

Obituary

Tom Ravenette (1924-2005)

Tom Ravenette died in October 2005. He kept his characteristic vitality and spark right up to the end. For those of us who seek to use personal construct ideas with young people he was an incomparable inspiration.

I first came across Tom's work well before the days of email and pdf files. In fact before the days of easily available photocopies. Grubby carbon copies of Tom's articles would be passed hand-to-hand by eager clinicians keen to spread (and receive) the word. You see Tom wrote as a practitioner for fellow practitioners. As he memorably said: "Research psychologists seek to find a significant difference. Applied psychologists (*like himself*) strive to make a significant difference." So he did not communicate as a career academic might by publishing regular books or journal articles. He addressed colleagues, gave papers and tutored students – always speaking in his own unique voice. I never had the privilege of seeing Tom working directly with children but I did join him on training workshops for clinical psychology trainees when his combination of keen interest in another's ideas and preparedness to deliver a timely challenge to students effortlessly bridged a generation gap of some 50 years. He was just as charitable with his attention to those of us who were maybe not quite that much younger than him. Tom was an active conference participant who listened carefully to other presenters' views and would always find time for the encouraging comment and indeed take the opportunity to put you right on a few things if he felt it necessary! And what Tom thought of your work mattered...

Tom was an educational psychologist by trade and developed his skills at a time in the UK when Child Guidance clinics gave members of that profession a therapeutic leeway that current day

practitioners probably envy. So his position allowed him to pioneer novel methods of interviewing and consultancy that were both easily transferable from an educational to a health context, and are also as useful now as on the day when they were first developed.

An engaging nature; a creative mind; a kindly temperament; a humorous twinkle in the eye; and a deep generosity of spirit. We have been lucky to be able to count Tom Ravenette as one of our own. As the Irish allegedly say – we shall not see his likes again.

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Editors note - Tom Ravenette's last book:

Ravenette, T. (1999). Personal construct theory in educational psychology. – A practitioners's view. London: Whurr

REFERENCE

Green, D. (2005). Tom Ravenette (1924-2005). *Personal Construct Theory & Practice*, 2, 12.

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