

Appendix 4

REPERTORY GRID BASICS AND THE USE OF GRID TECHNIQUES IN CAT

Repertory grid technique is derived from personal construct theory, which was developed by George Kelly (1955). It offers a way of exploring how a person makes sense of particular aspects of his or her world. The test consists of a list of elements which are compared by rating how far each is described by a list of constructs. Both elements and constructs are elicited from, or at least must be relevant to, the person doing the test. In the development of CAT, ideas were derived from grids in which the elements were significant people or, in the dyad grid, the relationships between self and significant people, and the constructs were descriptive of psychological characteristics or of patterns of relationship. This work and an outline of the technical and mathematical procedures involved are reported in Ryle (1975).

Completed grids are subjected to a principal component analysis which yields three main types of data: (1) How far any two constructs are used in a similar way is expressed as a construct correlation. For example, people described as strong may be seen as dangerous or as trustworthy, indicated by a positive correlation between strong and dangerous or between strong and trusted. (2) How far any two elements are seen as similar is indicated by a similar measure, namely element distance, calculated around the average value for the whole grid. Thus an element distance of 0.4 between the relationship of self to husband and that of self to father, indicating a high degree of similarity, will carry different implications than would a value of 1.6 indicating extreme dissimilarity. (3) The dispersion of the elements in the construct space can be plotted in a graph which places both elements and constructs according to their loadings on the first two principal components. These can be regarded as maps

in which the meaning of the territory is indicated by the construct loadings (usually written in the periphery to avoid clutter) and the elements are located in the 'territory' so defined.

Repeat repertory grid testing can be used to measure change with therapy, predictions of the direction of desirable change in measures, usually construct correlations, being made at the reformulation stage, the procedure being repeated at the end of therapy (Brockman et al., 1987; Ryle, 1979, 1980). The technique was applied to the plotting of changes in transference and counter-transference (Ryle, 1995a). Pollock and Kear-Colwell used the grid technique to investigate the relationship between sexual victimisation and offending behaviour. In the present volume the 'States Grid', involving the rating of states identified in the early stages of the therapy of borderline patients, is described in Chapter 6. A similar use using a standard grid with a series of borderline patients is reported in Golyunkina and Ryle (1999).