strategies that are more prevalent among members of certain societies. Although each of these chapters offers an interesting tour de l’horizon of the variety of analytic tools and conceptual models available to cross-cultural psychologists, they also highlight the complexity of making sense of any one finding without the application of a multilevel framework of analysis. Some chapters, such as Deregowksi and

References
Self-Esteem Enhancement: The Hard Work of Helping Children Feel Better

Alice W. Pope, Susan M. McHale, and W. Edward Craighead

Review by Maurice J. Elias

Self-Esteem Enhancement With Children and Adolescents
166 pp. ISBN 0-08-032765-6 (hardcover); 0-08-032764-8 (paperback). $22.50 (£16.50)
hardcover; $12.95 (£9.95) paperback

Alice W. Pope is assistant professor of psychology at Texas Tech University (Lubbock). Susan M. McHale is associate professor of human development at Pennsylvania State University (University Park). W. Edward Craighead, professor in the Department of Psychiatry, Division of Medical Psychology at Duke University Medical Center (Durham, North Carolina), is the editor of Behavior Therapy. Maurice J. Elias, associate professor of psychology at Rutgers University (New Brunswick, New Jersey), is recipient of the National Mental Health Association’s Lela Rowland Prevention Award.

The fields of psychology and education appear united in the view that enhancement of children’s and adolescents’ self-esteem should be a national priority. Deficiencies in self-esteem have been implicated in DSM-III-R disorders and in a host of other problem areas, such as substance abuse, delinquency, school failure and dropout, and teenage pregnancy. The psychological benefits of feeling good about oneself may seem obvious, but the task of self-esteem enhancement is quite challenging.

The authors have entered into the fray with a book for practitioners that is based on a theoretical framework about self-esteem and a program that the authors say they have used with success. They view high self-esteem as a “‘healthy’ view of the self—one that realistically encompasses shortcomings but is not harshly critical of them” (p. 2). Low self-esteem is more slippery construct. It is evidenced by “an artificially positive self-attitude to the world” or a “retreat” into oneself (p. 2). Self-esteem is believed to encompass five areas: social, academic, family, body image, and global. The essence of this book is to present a series of activities that practitioners can use to implement their program.