



27th International Congress of
Applied Psychology †
11-16 July 2010 Melbourne Australia



**ICAP SYMPOSIUM: 15th July, 2010. 8.30am – 10am.
(Proposed program time-table as at May 2010 *)**

IAAP Division 1 Work & Organizational Psychology

Symposium Title:

**‘Best practices in testing and feedback training for development in a diverse global world’
Room 212 – 213 Melbourne Convention Centre**

Chair: Ray Elliott. MLQ International.

Presenters:

- Dr Clara To (Moberly Group Pacific, Hong Kong)
- Dr Elizabeth Allworth (Allworth Juniper Organisational Psychologists, Sydney)
- Dr Almuth McDowell (University of Surrey, London)
- Ray Elliott (MLQ International, Melbourne)
- Professor Beryl Hesketh (Discussant): University of Western Sydney

* Check ICAP website for final details of time and location – program: www.icap2010.com/index.php

Ray Elliott is an Organisational Psychologist with a multi-disciplinary background. He has led the design of State-wide Social Education courses, the Australian Interest Group in Coaching Psychology, and he works at senior levels in multi-nationals such as Toyota, Pirelli and Celestica. He is the Director of MLQ International (www.mlq.com.au).

Dr. Clara To is a Vice President of Mobley Group Pacific. She has consulted in the areas of talent assessment and leadership development for organizations in Greater China and Asia. Clara is a registered Psychologist in the Division of Industrial & Organizational Psychology of The Hong Kong Psychological Society.

Dr Elizabeth Allworth has over sixteen years of experience as an organizational psychologist offering consulting services in the areas of selection assessment and career development. With current and previous memberships to numerous psychological and ethic committees, she is also the recipient of the 2009 Elton Mayo Professional Practice Award.

Dr Almuth McDowall lectures at the University of Surrey. Almuth combines a fulltime lecturing post with consultancy in private practice. As a chartered psychologist who works with organizations, she uses psychological theory to advance best practice. Her current interests are work-life balance, coaching and development and cross-cultural testing and assessment.

Professor Beryl Hesketh has held senior executive positions in several universities and taught and published extensively in organizational psychology and received consistent ARC funding for her applied decision-making research. She was awarded the Australian Psychological Society Elton Mayo Award in 1997.

**Symposium
Description:**

This symposium presents seasoned practitioners, authors and researchers from the United Kingdom, China and Australia who have worked extensively on testing standards, psychometric tests, assessor training and coaching for development in different geographical locations around the globe. Challenges in conducting assessments, interpreting data, delivering feedback and establishing goals for development will be discussed along with issues defining best practice in assessor and coach training in different cultural contexts.

Psychological assessment tools can contribute to the effective identification of talents and competency characteristics predictive of outcomes for effective organisational functioning. Assessors and those concerned with the identification and development of talent have to possess relevant knowledge and skills and be able to recognise the implication of assessment data on talents' competency, work performance, and likely improvement goals for on-going development. It is critical for assessors to build their savvy in leveraging global best practices in testing and feedback with an appreciation of the local business contexts, standards requirements and cultural sensitivities in talent assessment and development.

<p>Key learning objectives</p>	<p>Learning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform psychologists of current Chinese, Australian and international approaches to developing and implementing standards in psychological testing for effective individual and organisational performance. • To provide perspectives on best practices, directions for continuous enhancement of standards, and training requirements for professionals in diverse world contexts. • To learn about available professional standards of psychological testing across different regions in Greater China (Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) and challenges in using different types of psychological assessments in the Chinese work setting. • To advance practice in leadership development through the integration of empirical leadership knowledge and psychometric assessment with current coaching practice and theory. • To inform and stimulate psychologists' awareness of important ethical issues associated with internet testing which have been given less consideration to date. • To highlight the necessity of conducting in depth qualitative and quantitative psychological research into developmental applications of psychometric instruments. <p>This symposium will be of interest to those involved in the review of testing standards, psychometric testing training, and the utilisation of empirical knowledge for talent development in a diverse yet interconnected global world.</p>
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<p>*Paper 1 Dr Clara To</p>	<p>Professional standards in using psychological tests in Greater China: Present and future.</p>
	<p>Aim: The use of psychological assessments gains increasing popularity in the work setting of Greater China. Users are typically hiring managers and human resources professionals with diverse educational backgrounds and career experiences. Yet there lacks concerted efforts in aligning professional standards across different regions of Greater China, namely Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan for users to make reference to. The present paper attempts to compare and contrast the professional standards of psychological testing across these different regions.</p>

	<p>Method: The study would be carried out with desktop research on available ethical principles and code of conducts from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Critical aspects would be benchmarked with the available information from other overseas authorities such as APA, BPS, and APS. Interviews would be conducted with the professional governing body and corporate users to solicit their perspectives towards the challenges in the professional use of psychological assessments in each of the locations.</p> <p>Results: Issues related to confidentiality, data interpretation, and intellectual property protection, will be discussed in the context of Greater China. Challenges that users face when using different types of psychological assessments in the Chinese work setting, including aptitude tests and personality tests, will also be highlighted.</p> <p>Conclusions: This paper will shed light on best practices, directions for continuous enhancement of psychological standards, and training requirements for the professionals involved in the use of psychological testing in Greater China.</p>
<p>Paper 2 Dr Elizabeth Alworth</p>	<p>The development and maintenance of Australian standards for test development and use in a burgeoning internet testing industry.</p>
	<p>Aim: Recent years have seen a proliferation of tests, test publishers and test users, spurred on by the expanded access afforded by the internet. Psychologists can no longer claim psychological testing as their protected domain. On the contrary, psychological tests are now a valuable commodity in a burgeoning, and largely deregulated, industry that is characterised by vast discrepancies in quality and standards of test development and use. This paper examines approaches to standardisation and regulation of occupational testing internationally and explores the extent to which current models are applicable and sufficient for the Australian context. More specifically, the review focuses attention on potential threats to ethical practice posed by internet testing.</p> <p>Method: This paper is based on a broader review of international approaches to setting standards for tests and test use. The findings are evaluated in the context of the current debate in Australia - stimulated by the introduction of the new National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) due in July 2010 - around the regulation of psychological testing and, more specifically, the ethical implications of internet testing.</p>

	<p>Results: The review highlights some threats to ethical practice in internet testing that require greater attention in the setting of testing standards. These relate to: (1) the entry of internet test publishers into the psychologist-client relationship through their access and storage of confidential client test data in their proprietary databases; (2) test users' access to client test data, particularly raw scores; and (3) test users' access to technical information about the psychometric properties of internet tests to enable psychologists to evaluate the tests they use while also protecting the intellectual property of test publishers.</p> <p>Conclusions: The nationalisation of psychologist registration and accreditation in Australia provides an opportunity for the implementation of a system that raises standards of tests and test users to the benefit of the community. The establishment of these standards needs to give due consideration to the unique features of internet testing that have undermined psychologists' access to test data and have threatened their ability to provide an ethical and confidential service to their clients.</p>
<p>Paper 3 Ray Elliott</p>	<p>Getting the balance right: Utilising psychometric assessment inputs and evidence based theories in the coaching 'reflective space' for leadership development.</p>
	<p>Aim: Discussions within the emergent Coaching Psychology literature often focus on the practice of leadership development. Yet this domain within psychology continues to be disconnected from the considerable empirical literature about leadership and leadership assessment. Similarly, the scientific leadership literature has only recently begun to focus on how leadership is developed. Likely reasons for this include premature domain self-limiting assumptions and restrictions on how scientific knowledge itself progresses.</p> <p>However, this lack of literature cross-engagement is brought into sharp focus for professional leadership development coaches. Recognition of this separation brings an imperative for applied psychology to achieve comprehensive integration in leadership development. This entails review of current knowledge domain boundaries, techniques, skills and relevant ethical principles and practices.</p> <p>Method: The conceptual framework for the 'coaching reflective space' was presented by Elliott (2007) following systematic client coaching case study analyses and naturalistic participant-observer reflections on actual coaching practice. These methods are extended to include observer review of coaching processes to incorporate scientifically established leadership theories and an examination of necessary associated ethical practices. Additionally, description and review is made of the utilisation of psychometric leadership assessments, such as the MLQ360, to achieve integrated adopted coachee goals informed by such scientific theories.</p>

	<p>Results: The conceptual framework for the reflective space, extended to leadership assessment and development, provides a cognitive organiser for the systematic utilisation of salient knowledge domains, information inputs and processes within the complex coaching relationship. It demonstrates how evidence based leadership theories, such as the transformational-transactional theory; inform coachee goal attainment without diminishing coachee self-actualisation. It describes and contextualises necessary coach-managed expert and facilitative modalities, and associated ethical transitions, to establish, maintain and bound the reflective space.</p> <p>Conclusion: This paper redefines required parameters in coaching for leadership development (Elliott, 2005) through an extended conceptuality for the coaching reflective space. By proposing a more comprehensive model for leadership coaching it provides guidance for good practice in test utilisation for facilitators and trainers. As a crucible for integration and innovation the conceptual framework for practice itself provides an evaluation point for current coaching and leadership scientific literatures. Suggestions for further research are made.</p>
<p>Paper 4: Dr Almuth McDowell</p>	<p>Underpinning best testing practice by combining qualitative and quantitative methods.</p>
	<p>Aim: The aim of this paper is to develop methods for bridging the gulf between psychological research and the way that psychological tests are being used in organisational practice, with particular reference to a cross-cultural context. Much work in testing is purely numbers driven, however this presupposes that relevant constructs and measures need no passport and can indeed be understood and interpreted by considering numbers alone. Whilst such studies are clearly needed to further our understanding, we argue that they need to be augmented by qualitative techniques. The latter are particularly valuable when considering approaches that do not lend themselves to traditional techniques such as factor analysis, locally developed competency based indicators or frameworks are one example.</p> <p>Method: This paper will first present a qualitative synthesis of existing research on testing to demonstrating how we lack an evidence base in particular for developmental applications of testing. This review will be augmented by the integration of existing research, one cross-cultural comparison and one case study investigating leadership in a SE Asian context.</p>

Results:

Findings demonstrate that whilst at face value psychometric constructs may appear to travel across borders, interpretations and understanding on part of test takers and end users appear to have subtle differences. .

Conclusions:

The content of this paper has implications for test use and interpretation. Qualitative techniques such as focus groups and interviews offer a rich but robust approach to initial validation, that allow better definition of the 'criterion space' (Bartram, 2005), and there is a need to bring relevant research into the psychological domain particularly when considering test use contexts such as leadership development. Finally, we will make the link to emerging test use contexts such as coaching, integrating our recent work on developing guidance for best practice (Smewing & McDowall, 2009; McDowall & Smewing, 2009).