

Vygotsky and His Non-Classical Psychology

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The art of psychology was one of the main highlights of Vygotsky's activity. He began research in psychology after he had worked as a teacher of literature, theatre critic, etc. It was his experience in this sphere that allowed him to found a new sphere of psychology, called "non-classical" psychology.

Non-classical psychology includes neither the stages of special research and implementation of that research's results, nor theory and practice. Instead, non-classical psychology is a science which studies human psyche and personality and that exists in theoretical and practical studies and in the real life of a person. This psychology is the psychology of cooperation, implying, first, the cooperation of a professional psychologist with his/her colleagues and with other people working in other spheres. In non-classical psychology, the psychologist does not correct, form or develop anything; instead, he creates situations and circumstances in which he can correct, form or develop. At the same time, these situations and circumstances strive to strengthen and develop inherent personal characteristics. Correction and rehabilitation are possible only as a last resort.

The best example of non-classical psychology is constructive psychology (in Russian "proektiruyuzhshaya") – the methodology and main principles of which are based on the cultural-historical approach. Vygotsky's constructive method means that pupils and teachers – as well as psychologists and those who they help to develop – live common lives. The constructive approach in non-classical psychology means movement from inherent mental functions to higher ones, from the actual development to the Zone of Proximal Development, and from the present to the future. This approach shows many possible ways of personal development.

This keynote will show that the constructive approach in non-classical psychology is the future, or the Zone of Proximal Development, of modern psychology.