

• ASSESSMENT NEWS •

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*Official newsletter of the IPMA Assessment Council, a special professional section within the International Personnel Management Association*

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INTRODUCING "ASSESSMENT NEWS"

IPMAAC expects to publish and distribute this newsletter approximately once every three months. You are invited to submit articles of interest related to the following purposes to one of the newsletter staff. The purposes and staff of this newsletter are:

1. To provide information on the activities of IPMAAC, especially information on how the "Purposes" of IPMAAC (Article II of IPMAAC Bylaws) are being accomplished.
2. To serve as the medium or distribution mechanism to solicit nominations for officers and awards, calls for programs, and votes on issues.
3. To inform assessment specialists of significant events related to public personnel assessment.

Examples include: changes in professional standards, guidelines, court decisions and trends, new assessment approaches, research findings, and assessment problems and trends.

4. To provide information on the activities of IPMAAC members.

Examples include: changes in employment, degrees and awards received, and significant professional accomplishments; to provide announcements of job openings or available job seekers.

5. To provide information on the activities of related organizations such as the various regional Consortia, Personnel Testing Councils, American Psychological Association, etc.

*Plan now to attend the 1978 IPMAAC Annual Conference  
April 23-27, 1978, American Motor Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia*

Contributing Editors

DEE ANN HORSTMAN  
Personnel Research Psychologist  
Personnel Research and  
Development Center  
U. S. Civil Service Commission  
1900 "E" Street, N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20415  
(202) 632-4674

ERNEST M. ("Chip") Johnson  
Research Psychologist  
City of Milwaukee  
Fire and Police Commission  
6846 North 1st Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53223  
(414) 276-2400

DIANA MARR  
Consultant  
Psychological Services, Inc.  
4311 Wilshire Boulevard  
Suite #600  
Los Angeles, California 90010  
(213) 937-3851

IPMAAC Liaison

CHARLES F. SPROULE, IPMAAC President Elect  
Chief, Research and Special Projects  
Division  
Pennsylvania State Civil Service  
Commission  
P. O. Box 569  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120  
(717) 787-1795 or  
(717) 787-2935

IPMA Representative

THOMAS A. TYLER, IPMAAC Secretary  
Director of Test Services  
International Personnel Management  
Association  
1313 East 60th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637  
(312) 947-2190

IPMAAC COMMITTEE CHAIRS APPOINTED

The following individuals have accepted appointments from WILLIAM GORHAM, president, IPMA Assessment Council, to chair committees. The initial statement of objectives for each committee follows the list of committee names and chairs. A list of the persons on each committee will be published in a future issue of this newsletter.

COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE CHAIR(S)

Education and Training

ALBERT P. MASLOW  
Director, Center for Occupational  
and Professional Assessment  
Educational Testing Service  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540  
(609) 921-9000

Professional Affairs

JOHN W. MENNE  
Director, Test and Evaluation  
Services  
Iowa State University  
44 Carver Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011  
(515) 294-2232

COMMITTEE (continued)

COMMITTEE CHAIR(S) (continued)

Professional Affairs

JAY A. GANDY  
Research Psychologist  
U. S. Civil Service Commission  
1900 "E" Street, N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20415  
(202) 632-4674

Intergovernmental  
Cooperation

JAMES P. SPRINGER  
Supervisor of Examinations  
City of Milwaukee Personnel  
Department  
Room 706, City Hall  
200 East Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211  
(414) 278-3337

Membership

JAN KLEIN  
Coordinator, Cooperative Organization  
for the Development of Employee  
Selection Procedures (CODESP)  
6861 Santa Rita Avenue  
Garden Grove, California 92645  
(714) 893-4665

Program

ARLEEN C. KLEBER  
National Programs Administrator  
Psychological Services, Inc.  
4311 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90010  
(213) 927-3851

Newsletter

CHARLES F. SPROULE  
Chief, Research and Special Projects  
Division  
Pennsylvania State Civil Service  
Commission  
P. O. Box 569  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120  
(717) 787-1795 or  
(717) 787-2935

Each committee was asked to work on a number of specific objectives. The objectives and members of the newsletter committee are stated elsewhere in this newsletter. Information on the 1978 conference (Program Committee) is also presented elsewhere in this newsletter. Objectives of the other committees follow:

### Education and Training

1. Identify high priority training needs for public assessment specialists.
2. Identify resources currently available to meet the needs.
3. Conduct 8 workshops or other appropriate training vehicles.
4. Plan and direct the pre-conference workshops for the 1978 IPMAAC meeting.
5. Devise a plan for IPMAAC to inform graduate schools about what the educational needs are of practitioners working in the area of public personnel assessment.

### Professional Affairs

1. Qualifications of Assessment Specialists
  - a. Prepare a policy statement regarding the knowledges, skills and abilities or areas of competence required of the public personnel assessment specialist.
  - b. Submit the policy statement to the Board and to the IPMAAC membership for comment and endorsement.
  - c. Develop plans for making the policy statement known.
2. Review the proposed Merit System Standards and prepare a statement on positions relevant to the interests of the Assessment Council which will be sent to IPMA for inclusion in their comments.

### Intergovernmental Cooperation

Encourage and facilitate intergovernmental cooperation, information exchange, and resource sharing. Potential sub-objectives of the committee include:

- a. Establish standards for item-bank sharing.
- b. Establish practical standards for test portability.
- c. Encourage cooperative research.
- d. Foster or found a selection information exchange effort.

### Membership

Increase membership of the IPMA Assessment Council by 100 this year.

SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN ATLANTA

Mark your calendar! ARLEEN CHRISTY KLEBER, program chairperson for the 1978 Annual Conference, has begun the planning for an exciting series of sessions and pre-conference workshops for IPMAAC's second annual workshop and conference to be held at the American Motor Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, April 23-27, 1978.

Please forward any suggestions or recommendations for topics, formats or speakers to: Arleen Christy Kleber, National Programs Administrator, Psychological Services, Inc., 4311 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 600, Los Angeles, California 90010. Suggestions or recommendations will be enthusiastically received. Full details of the program--a blending of theoretical and nuts-and-bolts topics--will be presented in future newsletters.

Members are urged to make plans now for attending the conference in beautiful Atlanta.

PERSONNEL TESTING COUNCIL SUMMER CONFERENCE

The Personnel Testing Council of Southern California recently held its summer conference--"The Past, Present and Future of Criterion-Related Validity." This one-day seminar explored the critical issues surrounding criterion-related validity, with the focus on current thinking in this area. Featured speakers included DR. RICHARD BARRETT, professor of psychology and director of the Applied Psychology Program for the Stevens Institute of Technology; DR. MARY TENOPYR, manager of human resources research at American Telephone & Telegraph; and DR. FRANK SCHMIDT, personnel research psychologist for the U.S. Civil Service Commission.

Dr. Barrett discussed some of the common flaws in validation research, and presented a checklist of questions which validators should ask themselves about their research. Dr. Tenopyr focused on several critical issues in validation research, including job analysis techniques, the development of construct- or content-valid criteria, and test fairness. Dr. Schmidt explored the future of criterion-related validity and outlined a Bayesian model for validity generalization.

Following the presentation a lively panel discussion was led by HOWARD LOCKWOOD, PEGGY CLARKE, and ED HANE.

IPMAAC PAPERS TO APPEAR IN "PUBLIC PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT"

The presentations of DR. ROBERT GUION and Deputy Attorney General JOSEPH B. SCOTT at the 1977 IPMAAC Annual Conference will be published in the November-December issue of IPMA's journal, Public Personnel Management. IPMAAC members who do not regularly receive PPM may obtain a free copy of this issue of PPM on request. Requests are now being accepted and can be addressed to: Dr. Thomas A. Tyler, IPMAAC Secretary, IPMA, 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637.

MAPAC CONDUCTS PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM  
IN JOB ANALYSIS AND CONTENT VALIDATION

The Mid-Atlantic Personnel Assessment Consortium (MAPAC) has developed a seven day training program in "Job Analysis and Content Validity." The program was developed by members of state and local jurisdictions belonging to MAPAC with the assistance of the Philadelphia and New York Regional Officers of the U. S. Civil Service Commission and the Center for Occupational and Professional Assessment, Educational Testing Service. The development and conduct of the training program is partially funded by an IPA grant.

The training program was pilot tested in June 1977, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Twenty state and local government personnel specialists participated in the training, which was conducted in three modules. Module One consisted of one day on "Professional and Legal Guidelines and Standards for Job Analysis and Content Validity." Module Two consisted of three days of training on "Conducting Job Analysis." Module Three was a three day program on "Constructing the Content Valid Test."

Instructors for the pilot program, by module were: DR. GRACE WRIGHT, Director of Validation Program Development and Review, New York State Department of Personnel, and MR. ROSCOE WISNER, Supervisor, Test Research and Evaluation, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (Module One); MR. CHARLES SPROULE, Chief, Research and Special Projects Division, Pennsylvania State Civil Service Commission, and DR. MICHAEL ROSENFELD and DR. RICHARD THORNTON, Program Research Scientists, Educational Testing Service (Module Two); and MS. NANCY ABRAMS and MR. TED DARANY, Regional Psychologists, U. S. Civil Service Commission (Module Three).

DR. PETER GIOVANNINI of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey chairs the MAPAC Training Committee, which developed and is conducting the training. The training is based on the results of a training-needs survey conducted in MAPAC member jurisdictions.

On the basis of an evaluation of the pilot training program, the training materials and approaches will be improved and a final training package developed. MAPAC intends to conduct the training program three more times within the next twelve months. Once the training package is finalized, MAPAC will release the instructor's manual and student manual to interested agencies and jurisdictions. The availability of the materials will be announced in a future issue of "Assessment News" along with information on how to obtain the materials.

## POSITION CHANGES

EDGAR L. YOST, Chief of Evaluation of the Pennsylvania State Civil Service Commission, was promoted to Deputy Director of that agency on June 9, 1977. He is currently Vice-Chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Personnel Assessment Consortium (MAPAC).

MICHAEL P. MALONE, left his position as personnel management specialist for the U. S. Civil Service Commission's Chicago Region Intergovernmental Personnel Programs Division to join Montgomery Ward in Chicago.

## GORHAM RECAPS 1ST IPMAAC CONFERENCE

We started out this conference with a keynote address on content validity. Following the principles of content validity, I sampled what went on this week in the sessions that I attended. I have, from this process deduced some constructs I would use to describe this conference, and my observations are organized around these:

### 1. Advancement

Our conference theme last year was "Where is public personnel assessment?" This year we have added the word "going."

- Assessment centers seem to have come of age in the public service. They have survived an important legal challenge. But we are cautioned that, unless this is a systematic process, its legitimacy will be tarnished.
- Assessment centers are advancing from the selection state to the personnel development phase. This seems to me to have some implications for the staffing of the assessment center. Who are the developers? What should their qualifications be? How is a development session handled with those who do poorly; with those who do well?
- Assessment centers while advancing, seem to need advancement in the area of cataloguing--an area which tests seem to have resolved.
- There is emphasis on simulation of the environment whereas the early assessment centers concentrated more on technique.

### 2. Systematizing Complexity

- THORNTON reports a selection project using five rating scales, six dimensions, five kinds of jobs, five levels of impact, five levels of quality of judgment, etc. on a large number of job responsibilities. Clearly life is not simple. It is becoming more complex. But if anyone wants to know what a thorough job analysis is, he or she might look at THORNTON and ROSENFELD's work. It is systematic in trying to sort out complexity. But the methodology apparently leads to test specifications which satisfy the job requirements.

- MARTIN also emphasizes a large number of items or tasks (360) -- chaos out of which he has tried to create order. I'm stunned to learn about the complexity of the firefighter's job. It apparently is more complex than office manager. Martin has four scales only one of which is in common with the Thornton thinking. Are scales occupationally specific, I ask myself? Martin had some troubles with scales. Why, after all these years do we not know about the properties of scales? Martin despairs too; he finally resorted to a non-scale. Yet I predict we will need to continue the systematic reduction of data through scaling approaches. There are simply too many tasks--even in apparently a simple job--there are apparently few and simple jobs. Martin tells us that psychologists and firefighters are able to come up with the same ranking factors. This kind of work is reassuring, and there is a body of knowledge accumulating on this. At the same time he cautions us about the ability of SMEs to evaluate the potential capabilities of newcomers.
- MASLOW criticized the proliferation of KSAOs, but shelf items developed 30 years ago are frowned upon by attorneys and judges. It is obvious that there must be something wrong with the old lists. Are they legally suspect because they predated the Civil Rights Act or the Civil War? Maybe so. Therefore, the systematic modern reconstruction of KSAOs through several avenues may not be wasted motion.
- JOHNSON in an all-out search used four different approaches. In one he proposes going from tasks to items and skipping KSAOs, thus eliminating the need for a psychologist altogether. This may not be a bad idea, and Martin has his suspicions about presence anyhow.
- THORNTON proposes going from tasks to KSAOs to items, a most thorough approach, as does Martin.
- PRIMOFF, whose job element method has withstood the test of time, goes directly to KSAOs and thence to items. It remains the economical approach in our search for reductionism, and I would hope next year's meeting devotes more attention to this.

### 3. Practicality

- SAGE initially counseled us to let the costs control the data to be collected on the grounds that funds are controlled by the legislative body. He complained of staff shortage, but finally told us that, despite these problems, cursory plans and hasty development of rating schedules must be a thing of the past. Unreliable or invalid data have no practical use. He rightfully acknowledged the increased use of supplemental forms and reminded us that we can pass along some of the practical information we've accumulated in the area of written tests to the area of unassembled examining.



- TURPENOFF reinforced and described the supplemental-form notion and advised us about techniques to increase reliability and validity. None of these is likely to make life easier. Perhaps that is the message.
- DAVIS came full circle. He actually exhibited a comprehensive system of job analysis and supplemental questionnaires. The system may well be a model of thoroughness--complete with computer-tie-in results--and who really cares about the burden or the jurisdiction or the applicant.

*I must conclude from these three presenters that some of us have become clever in calling "increasing job relatedness" by the name of "practicality." If this convinces administrators that more relevant data must be secured before an effective job of selection can be done, I congratulate them on their ingenuity. Clearly, in these presentations, practicality and validity seem to have been quietly married. As a practical matter, the offspring should be descendants who will survive as more fit if we are to believe Darwin at all.*

#### 4. Cooperation

- SPRINGER laid out a comprehensive menu of kinds of cooperation in testing, selection, job analysis, etc., but offered the basic question, "If we do build a better test, do we want the world to beat a path to our door?" He seems willing but cautious. He traced the apparent demise of the IPMA item sharing, and the reluctance of users to continue to participate. Apparently, excessive accessibility of items, like familiarity, breeds contempt (or at least avoidance), is counterproductive, and is giving way to cooperating with those you know and trust. These informal nets seem to be working, and they often lead to larger cooperative ventures. Multijurisdictional ventures are still in their infancy, and are difficult, but people haven't given up. Hope exceeds accomplishment, but successful ventures can be cited. Springer pointed out that economics alone may force cooperative ventures. Unfortunately this may only work to the extent that it is attenuated by trust.
- MILLARD, speaking from a broad national perspective, questions whether there is really all that much interest in cooperative ventures. Citing the reluctance of some jurisdictions, he nevertheless reminds us that elimination of duplication is a national policy--written into at least two laws--and that it just makes good business sense. He left us to think over where our priorities really ought to be.
- DUNNETTE, demonstrated that multijurisdictional selection research can be done. In addition, he has explicitly contracted to produce a document to guide jurisdictions not participating in his national firefighter selection study, as to what they must do to tie into the completed cooperative venture. In doing this study he boldly attacked the problem from a construct validity point of view--a remarkable approach. There is no doubt

that the construct approach offers the most promise for portability, and Dunnette has laid out a significant methodological model for us in this area. The extension to other jurisdictions has rules, but buying in seems feasible. His report will be available soon.

*I conclude from this sample that we must and can go in the direction of cooperative ventures and are doing so. This is consistent with the intent of law and of the new Federal Executive Agency Guidelines. It is also one of the purposes of this organization.*

#### 5. Hope

- MUSSIO asked what hope there is for the future in job simulations as selection devices and offered arguers for the pros and cons of the issue in a debate form.
- MAURER, who grew up with performance testing, bases his hopes for the future and continuation of job simulations largely on the basis of successful past experiences in this area and good sense. Public acceptance is apparently high, and examiner training (like assessor training in the assessment center) is thorough but occasionally soft. There is great hope from the economic point of view. Maurer estimates expenses of \$5 to \$8 per examinee, with a donated building and no rent to pay. I am encouraged by the practicality and acceptability of the program which tests 8000 per year.
- DRAUDEN countered by speaking out for old fashioned ability testing. She criticized job samples on cost, portability, and their lack of contribution to our storehouse of knowledge about human abilities. The problem of many applicants (even at \$5 to \$8) is surely a real one, and Drauden maintains that performance tests are infeasible for small jurisdictions. Better, she says, to use an instrument with known measurement properties. She criticized the nonportability aspect of simulations, which once again shuts out the small employer.

*Essentially I thought the differences were in philosophy. This brings into close conflict the needs of the practitioner and of the researcher. Is it necessarily an infinite obligation of the practitioner to contribute to theory building? Perhaps Maurer may or may not know what he is measuring in conventional ability terms, but he may be staying out of court better than some of us. Drauden, however, has hope for ability testing, but admits to the paucity of empirical data regarding the linkage of abilities to job performance. She encourages developing such data and I agree. Our long term hope is on the development of good constructs. That may, rather will take a long time. I would remind us that Fleishman took perhaps 20 to 30 years to perfect constructs for his psychomotor work alone. In the meantime there's nothing wrong with pinning some hopes on simulations. Perhaps the same persons simply cannot do both. I wish that someone would give me or anyone a building and supplies to build the understanding of abilities which Drauden suggests at a cost of \$40 million. The hope is that we might move along both fronts. As a practical matter Maurer may come closer to meeting Guidelines now than some of us who have not strayed from the ability path.*