

Who Will Teach Psychodynamics in the Future?

By Melissa Grady

With Lisa Cobourn, Rana Duncan-Daston, Douglas Lane, Sergio Paradiso, and Daniel Rochman

The above question is what the leaders within the American Psychoanalytic Association sought to answer and, upon reflection, they found that the answer was not clear. The Association is an organization with a rich history, now spanning over 100 years, with a diverse membership of different disciplines, representing a multitude of specialty areas within psychoanalytic and psychodynamic practices. It has grown from a practice-based organization where practitioners from around the country and world could come together to discuss theory, practice challenges, and their most illustrative cases to one that includes researchers and leaders that reach beyond the organization into different disciplines and orientations. While these changes have enriched the organization and broadened its appeal to others as the scope of the work supported by the Association expands, most university settings have significantly reduced content in psychoanalytic and psychodynamic practice in their training programs. This reality led the leadership within APsaA's Education Department to begin to consider who would be the next generation to carry on the work of the Association that previous generations have so tirelessly promoted.

TEACHERS' ACADEMY: MENTORS AND TEACHERS

Out of this discussion emerged the idea of the Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Teachers' Academy: a program designed to support the efforts of teachers working to

include psychodynamic and psychoanalytic theory and practice into their training settings. By targeting those who are directly involved in training future practitioners, the Association's goal is to help practitioners or academicians with a psychodynamic background and inclination develop skills specific to teaching psychodynamic thinking to trainees in psychiatry, psychology, and social work,



Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Teachers' Academy participants (from left): Richard Summers, chair of the Teachers' Academy Committee; Sergio Paradiso, Daniel Rochman, Douglas Lane, Lisa Cobourn, Melissa Grady, Rana Duncan-Daston, and members of the Teachers' Academy Committee, Susan Sherman and Elisabeth Schreiber.

including trainees who have no previous exposure to or are prejudiced against psychodynamic thinking. Teaching teachers will achieve the goal of reaching out to exponentially more trainees and exposing them to psychodynamic theory and practice. The impact of this effort in its inaugural year is unknown. However, we as the program's participants have planned to share our initial impressions of the experience to date in the hopes that as the first tier of this experiment, we may inspire the Association (and other psychodynamically oriented organizations) to continue to think creatively about how to

foster the development of practitioners and leaders who will take this Association and others into its next 100 years.

For this yearlong experience, APsaA through an application process selected six teachers, two each from three different disciplines: social work, psychology and psychiatry. All applicants were required to submit a proposal for a teaching project that they would develop over the course of the year. During the development process, through the Association, each teacher was assigned a mentor who is a master teacher in his or her discipline. Together, the mentor and the teacher will work to develop the proposal further, to anticipate and prepare for any barriers, and to come up with concrete ideas on ways the

project can be implemented to have the greatest impact within the respective treatment or teaching settings. The mentors and teachers began this exciting process at the 2011 National Meeting in January through individual meetings and now are continuing through phone calls, e-mail, Skype, and other contacts until January 2012.

CREATING A HOLDING ENVIRONMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Although we are at the beginning of this process, we feel invigorated, excited, and inspired by our experiences to date. At the January 2011 National Meeting, we had the opportunity to meet and learn from several master teachers representing our various disciplines. These teachers

exposed us to applied teaching skills as well as broader issues related to pedagogy and the parallel process of creating a holding environment in the classroom where affect and unconscious processes can evolve and enrich the learning of our students. In addition, we attended many workshops of our choice, further enhancing our own knowledge of psychoanalytic theory and practice. These workshops, along with the experiences with the master teachers, armed us with new knowledge and inspiration that we can bring back to our own training sites.

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The authors are the first class of participants in the Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Teachers' Academy.

Psychodynamics

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We believe that the Teachers' Academy is a vital step in ensuring a future for psychoanalytic practice. Infusing university and other training settings with information to creatively engage future professionals is critical if younger practitioners are to be exposed to and enriched by psychoanalytic training. Educational and training projects such as these are well worth the effort. What we know from psychoanalytic theory is that healthy functioning emerges through attention and nurturing during the early developmental years. Through the nurturing and attention the Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Teachers' Academy provides to early trainees, APsA is setting the stage for a richer and healthier future. For more information on APsA's Teachers' Academy, visit: www.apsa.org/teachersacademy. 

Impasses and Failures

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of educational and institutional contexts, the supervisory process and the impact on supervision of other factors in institutional life is appearing to us as ever more intricate and complex. The impact on both treatment and supervision of institutional conflict and dysfunction is an area to which we have only recently focused our attention and which we hope to study further. To what extent might an impasse represent not only a co-construction between analyst and patient but also a more complicated construction involving the institute itself?

ONGOING THURSDAY DISCUSSION GROUP

As we continue to gather case material, we are beginning to consider writing a

casebook to communicate some of our experience and what we have learned from it to colleagues. We continue to invite colleagues to present cases involving impasse or failure at our Thursday discussion group, and we will continue in our COPE group to study analyses in which supervision itself is an issue and has played a significant role in the impasse or failure. We welcome supervisors and supervisees to contact us about bringing such situations to our Friday morning COPE group. Situations in which a candidate has been supervised by an analyst who is known to have been involved in a boundary violation or boundary crossing, and where the case has foundered or ended prematurely, would be welcomed as we try to understand some of the possible ripples and collateral damage from these events. Please contact judy_kantrowitz@hms.harvard.edu or stevenhgoldberg@sbcglobal.net. 