



The ITC Archives: Interviews with the Early Leaders of the ITC



RONALD HAMBLETON

As explained in the cover e-mail, the ITC Council would appreciate your providing detailed answers to the following questions:

- 1. During what year did you become involved with the ITC, how did this affiliation occur (e.g. were you asked to join the ITC, were you a representative of another organization, or did you elect to become involved), and what was the nature of your initial work on the ITC?**

“I became involved with the ITC in 1982 and my close connection continued for 32 years. I was elected to serve on the ITC council several times with four year terms, and I was elected President for a four-year term (1990 to 1994) and with that election, I served four years as Vice President and four more years as Past President and I even served as Secretary for four years. I also served as IAAP’s representative to the ITC Council. I served too as an early editor of our journal that appeared in the European Journal of Psychological Assessment. It all began for me when I was appointed APA’s representative to the ITC. As a Canadian, working in the US, with British parents and relatives, and teaching many international students, I was attracted to many international testing issues and practices. I think my work on the AERA, APA, and NCME Test Standards was the impetus for the APA appointment, and I was very happy to be nominated. Never did I expect 32 years later to be still involved.”

- 2. What were your initial impressions of the ITC, including its organizational structure, missions, and personnel?**

“Well, in 1982, the situation with the ITC was that it was early in its development. There was a rough draft of a constitution and by-laws, an executive including Ken Miller, John Toplis, and Jac Zaal, and a small number of Council members including Elizabeth Nair from Singapore and Rolf Prinsloo from South Africa. Income was perhaps \$2000 a year. As I was the APA representative, and because of APA’s size and importance in the world of psychology, I was immediately appointed to the Council. I can say now that I was pretty disappointed with the situation. I judged the ITC to be without a clear set of goals, and no money to do much anyway. In my first report to the APA following the ITC Council meeting in 1982 I indicated that I thought the APA should seriously consider withdrawing their support. One activity where the ITC was successful in the early years was organizing symposia for meetings of the International Congress of Psychology and the International Association of Applied Psychology. These were fun to work on and somewhat useful to the testing field, but rarely did publications result, and so the impact of these efforts was small.”



3. Who were some of the key leaders in the ITC at that time and what were their roles?

"I greatly admired Ype Poortinga from the Netherlands but his direct involvement was minimal after 1982. He had been ITC President in the earlier years, and he had leadership skills and worldwide credibility as a famous cross cultural psychologist but he stayed on the margins of the organization by his own choice. Justin Schlegel from France edited the Bulletin for the ITC and did a wonderful job—He identified the issues for publication, edited the manuscripts, produced copies of the publication, and distributed them too. He was a workhorse with these publications but the overall impact was low because of the very small number of persons who received the publication. There was only limited effort on the part of Council members to expand the readership. Jac Zaal was an early contributor and later published a book with myself on current issues in the world of testing."

4. What prominent changes have you seen in the ITC between when you first were a member and now?

"The leadership of the ITC through the executive and the Council has been outstanding and this has made all the difference since about 1980. I think of Tom Oakland, David Bartram, John Hattie, and José Muñiz and others from the past who brought ideas, plans, and energy to the ITC. The 10 conferences the ITC has held have been more successful than we ever imagined, the website has been invaluable, and who would have predicted the great success of the conferences, the journal and newsletter publications, and the various sets of guidelines. Recent leadership from the Executive and Council has continued to be strong and is the best hope we have for the future of the ITC."

5. Where has the ITC done well? What do you think the ITC's biggest accomplishment has been over the years?

"I have seen substantial growth in the ITC. Perhaps the biggest accomplishment has been the growth of an organization from very limited significance in the field of testing to what it has become today with conferences every two years bringing international leaders in the testing field together with scholars from all over the world to share ideas and advances, important and interesting publications such as Testing International and the International Journal of Testing, and the development and distribution of testing guidelines. For me personally, I am proud of our conferences, publications, and guidelines, but I too have appreciated the opportunity to develop my own skills particularly regarding testing around the globe. I am grateful too for the opportunity to develop friendships with so many colleagues—David Bartram, José Muñiz, Tom Oakland, Jacques Gregoire, Fons von de Vijver, Ype Poortinga, and so many other outstanding scholars. To be working on behalf of the ITC with so many friends and colleagues in a collaborate way, made the past 32 years to be the best experience of my career."

6. Where has the ITC possibly made "wrong steps" or mistakes?

"The ITC was just a few years old when I joined in 1982. Probably we made a number of mistakes. The failure to have a place for individual members limited the ways in which interested individual members could serve the ITC. I still think the membership is underutilized in the important work of the ITC."



I had some strong negative feelings about the lack of productivity in the early years of the ITC. Progress was too slow and hampered by lack of vision and inactivity. Eventually, that situation changed in the 1980s and today I see the Council energized and moving in many directions and with nearly everyone contributing to the work. I will be watching with great interest, and saddened that my time is up."

7. What do you perceive to be current challenges facing the ITC and what role should the ITC play in this regard?

"Testing is not having the impact that I believe it should have around the world. I'd like to see the ITC more involved in educating the leadership and the public in the many ways that improved testing could play in helping children, teachers, policy-makers, human resource specialists, and the public. I'd like to see closer relationships with PISA and TIMSS, for example, and other national and international assessment initiatives."

8. What do you believe the ITC should be focusing on right now and who are the key stakeholders that should be involved?

"I think the ITC already has a number of important initiatives and I would like to see those continue. I would prefer to see guidelines development, conferences, and publications succeed and supported. I don't know if any major expansion is possible or desirable. Still, there is room for some minor initiatives. Representation by the ITC or their designees, at national meetings or regional meetings can have an impact on improving testing practices. Also, I would like to see the ITC capitalize on the skills of its members in ITC projects such as offering workshops at national and regional meetings, furthering the uses of testing guidelines, and testing projects, such as furthering testing with special populations."

9. If there was one thing you could change with regards to the ITC, what would it be?

"I am not so familiar with ITC developments over the last four years, but I like everything that I see: excellent leadership from the Executive and Council, and lots of worthwhile activities."

10. What structural or organizational changes to the ITC should be considered to further its effectiveness?

"I think the ITC organizational structure is fine, though I wish the Council could find some important ways to capitalize on the strength of its membership. I would like to see more involvement of the membership on task forces and committees to do the work of the ITC. Maybe we could establish regional centers of ITC activities."

11. To what extent did you find it difficult to dedicate your time to the work of the ITC?

"When I joined the ITC in 1982 I was early in my career and besides that, not much was required each year of council members. Later as I become more involved, time was not much of a problem for me because the ITC had become an important part of my career.."



12. How would you compare the first ITC conference you ever attended with the more recent ones?

“I have attended all of the conferences so far, and the first one may have been the best one. The meeting was held at Oxford University in England and everyone wanted to be there. Oxford was a famous center for learning, and even if the conference had been a bust, it still would have been great to spend time at one of the most famous universities in the world. Also, everyone lived together in the dorms, and we all ate our meals together. You couldn’t get away from interacting with colleagues from around the world, had you wanted to do that. The positive interactions and networking were an immensely important part of that first conference. Also, we had a great list of speakers—some of the best testing specialists in the world. We even published a book of proceedings. For many of us, that first conference was highly emotional and successful. But the conference in San Sebastian too was terrific. Paula Elosua provided a wonderful facility for the meeting, and she organized a terrific agenda. The social events were great too. I think the first and last conferences have been among the very best that we have ever had.”

13. Among your various contributions, what do you believe may be your lasting legacy?

“I hope my contributions overall have helped the ITC grow and become an important contributor to the improvement of testing practices around the world. I know I was viewed by some as a trouble-maker but I think my activities over the years proved to be useful and moved the ITC forward.”