

## **Book Review**

# **The Easy Guide to Repertory Grids**

**by Devi Jankowicz**

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reviewed by

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The *Easy Guide to Repertory Grids* provides a very good link between taught grid elicitation and the development of personal understanding. The style of the book is welcoming and inviting. The Introduction provides a very clear account of what the book is intended to provide and where the confident student can go for further development of their understanding. It also provides a comprehensive guide to the best use of the book material. I have been particularly impressed by the technician and theorist perspectives which thread throughout the book and offer different levels of analysis for the student. The reader is encouraged by the technician perspective to attempt the practical exercises and then review them in more depth by engaging with the theorist. In this way the reader is encouraged to experiment and, rather than becoming anxious at exposure to fresh theoretical ideas, has their existing constructs about research rendered more permeable and open to adaptation.

The second chapter of the book offers a user-friendly, clear and simple description of the basic ideas behind the repertory grid and its potential uses. It takes a while to warm to the two perspectives (the technician and the theorist) but reading the chapter twice, through the technician's account first, followed by the inclusion of the theorist, leads to a sense of satisfaction at having laid down the groundwork for the subsequent journey through grid elicitation in chapter three.

Professor Jankowicz cleverly addresses the needs of the naïve grid user throughout the body

of the book. He seems to have taken into account the range of questions posed by his students and used them to create a dialogue between the reader, the technician and the theorist. The fourth chapter begins with responses to basic concerns about procedures in working with grids and leads the reader into greater depth of material so they become conversant with the processes behind classic PCP techniques such as the *self-characterisation sketch*, *laddering* and *pyramiding* without being overwhelmed.

Chapters five to seven cover a range of ways in which repertory grids can be analysed without the use of a computer. Chapter five explores descriptive analysis of grid content; chapter six looks at analysing the numerical relationships between elements and constructs in a single grid and chapter seven describes how to analyse more than one grid with supplied constructs and, more in keeping with the central theme of Personal Construct Psychology, individually generated constructs. Professor Jankowicz describes how content analysis can be used to analyse more than one grid with personal constructs derived from supplied common elements.

Chapter eight focuses on the exploration of personal values, including an account of how to ladder up with constructs. The script suggested in this chapter is easy to follow and the explanation enables students to recognise the powerful impact of the technique and how it relates to the repertory grid. The chapter then uses the further explo-

ration of personal values to introduce a *resistance to change technique*.

The final chapter examines personal change and differences between people, using repertory grids. He tackles how to examine simple change using the same elements and constructs and how to research messy change where new constructs or elements need to be introduced. Differences between people are explored through "partnering" grids to see different ways people construe a similar topic. A further technique, the *Exchange Grid* requires two participants to complete grids from the perspective of the other person, using the other person's constructs.

Overall, the book gives a clear account of the technical and theoretical aspects of the repertory grid technique, grid analysis and interpretation. It covers a range of variations on this theme in a creative and accessible way. I have used the easy guide to teach Clinical Psychology trainees and PCP Foundation Course students. I have found that students respond well to the book's sensible approach and want to experiment with the tech-

nique rather than discard it as too hard. Professor Jankowicz has obviously taken students' construction processes into account when writing this book and laid the groundwork for them to move towards using repertory grids as a feasible and pleasurable part of their repertoire of research methods.

#### REFERENCE

Allen, D. (2005). Review of: Jankowicz, D. (2004). *The easy guide to repertory grids*. Chichester: Wiley. *Personal Construct Theory & Practice*, 2, 15-16.

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