Abstracts of the 27th International Congress of Applied Psychology

The state of the art in rehabilitation psychology

STIERS, W. (Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine)

It is estimated that 10% of the world's population, approximately 650 million people, experience some form of disability. Rehabilitation Psychology is a specialty which applies psychological knowledge and skills on behalf of individuals with physical and cognitive impairments and chronic health conditions in order to maximize their health and welfare, independence and choice, functional abilities, and social role participation. Dr. Stiers (Past-President of the Division of Rehabilitation Psychology of the American Psychological Association) will discuss theoretical models of disability, and their relation to the field of Rehabilitation Psychology. He will discuss the historical development of Rehabilitation Psychology, its current state, and its relevance to important on-going world health needs. Dr. Stiers will also discuss the evaluation of Rehabilitation Psychology training, including a structure/process/outcome model for evaluating programs, and the use of observational behavioral check-lists for evaluating students. He will also suggest pathways for the future development of Rehabilitation Psychology.

Applied sport psychology: Beware the sun, Icarus

TERRY, P. (University of Southern Queensland)

Most people involved in sport freely acknowledge that the quality of their performance is subject to significant fluctuations that are often driven by psychological inconsistencies. Great champions such as Michael Phelps, Maria Sharapova, Cristiano Ronaldo and Rafael Nadal have all used sport psychology techniques to enhance their own impressive performance levels. Applied sport psychology, however, is not necessarily about developing sporting titans or even about performance at all. It is, in the broadest sense, about using psychological principles, knowledge, strategies, and techniques to address any issue in sport. In this presentation, I will trace the historical progress of applied sport psychology from the very earliest writings and investigations in Europe, Asia and North America through to the current state of the art across the globe. Along the way, I will present some of the landmark publications and key developments, address past trends, present challenges and opportunities, and predict future developments in the field. Two enduring challenges for applied sport psychology are, firstly, to educate the sporting community and the general public about what sport psychology can and cannot achieve and, secondly, to ensure that claimed benefits are pitched at the right level and are supported by compelling evidence. Just as, in Greek mythology, Icarus flew too close to the sun, melted the wax that held his wings together and fell to his death, so the profession of applied sport psychology risks losing its credibility if practitioners over-promise on what can realistically be achieved and then fail to deliver on their promises. Equally, if applied sport psychologists downplay the performance gains and the other benefits that their profession can deliver (perhaps the equivalent of Icarus remaining with his feet firmly on the ground) then the sports world will look elsewhere for specialist assistance.

From studying cognitive systems to developing cognitive technologies

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Research on human cognition immensely benefited from application of methods and models of natural sciences. Within the NBIC-