Fifteen Steps to a Competency-Based, Multiple-Choice In-Basket

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IPMAAC Conference on Professional Personnel Assessment
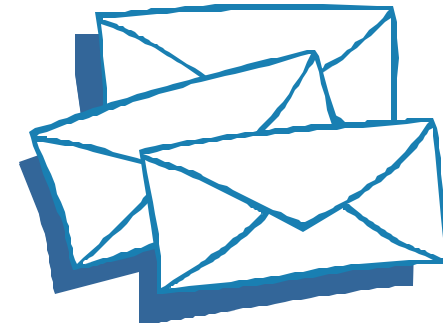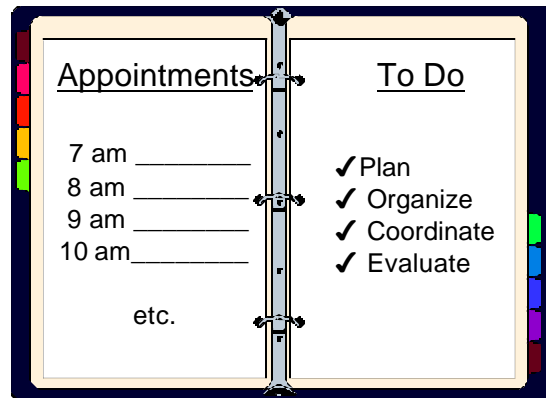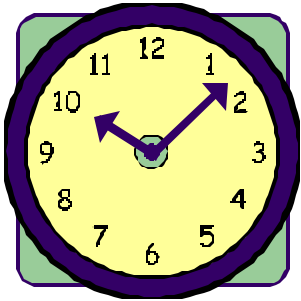June 6, 2000

Session Goals

- Outline general steps for developing an In-Basket Exercise

- Review procedures for ensuring content and construct validity

- Present procedures for developing competency-based, multiple-choice test items

Background: The Competency-Based Promotional Assessments

Assessment Strategy

Competency Area	Decision Making	In-Basket	Writing	Job Experience Measure
Thinking Skills	X			
Administrative Skills		**X**		
Writing Skills			X	
Technical Skills				X

The In-Basket

Appointments

7 am _____
8 am _____
9 am _____
10 am_____

etc.

To Do

✔ Plan
✔ Organize
✔ Coordinate
✔ Evaluate

Measurement Domain of
the In-Basket

Administrative Skills

- Decision-Making/Problem Solving
  - » Identifies problems; gathers, interprets, and evaluates information to determine its accuracy and relevance; generates and evaluates alternatives; makes sound and well- informed decisions; and commits to action to accomplish organizational goals

- Planning and Evaluating
  - » Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines objectives and strategies to achieve them; monitors and evaluates progress against goals

Measurement Domain of the In-Basket

Administrative Skills

- ● **Managing and Organizing Information**
  - » Identifies need for information; determines its importance and accuracy, and communicates it by a variety of methods

- ● **Self-Management**
  - » Shows initiative; sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; monitors progress and is motivated to achieve; manages own time and deals with stress effectively

Overview: The Steps

- Step 1: Identify Critical Tasks and Competencies

- Step 2: Collect Source Materials

- Step 3: Establish the Context (The Scenario)

- Step 4: Develop a Pool of Documents

- Step 5: Secure SME Review of Documents

- Step 6: Select Optimal Set of Documents

- Step 7: Develop Performance Benchmarks

- Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items
          (or Rater's Benchmarks)

Overview: The Steps

- Step   9: Conduct Technical (Psychometric) Review

- Step 10: Conduct Final SME Review

- Step 11: Assemble Alternate Forms

- Step 12: Conduct Final Technical Review

- Step 13: Proofread!!!

- Step 14: Print

- Step 15: Prepare the Test Documentation File

Step 1: Identify Critical Tasks and Competencies

- **Identify Critical Tasks**
  - » SMEs identify task and duty areas
  - » SMEs rate task importance, and time spent, performing

- **Develop or Adopt a Competency Model**
  - » Assessment professionals develop and define competencies required by the job
  - » SMEs rate importance, need at entry, distinguishing value

- **Perform Task-Competency Linkage**
  - » SMEs link critical tasks to competencies

Step 1: Identify Critical Tasks and Competencies

● **The Job Analysis Supports Validity**

  » Content validity relies on faithful sampling of critical tasks and duties

  » Construct validity rests on the ability of the assessment to measure important competencies

Step 2: Collect Source Materials

- Visit Representative Sites

- Collect Documents
  - » Letters
  - » Memos
  - » E-mail messages
  - » Phone logs

Step 2: Collect Source Materials

- Conduct Interviews with Job Incumbents
  - » What do you do on a typical day?
  - » Who do you talk to?
  - » What gets transmitted to you?
    - through e-mail
    - through phone calls
    - through internal memos
    - through correspondence from outside your organization

- Collect Critical Incidents (War Stories)
  - » The circumstances leading up to the event
  - » The action taken in response to the event
  - » The outcome of those actions (positive or negative)

Step 3: Establish the Context (The Scenario)

What to Include in the Scenario

● The context of the scenario

● The candidate's roles and responsibilities

● The time frame

● The organizational setting

» Physical setting

» Staff

» Critical issues

Step 4: Develop a Pool of Documents

- **Strive for Balance**
  - » Job duties and critical tasks represented
  - » Competencies elicited
  - » Document features
    - – format
    - – source
    - – origination date
    - – priority

- **Create More Documents Than You Think You Need**

Step 4: Develop a Pool of Documents

Sample Document Map

Doc. #	Content	Format	From	Duty
1	Welcome	Note	Meg Lindstrom	
2	Request to approve funds	Phone Msg.	SBPA Markowitz	Budget/Financial
3	Information Leak	Note	SBPA Markowitz	PR/Communications.
4	Surplus Equipment	e-mail	ACPA Cook	Resource Mgmt.
5	Morale Problem	Memo	SBPA Quesada	Personnel Mgmt.
6	Coordination of joint operation	e-mail	Kluski@customs	Operations
10	Appearance on TV	Letter	KTAK-TV	PR/Comm.
11	Harassment Claim against SBPA	Memo	DEO Gatos	Personnel Mgmt.
12	Fuel Tank Leak	Memo/Note	SBPA Tyrol	Resource Mgmt.
14	Notification of CPR training	e-mail	Sector Training Officer	Personnel Mgmt.

Step 5: Secure SME Review of Documents

- **Who is a Subject Matter Expert (SME)?**
  - » Has held target position
  - » Not eligible to take test--At target level or higher
  - » Recognized as competent

- **Why do we need them?**
  - » Establish job-relatedness (content validity)
  - » Evaluate technical accuracy and realism
  - » Organizational buy-in
  - » Other job duty insights

Step 5: Secure SME Review of Documents

- **What materials do they need?**
  - » Security Agreement
  - » Demographic Information Survey
  - » Competency Definitions
  - » Document Evaluation Forms
  - » In-Basket Materials
  - » Supplies (pens, paper, clips, markers, etc.)
  - » Position Descriptions

Step 5: Secure SME Review of Documents

- **What will they do during the session?**
  - » Respond to in-basket materials as candidates
  - » Evaluate and revise materials (individually)
  - » Obtain group consensus on revisions
  - » Define the range of responses
    - – What do I with the document after reading it (MI)?
    - – What decisions need to be made (DM)?
    - – What actions need to be taken (PE)?
    - – What priority do I give this issue, relative to others (SM)?
    - – Who can I delegate this to (SM)?

Step 6: Select Optimal Set of Documents

Primary Considerations

- ## Content Validity

  » Does the document require performance of a at least one critical task?

- ## Construct Validity

  » Can you ask questions about a variety of constructs based on this document?

Step 6: Select Optimal Set of Documents

Additional Considerations

- ## Realism
  - » Have you included a variety of document formats, message originators, priorities, and due dates?

- ## Time Constraints on Testing
  - » Can the candidate read and digest the documents in the allotted time?
    - – 25 documents (30-35 pages) can be reviewed in about 45 minutes

- ## Document Loss
  - » Have you included "back-up" documents to allow for document loss down the line?

Decision Point:
What Kind of Response Should be Required?

Free Response VS. Fixed Response

- Candidate supplies response

  » Prepare actual responses to documents

  » Present oral or written summary of actions

- Candidate selects response from list of options

  » Multiple-choice test

  » Checklist

  » Selecting or rating possible actions

Decision Point:
What Kind of Response Should be Required?

Free Response: Raters' Benchmarks

- Assessment professionals develop behavioral benchmarks for each competency

- SMEs define substandard, acceptable, and superior performance for each document
  - » Phrase performance standards in behavioral terms

- Assessment professionals categorize each document response by competency benchmark

- Raters use benchmarks to assess candidate performance

Decision Point:
What Kind of Response Should be Required?

Fixed Response: Multiple-Choice Items

- Assessment professionals develop competency benchmarks; SMEs develop document benchmarks

- Assessment professionals develop test plan

- Competencies and subcompetencies guide development of item stems

- SME responses and competency benchmarks guide development of response options

- Response options are objectively scored

Decision Point:
What Kind of Response Should be Required?

Free Response

+ Provides maximum flexibility
+ Allows for unusual, creative responses

C Is expensive to administer and score

C Scoring may reflect rater biases

C Confounds competency measurement with oral or written communication skill

Fixed Response

+ Is easy and inexpensive to administer and score
+ Is objectively scored

C Inflexible: limits range of responses

C Item responses may reflect test constructors' biases

C Confounds competency measurement with cognitive ability

Step 7: Develop Performance Benchmarks

- **Develop Two Types of Benchmarks**

  - » Competency benchmarks

  - » Document benchmarks

Step 7: Develop Performance Benchmarks

- **Competency Benchmarks**
  - » Define performance levels for the competency and/or subcompetency
    - – substandard
    - – acceptable
    - – superior
  - » Are developed by assessment professional
  - » Are generic
    - – They can be applied in future assessments

Step 7: Develop Performance Benchmarks

- Begin with competency definition

> ***Managing and Organizing Information*** - Identifies need for information; determines its importance and accuracy, and communicates it by a variety of methods.

- Break competency definition into component behaviors (subcompetencies)

  (See overhead. Confidential test material)

Step 7: Develop Performance Benchmarks

- ● Establish benchmarks for each subcompetency

  » Benchmarks are behavioral examples of performance levels for each subcompetency

  (See overhead. Confidential test material)

Step 7: Develop Performance Benchmarks

Example

(See overhead. Confidential test material)

Step 7: Develop Performance Benchmarks

- **Benchmarks for In-Basket Documents**

  » Provide behavioral examples for varying levels of performance on a document
    – substandard
    – acceptable
    – superior

  » Are specific -- relate to <u>one</u> document

  » SMEs develop; assessment professional refines

Decision Point Revisited:
What Kind of Response Should be Required?
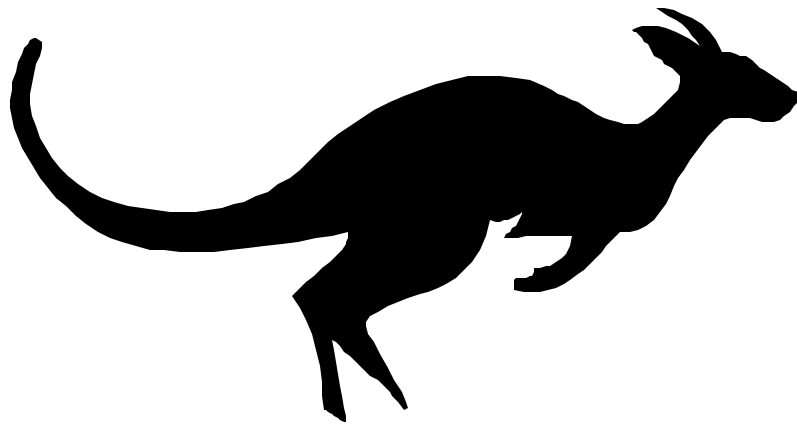
● If you selected "free response," categorize document responses by competency, then you can leap to Step 9

● Otherwise, hop to Step 8 and develop your multiple-choice items

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

- **Prepare the Test Item Development Plan**

- **Develop Item Tracking/Documentation System**

- **Select Item Format**

- **Prepare Items**

- **Revise Documents as Needed**

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

● **Prepare the Test Item Development Plan**

  » Specify a target number of items needed for each competency

Competency	# of Items[1]	
	Draft	Final
Decision Making	25	20
Planning and Evaluating	25	20
Managing Information	25	20
Self-Management	25	20
Total	**100**	**80**

[1]Assumes that 2 forms will be developed and that there will be about 40-50% overlap between the forms.

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

● **Tracking Items**

» Develop a numbering system

– competency code (e.g., DM, MI, PE and SM)

– item number

– author code

Examples: **DM01-IG**

SM13-DH

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

● **Documenting Items**

  » The documentation form should include:

    – item development number

    – number assigned to operational test item

    – competency/subcompetency

    – documents referred to

    – item stem

    – response options

    – explanation and documentation of correct answer

      ● for technical information, include manual and page number

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

Job Simulation Question Development Worksheet		
Development Number: [item #]	**Question Number:**	**Series [#] – [itm#]**
Documents Used: [doc. #'s]		**Series [#] – [itm#]**
Primary Competency Measured:	___ **Decision Making**	___ **Planning and Evaluating**
(Enter subcompetency #)	___ **Managing Information**	___ **Self-Management**

Item Stem and Alternatives

[Item Stem goes here)

1 2

    A) First option
    B) Second option
    C) Third option
    D) Fourth option.
    E) Fifth option

Explanation

Item Code: [Key Code] Justification for correct answer goes here

Other Response Options: Justification for incorrect answers go here

Reviewer's Comments   *Reviewer's Initials* ___

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

- **Develop Competency-Based Item Stems**
  - » Based on subcompetencies

- **Select Item Response Format**
  - » Traditional multiple-choice
  - » Checklist
  - » Rating

- **Develop Response Options**
  - » Based on subcompetency benchmarks and SME responses to documents

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

Examples of Competency-Based Item Stems

● **Problem Solving and Decision Making**

  » What is the most critical issue raised in this document?

  » What action would you be MOST/LEAST likely to take in response to this issue?

● **Planning and Evaluating**

  » What specific steps would you take to resolve the situation in this document? Which of these steps would you take first?

  » What indicators would provide the strongest evidence that your dealing with the situation had been successful?

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

More Examples of Competency-Based Item Stems

● **Managing and Organizing Information**

  » Who else needs the information presented in this document?

  » What should you do with this document once you have read it?

● **Self-Management**

  » What priority would you assign to each issue or situation presented in the in-basket?

  » When must each situation be handled?

Example: Developing an Item to Assess Decision-Making Subcompetency 1

Decision-Making/Problem Solving

● Identifies problems; gathers, interprets, and **evaluates information to determine its accuracy and relevance;** generates and evaluates alternatives; makes sound and well- informed decisions; and commits to action to accomplish organizational goals

(See overhead. Confidential test material)

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items
Sample Document # 3

FROM THE DESK OF SAM MARKOWITZ

CPA Cook called me last night from Sector Headquarters. She tried to reach you until about 11:00 p.m., but had not yet returned from your trip. She had just received a phone call from Dick Grady. He hosts the all-night talk show on KNWS-Talk Radio. Dick Grady invited her to appear to respond to his "digs" and then take questions from the public. CPA Cook said that Dick Grady appears to know much more about our plans for Operation RATTRACK than we have released to the public. Specifically, he asked CPA Cook to be prepared to comment on our strategy for this week's joint operation with DEA.

CPA Cook told Dick Grady that INS had no comment and asked him where he obtained this information. He told her that he cannot reveal his sources. She asked me to pass this information on to you immediately and to ask you to handle it. I will be on location for the remainder of the day.

Source Preparation Guide for the In-Basket Exercise

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items
Sample Decision Making Item

● In Document 3, SBPA Markowitz informs you that a radio talk show intends to ask ACPA Cook about Operation RATTRACK. What is the most critical issue raised in this document?

    A) Dick Grady's invitation to ACPA Cook

    B) SBPA Markowitz's whereabouts for the remainder of the day

    C) CPA Cook's inability to reach you last night

    D) Dick Grady's knowledge about Operation RATTRACK

    E) Dick Grady's refusal to divulge the source of his knowledge about Operation RATTRACK

Source Preparation Guide for the In-Basket Exercise

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items
Sample Documentation

- **D) Dick Grady's knowledge about Operation RATTRACK is the most critical issue raised in Document 3**

  » Someone has information about a secret operation and is leaking it to unauthorized sources. The source of the leak must be found as soon as possible. The fact that Dick Grady has invited ACPA Cook to appear on his radio program (A) is less important; it is her decision whether to accept the invitation. SBPA Markowitz's whereabouts (B) are known and he can be contacted if needed, therefore, this information cannot be considered as critical. Her inability to reach you last night (C) is now irrelevant because you have been contacted. Dick Grady is under no obligation to reveal his sources (E), thus his refusal is not important information.

Source Preparation Guide for the In-Basket Exercise

Step 8: Develop Multiple-Choice Items

● **Preparing Items--Rules of Thumb**

  » Generate at least one item per document (or replace the document)

    – If necessary, revise documents to make items plausible (*but tell the other item writers!*)

  » Follow good item-writing guidelines

  » Use SME responses as a guide in preparing response options

Step 9: Conduct Technical (Psychometric) Review

- **Who's on the review panel?**
  - » Assessment development team
  - » Peers
  - » Section Chief

- **Why conduct the review?**
  - » Obtain peer-level technical review
  - » Ensure psychometric soundness

- **What materials do they need?**
  - » Introductory materials
  - » Documents
  - » Multiple-choice items and documentation
  - » Competency/subcompetency definitions and benchmarks

Step 9: Conduct Technical (Psychometric) Review

- **What will they do during the session?**
  - » Reach consensus on changes to items and documentation

  - » Generate questions for final technical review
    - – Policy issues
    - – Job knowledge issues

  - » Produce "master copy" with changes to make before final technical review

Step 10: Conduct Final SME Review

- **Prepare for the SME Review**
  - » Make revisions agreed upon in technical review
  - » Prepare materials for the SME review
    - – Agenda (optional)
    - – Introductory materials
    - – In-basket documents
    - – Multiple-choice test
      - Sequence items by document number
    - – Item and document review forms
    - – Item explanation booklet
    - – Supplies

Step 10: Conduct Final SME Review

- Activity 1: Complete the assessment as a candidate would (About 1 hour 45 minutes)

- Activity 2: Review, revise, and document the content validity of the introductory materials and documents (About 4 hours)

- Activity 3: Review, revise, and document the content validity of the multiple-choice items (About 4-5 hours)

Step 10: Conduct Final SME Review

● Activity 1: Complete the assessment

» Review the scenario and documents

» Complete the multiple-choice items

– Alternate forms will be developed, therefore

● Test is much longer than the one presented to candidates (about 50% longer)

● Some items will overlap

Step 10: Conduct Final SME Review

- Activity 2: Review, revise, and document content validity of introductory materials and documents
  - » SMEs use **Document Review Form** to evaluate job-relatedness and quality of materials
    - – Are materials job-related?
    - – Are materials technically correct?
    - – Are materials clearly stated?
    - – Are documents presented in the appropriate format?
  - » SMEs discuss materials, raise problems, suggest revisions
  - » SMEs reach consensus on disposition of materials

Step 10: Conduct Final SME Review

- Activity 3: Review, revise, and document content validity of multiple-choice items
  - » SMEs use **Question Review Form** to evaluate job-relatedness and quality of materials
    - – Are questions job-related?
    - – Are questions worded clearly and concisely?
    - – Are details technically correct?
    - – Are response options plausible?
      - Do answers rely upon localized knowledge or regional policies?
    - – Is the key correct? Is point assignment appropriate?
  - » SMEs discuss items, raise problems, suggest revisions
  - » SMEs reach consensus on disposition of items

Step 11: Assemble Alternate Forms
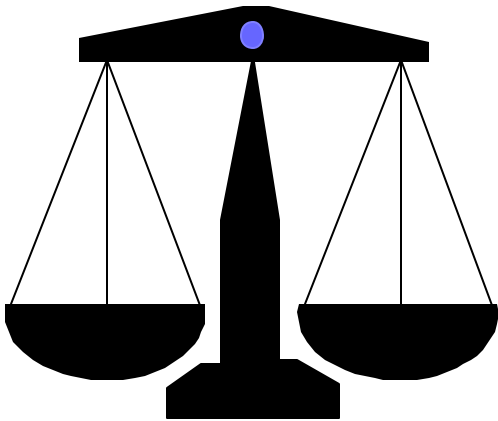
A True Balancing Act

- Both forms must follow the competency-based test plan

- Each document must be addressed by at least one multiple-choice item

- One item cannot suggest the answer to others

- Response options should be equally distributed
  - » Each option (A,B,C,D,E) will comprise about 20% of the total

- Response options should be appropriately sequenced
  - » No more than 3 "A's," "B's," "C's," etc. in a row

Step 11: Assemble Alternate Forms

Allocation of Multiple Choice Items to Parallel Forms

Competency	Post-Review Item Pool Total	# Items per Form			Items Used
		Core Items	Unique Items	Total	
Decision Making	20	10	5	15	20
Managing Information	15	7	4	11	15
Planning and Evaluating	16	8	4	12	16
Self-Management	17	8	4	12	16
Total	**68**	**33**	**17**	**50**	**67**

The header "Number of Items per Competency" spans the data columns.

Step 11: Assemble Alternate Forms

● **Prepare Item Documentation Booklet**

» Update the documentation sheet for each item

» Assemble the item documentation sheets into booklets

– Make a booklet for each alternate form (e.g., Series 175 & Series 185)

– The documentation sheets should follow the order in which the items appear on that form

Step 11: Assemble Alternate Forms

● **Prepare Official Answer Key**

Key for Hypothetical In-Basket Series 175

Item # on Series 175	Item Dev. Code	Key	Score	Item #on Series 185
1	PE-03-1	E	2	1
2	PE-14-2	C B	2 1	
3	MI-16	D B	2 1	2
4	SM-18	E	2	
5	DM-01-1	B	2	3
6	DM-01-2	A	2	4

Step 12: Conduct Final Technical Review

- **Who's on the review panel?**
  - » Assessment development team
  - » Section Chiefs
  - » Branch Director

- **Why do we need them?**
  - » Secure management-level policy review
  - » Ensure psychometric soundness

- **What materials do they need?**
  - » Introductory materials
  - » Documents
  - » Multiple-choice items, documentation booklets, and keys
  - » Competency/subcompetency definitions and benchmarks

Step 12: Conduct Final Technical Review

- **What will they do during the session?**
  - » Examine introductory materials and documents
    - grammar, syntax, clarity, diversity
  - » Review/edit multiple-choice items
    - Grammar, syntax, clarity
    - Correspondence to competency
    - Independence of response options
  - » Review/edit official scoring key

Step 13: Proofread!!

- **A Formal Proof Is Essential**
  - » Two people are involved
  - » One holds, the other reads

- **Look for Common Mistakes: Beware of Inconsistencies**
  - » Names of characters
  - » Names of places
  - » Dates
  - » Document format
  - » Missing pages in the final copy

Step 14: Prepare for Administration

- **Print Copies of the Assessment**

- **Prepare Directions for Conducting the Assessment**
  - » Materials needed by administrators
  - » Timing of components
  - » Specific instructions for the candidates

Step 15: Prepare the Test Documentation File

- **The Assessment**
  - » Prepare camera ready hard copy, original disk, back-up disk
    - – Scenario and Introductory Materials
    - – Documents and Document Map
    - – Multiple-Choice Test -- Series 175
    - – Multiple-Choice Test -- Series 185

- **Documentation**
  - » Item documentation booklets for both series
  - » Official answer keys for both series

- **SME Materials**
  - » Folders from first and second reviews
  - » Demographic information sheets

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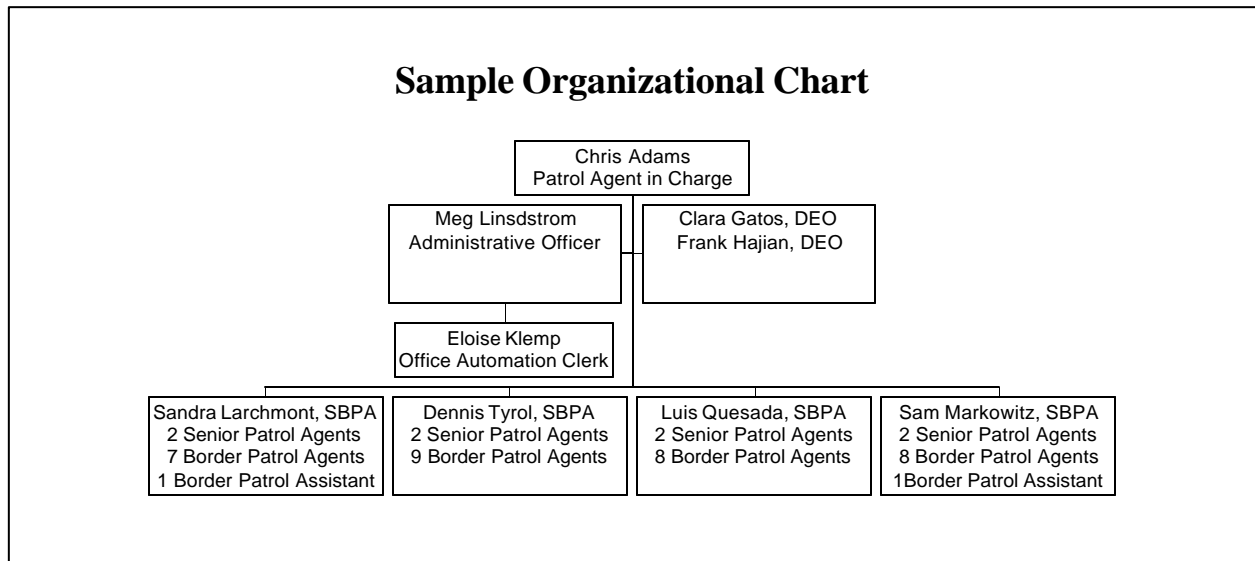# Fifteen Steps to a Competency-Based, Multiple-Choice In-Basket

SAMPLE IN-BASKET MATERIALS[*]

Ilene Gast
David Hamill
Research and
Development Branch
Immigration and
Naturalization Service
(202) 305-0600

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[*] These materials will be incorporated into a *Preparation Guide* for our Promotional Assessment Candidates. We have just completed STEP 8.

Sample Scenario Summary

- You are **Chris Adams**, Patrol Agent in Charge of the Crystal Lake station. Today is your first back after a two-week vacation. It is now 7:30 a.m. on Monday, September 10. . At 8:15 you will be leaving to serve on a promotion board, which will be held at sector headquarters. You do not expect to return to the office until tomorrow morning. You estimate that it will take about 30 minutes to review the documents in the in-basket, leaving 15 minutes to deal with the most critical one(s). You will have a few short breaks during the day when you can attend to other critical issues.

- The Crystal Lake Station is located in the Billingsley Sector in the southwestern United States. The Billingsley sector has seven stations and is responsible for monitoring 40 miles of international border. The Crystal Lake station has an authorized force of 53 INS employees.

- You report to **Lawrence Ayres**, who is the Chief Patrol Agent of Billingsley sector. Your major programs are coordinated through Assistant Chief Patrol Agent **Jesse Cook** at sector headquarters. Reporting to you are SBPA **Luis Quesada**, SBPA **Sam Markowitz**, SBPA **Sandra Larchmont**, and SBPA **Dennis Tyrol**.

- Your station has the lead responsibility in a multi-agency operation, Operation RATTRACK, which is part of a broader initiative, the Project SANDBLAST task force. You are a member of the Project SANDBLAST task force, which is meeting in Billingsley later this week.

Sample Organizational Chart

Chris Adams Patrol Agent in Charge

Meg Linsdstrom Administrative Officer	Clara Gatos, DEO Frank Hajian, DEO

Eloise Klemp Office Automation Clerk

Sandra Larchmont, SBPA 2 Senior Patrol Agents 7 Border Patrol Agents 1 Border Patrol Assistant	Dennis Tyrol, SBPA 2 Senior Patrol Agents 9 Border Patrol Agents	Luis Quesada, SBPA 2 Senior Patrol Agents 8 Border Patrol Agents	Sam Markowitz, SBPA 2 Senior Patrol Agents 8 Border Patrol Agents 1Border Patrol Assistant

SAMPLE IN-BASKET DOCUMENTS #3, 8, & 14 FOLLOW

From the desk of Sam Markowitz

To   Chief Adams

Date: September 10

Re: Leak on Operation RATTRACK

memo

URGENT

CPA Cook called me last night from Sector Headquarters. She tried to reach you until about 11:00 p.m., but had not yet returned from your trip. She had just received a telephone call from Dick Grady. He hosts the all-night talk show on KNWS-Talk Radio. Dick Grady invited her to appear to respond to his "digs" and then take questions from the public. CPA Cook said that Dick Grady appears to know much more about our plans for Operation RATTRACK than we have released to the public. Specifically, he asked CPA Cook to be prepared to comment on our strategy for this week's joint operation with DEA.

CPA Cook told Dick Grady that INS had no comment and asked him where he obtained this information. He told her that he could not reveal his sources. She asked me to pass this information on to you immediately and to ask you to handle it. I will be on location for the remainder of the day.

Sam

DOCUMENT 3

U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service

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425 I Street NW
Washington, DC 20536

August 30

MEMORANDUM FOR CHRIS ADAMS
                                PATROL AGENT IN CHARGE – CRYSTAL LAKE STATION

FROM: James Robie, Commander *JRobie*
                    BORTAC

SUBJECT: Request for detail of Dennis Tyrol to BORTAC

     We are very impressed with SBPA Dennis Tyrol's BORTAC skills and abilities. He successfully completed the Advanced Tactical Training Course and is the first in a long time to achieve a perfect score on the written examination. He also used novel techniques to navigate the obstacle course and set a course record. He is an exceptional member of the BORTAC unit and the Border Patrol.

     Later this month, the BORTAC unit will again conduct the Advanced Tactical Training Course, which SBPA Tyrol completed in March. While I know he is kept very busy with his duties at the station, we would like him to serve as an assistant instructor for the next administration of the advanced course. While he was completing the course in March, he indicated strong interest in serving as a BORTAC instructor. The course is scheduled to begin September 24 and runs for two weeks until October 5

     I know this is short notice, but we will need to know whether SBPA Tyrol can assist us with this course administration no later than noon on September 10.

DOCUMENT 8

Date: 9/03 6:39 AM
Sender: Camille Larson
To: Chris Adams
Priority: Normal
Subject: Surplus Communications Equipment

This is to confirm your enrollment in CPR training. You have elected the following session:

Course Name:	CPR Certification Training
Date:	Thursday, September 13
Time:	9:00 a.m. **B** noon
Location:	Sector HQ, Room 507

It is mandatory that all agents in the Billingsley sector be certified in CPR. If you are unable to attend this session, please notify me immediately by phone or e-mail. We will be offering CPR training through the end of September on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 9:00 a.m.

DOCUMENT 14

DM   1.   In Document 3, SBPA Markowitz informs you that a radio talk show intends to ask ACPA Cook about Operation RATTRACK. What is the **MOST** critical issue raised in this document?
- A)   Dick Grady's invitation to ACPA Cook
- B)   SBPA Markowitz's location for the remainder of the day
- C)   CPA Cook's inability to reach you last night
- D)   Dick Grady's knowledge about Operation RATTRACK
- E)   Dick Grady's refusal to divulge the source of his knowledge about Operation RATTRACK

DM   2.   Document 8 asks you to approve SBPA Tyrol's detail to BORTAC. Which factor below would carry the **MOST** weight in your decision?
- F)   SBPA Tyrol's performance at the Crystal Lake Border Patrol station
- G)   The impact of this detail on overall station workload and staffing
- H)   SBPA Tyrol's qualifications for detail
- I)   The dollar cost or benefit of this detail to the station
- J)   The impact of this detail on SBPA Tyrol's career goals

MI   3.   Which of the following documents would you be **LEAST** likely to retain after you have dealt with the immediate situation or problem it raises?
- A)   Document 6: Neil Kluski's e-mail message
- B)   Document 7: ACPA Cook's e-mail message
- C)   Document 8: Chief Robie's memo
- D)   Document 10: Laura Evers' Letter
- E)   Document 14: Camille Larson's e-mail message

SM   4.   Which of the following activities would be **LEAST** appropriate to delegate to Meg Lindstrom? *(Note: Ms. Lindstrom is Chief Adams' Administrative Assistant.)*
- A)   Contacting Chief Robie about BORTAC's request for SBPA Tyrol's services (Document 8).
- B)   Initiating paperwork for filling SBPA Larchmont's position (Document 9).
- C)   Meeting with DEO Gatos to discuss her complaint (Document 11)
- D)   Calling Laura Evers about your appearance on her television broadcast
- E)   Responding to Camille Larson's e-mail message (Document 14)

SM   5.   Document 14 notifies you of a previously scheduled training course. How would you handle this engagement? (*Note: Chief Adams is supposed to be at a Task Force meeting during this time)*
- A)   Attend the training as scheduled
- B)   Send SBPA Quesada in your place
- C)   Send Ms. Lindstrom in your place
- D)   Reschedule the training
- E)   Cancel the training without rescheduling

MI   6.   Which of the following issues would you be best equipped to handle obtaining additional information (*beyond what is presented in the in-basket*)?
- A)   Document 2: Request to approve funds for ongoing operation
- B)   Document 4: Response to Captain McAlester's offer of surplus Army equipment
- C)   Document 8: Detail of SBPA Tyrol to BORTAC
- D)   Document 12: Request for funds to study environmental impact of fuel tank leak
- E)   Document 14: Notification of CPR training course

SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION OF ANSWERS

1.	**Correct Answer: D**

D the best answer. The most critical piece of information is the fact that someone has information about a secret operation and is leaking it to unauthorized sources. The source of the leak must be found as soon as possible. The fact that Dick Grady has invited ACPA Cook to appear on his radio program (A) is less important; it is ACPA Cook's decision whether to accept the invitation. SBPA Markowitz's whereabouts (B) are known and he can be contacted if needed, therefore, this information cannot be considered as critical. Her inability to reach you last night (C) is now irrelevant because you have been contacted. Dick Grady is under no obligation to reveal his source (E); thus, his refusal is not important information.

2.	**Correct Answer: B or D.**

The most important consideration is how this detail would affect your ability to staff the station (B). Another consideration is how much this detail will cost you, since you are responsible for monitoring the station's expenses. Although SBPA Tyrol's qualifications for the detail (C) may be the Academy's primary concern, it should not be yours. You also do should not make SBPA Tyrol's job performance the primary determinant of your decision. After all, he is highly qualified to perform the duties at the Academy. Finally, the pending allegations against him are unsubstantiated and should not enter into your decision. As a supervisor, you should be concerned with the developmental needs of your individual subordinates (E). However, the needs of the station as a whole must come first.

3.	**Correct Answer: A**

SBPA Markowitz's (A) situation is jeopardizing an ongoing the operation and requires immediate notification of ACPA Cook, whose assistance is required to resolve the funding issues.

The remaining options could be raised with ACPA at a later time. There is no need to communicate with ACPA Cook until you learn more about Mr. Kluski's concerns (B) and consider how they might be resolved. You will need to tell ACPA Cook about SBPA Larchmont's new job (C) eventually. Her departure creates a vacancy that will have to be filled. You should also tell ACPA Cook about the situation with DEO Gatos (D). Because of the potential for disciplinary action, this situation may be elevated to her level. Although it would be a good idea to give ACPA Cook advance warning, the situation is not yet critical enough to warrant her immediate attention. Finally from SPBA Tyrol's note, the fuel tank leak (E) does not appear to constitute an emergency. You can inform ACPA Cook once you have been fully briefed yourself.

4.   **Correct Answer: D**

It would be totally inappropriate for her to meet with DEO Gatos. However, with sufficient information and guidance from you or a senior member of your staff, Ms Lindstrom could contact Chief Robie (A), prepare paperwork for filling the upcoming vacancy (B), speak with Ms. Evers about the television broadcast(C), or reschedule your training (E).

5.   **Correct Answer: D**

This is a mandatory training course, but you now have a conflict that prevents you from attending at the scheduled time (A). Your only option is to reschedule (D). You cannot send another person in your place (B or C), nor can you cancel without rescheduling (E).

6.   **Correct Answer: B; partial credit E.**

Given only the information that its presented in the in-basket, you would be best equipped to contact Captain McAlester (B). You have no information about the kind of equipment that he is offering; therefore, you can not yet decide how the equipment fits your needs. A less satisfactory answer is (D). You could inform Ms. Larson that you are unable to attend the designated session. However, the training session is not until Thursday, and you have just returned from leave. It would be more efficient to work thorough your and then to reschedule training at the same time you respond to Ms. Larson's memo.

Before you can approve additional funds (A), you must determine whether funds are available. Before approving SBPA Tyrol's detail, you should check leave and official travel plans of key staff during that period to ensure that all station functions are covered. In addition, you should confer with SBPA Tyrol, should you decide to approve the detail. You should also confer with SBPA Tyrol before transmitting the memo requesting the environmental impact study.

Fifteen Steps to a Competency-Based, Multiple-Choice In-Basket

SAMPLE FORMS

Ilene Gast
David Hamill
Research and Development Branch
Immigration and Naturalization
Service
(202) 305-0600

Planning and Evaluating Critical Incident Collection Form

Instructions: Describe a situation that involved a Supervisory Adjudications Officer developing a plan or monitoring the progress of a plan. The activities for developing the plan or monitoring the progress of a plan could be either effective or ineffective. Indicate the job title and grade level of the Supervisory Adjudications Officer. Do not report any names, locations, or other information that would allow any person to be identified. Provide enough detail to allow us to understand the situation completely.

Job Title:_____   **Grade Level:**_____

1. What circumstances led to the situation?

2. What occurred during the situation? Be sure to describe the activities used to develop the plan or monitor the progress of a plan and whether the activities were effective or ineffective.

3. In the process of developing the plan or monitoring progress, what information should the Supervisor Adjudications Officer have considered?

4. What were the consequences, positive or negative, for the individual, for other individuals, or for the agency?

Document Response Form

Document Number _____

Remember to include:
- What would you do?
- Who would be involved?
- Who else needs to know about this issue/problem?
- When should action be taken?

Doc #	Format	Content	Job-Relatedness	Technical Accuracy	Format	Clarity		Use as is	Use changes with	Do not use
		Document Evaluation Form						**Recommendation**		
								Check if acceptable		**Check** one
Intro	**Text**	Scenario and background information								
1	**Note**	**Welcome to facility**								
2	**e-mail**	**Update of past 2 weeks issues**								
3	**Letter**	**Complaint from Citizen**								
4	**Phone msg.**	**Agent in the field requires assistance**								
5	**Etc.**									
6										
7										
8										
9										

Name_____   **Date** _____

Document Review Form			Job-Relatedness	Technical Accuracy	Format	Clarity
Doc #	**Format**	**Content**	*Check if acceptable*			
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Job Simulation Question Development Worksheet

Development Number:	**[item #]**	**Question Number:**	**Series [#] - [itm#]**
Documents Used:	**[doc #'s]**		Series [#] - [itm #]
Primary Competency Measured:	**3** **Decision Making**		**Planning and Evaluating**
	Managing Information		**Self-Management**

Item Stem and Alternatives

[Item Stem goes here)

1 2

       A) First option
       B) Second option
       C) Third option
       D) Fourth option.
       E) Fifth option

Explanation

Item Code: [Key Code] Justification for correct answer goes here

Other Response Options: Justification for incorrect answers go here

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Reviewer's Comments   *Reviewer's Initials*

Item Development Checklist

The ITEM as a whole should:

✓ clearly reflect a competency and subcompetency

✓ focus on a single problem

♦ the solution can involve several steps but only one question should be asked

✓ be totally independent of all other items for its correct answer

✓ be free of cultural, gender, or other biases

✓ be clear and contain simple language

♦ the sentence structure and vocabulary should not present any unnecessary challenge to comprehension

♦ unnecessary wording and details should be eliminated from both the stem and alternatives

✓ be printed entirely on one page

The STEM should:

✓ be self contained

♦ the candidate should be able to answer the question without the alternatives

✓ ask a question that has a definite answer

✓ be clearly worded and free of ambiguity

✓ be free of irrelevant unnecessary detail

✓ be grammatically correct within itself and in its relationship to each of the alternatives

✓ not provide any grammatical clues to any alternative

Each RESPONSE OPTION should

✓ be appropriate to the question asked or implied by the stem

♦ Do not include irrelevant options should because it is too difficult to come up with a fifth option

✓ be grammatically consistent with the stem and parallel in form

✓ be independent; response options should not overlap with other response options

✓ be stated as briefly and simply as possible

✓ be plausible

Item Development Checklist (Continued)

*In addition, **when preparing RESPONSE OPTIONS:***

✓ avoid the use of trickery

✓ always use the same number of alternatives

✓ avoid stating correct answer in greater length (or keep all alternatives as close to the same length as possible

✓ Place words that are common to all the alternatives in the stem

✓ avoid absolute terms like always and never

✓ refrain from using "all of the above" or "none of the above"

When developing the ITEM KEY:

✓ Make certain that the intended answer is only correct or clearly the best

✓ Vary the distribution of keyed item in a random manner

✓ Arrange response options in ascending or descending order

✓ Make sure that every item is independent of every other item

✓ Assign the same number of points to each item

Item Review Form

Item	Code #	KEY			Job-Relatedness	Technical Accuracy	Item Clarity	Quality of Responses
		2 points	**1 point**	**Other**	*Check if appropriate*			
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