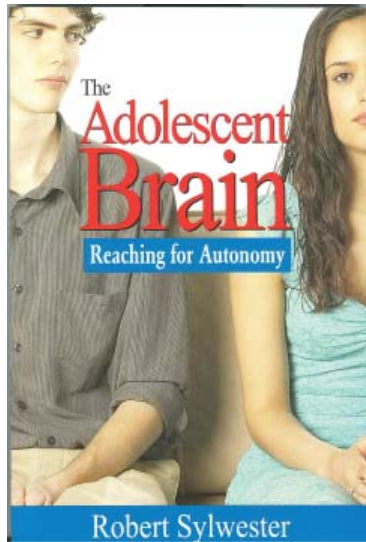


Robert Sylwester. (2007). *The Adolescent Brain: Reaching for Autonomy*. Corwin Press, 154 pages.

"We each get to make the adolescent journey once, and then we get to observe others make their journey. What more could one want from life?"
--- Robert Sylwester

Now Bob, watching kids grow up is fun, but let's not get too carried away. Robert Sylwester was a professor of mine in classroom management and democracy at the University of Oregon 25 years ago. One day he brightly informed us that as a young teacher himself, he always allowed his students to vote on issues ... and they always voted the way he wanted. "Yes, he sheepishly reminisced, "You have to be careful about that kind of classroom democracy."



Professor Sylwester is still professionally active at 83 because, he told me in a recent e-mail, "The cognitive neurosciences (my passion) exploded when I normally would have retired 16 years ago ...so I've been busy since doing conferences and staff development all over the world."

The Adolescent Brain is just one of several books that Robert has published since his "retirement" on "the best-organized, most functional three pounds of matter in the known universe." His books are offered as informational sources for parents, teachers or anyone interested in how the young brain "thinks, feels, learns and changes on its journey to adulthood." The explanations are based on modern brain research but put in mostly nontechnical language with lots of examples.

The immobile fact is that the teenage brain is incomplete. It is still under development ...its self-wiring job is not finished. Knowing this and the science behind it helps to understand why confusion rather than consistency often pervades adolescent behavior, and that while they may look like adults, and sound like adults and can do many complex things ...Robert reminds us that "knowing how to do something isn't the same as knowing if you should do it." Good news, I guess. Kind of like being told your hemorrhoids will go away pretty soon. Naw, just kidding.

Pioneers of Technology

Michael I. Posner
(1936-)

"It is now possible to look inside the human brain as it thinks"
----- Michael Posner

"For your *Pioneers of Technology* I recommend the University of Oregon's Michael Posner. He is perhaps the world's leading authority on our attention system (a topic of considerable interest in your field), and he was recently given the very prestigious National Medal of Science by President Obama."

So recommended Robert Sylwester, and a good recommendation it was as researching this man has opened the doors of understanding for me about what it is we do and don't yet know about the brain. If you are similarly interested, start out with his recent book (with Mary Rothbart) *Educating the Human Brain* (2007).



Michael Posner joined the faculty at the University of Oregon in 1965. He is now emeritus professor of psychology there and adjunct professor at Weill Medical College in New York (Sackler Institute).

Where he has made his life-long mark is in the study of attention networks in the human brain. Starting in 1978 with the publication of his book *Chronometric Explorations of the Mind*, he has used the latest tools of brain imaging (Positron Emission Tomography, etc.) to produce three-dimensional maps of the brain as it is asked to perform various tasks. In this way, researchers can now "see" the brain work. Kind of. They know what areas of the brain light up when given certain tasks. In any case, they know 1000 times more about how the brain works now than 30 years ago.

One technique that Posner and his team have consistently used is the "subtractive method." This is where complex cognitive tasks are broken down into a series of simpler tasks (all the while looking at the brain).

While the world has recognized Michael Posner as one the leading researchers into the human brain, he is the first to caution that the human brain is the most complicated and evolved piece of matter we own; and that truly we have just started to scratch the surface of true understanding.

Quarter Inch Drive

A quarterly newsletter for friends and graduates of Tom Hull's shop programs

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My wife coughed up \$100 in prizes, four judges pronounced their verdicts and 15-year-old Jacob Haeuter took 1st place in the freshman plant stake design competition with his kinetic windmill. Limited to a cutting torch, stick welder and basic handtools, for most freshmen this was their first experience with forming metal from the minds eye. Gotta start somewhere.

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