Testing International

Volume 43, June 2020
Editor: Nicky Hayes

Contents

Kurt Geisinger
President,
International Test Commission

Visible and Invisible
Borders
Kurt F. Geisinger

I wrote most of this column, my last as ITC President, just after a flood of tough decisions faced me, the ITC Executive Committee and the University of Luxembourg. We made the decision to postpone the 2020 Conference to which many of us were so looking forward, to 2021. We hope it will be able to be in Luxembourg, but that depends on a number of factors related to availability, disease progression, and so on.

Those in control of such issues, at Luxembourg and in ITC, are themselves in the swirling and treacherous waters of Covid-19. Presently, we are simply planning to move the entire conference back a year; there will be no new call for papers, no new invited speakers (unless some change their mind). It also commits each and every one reading this column to be with us next year. On a personal level, I was losing sleep up until we made the decision. Now I am sleeping like a baby.

At this time, I can only wish health, safety, and happiness to each and every one of you. Be well. And now, I continue with the column I wrote before the decision to postpone. I note that I have edited some of the following message to fit with the above notice of this decision.

In one of my most recent columns, I extolled the virtues of international conferences. I happen to believe that breaking down borders is not only needed to the advancement of science, including psychological science, but also to developing effective professional relationships. And during the 2016 US election campaign, I gave a talk on testing at Mexico's National Institute for

Educational Assessment and Evaluation (INEE). I closed my presentation on test adaptation with a comment that we needed more bridges across borders and fewer walls, a statement which Americans and Mexicans will understand to be highly political, especially at that time.

I write this column while education and life in general is "hunkering down" here in the United States of America, as it is around the world. The Covid-19 virus is affecting life in ways to which we are simply not accustomed. It has already struck in China, Korea, Australia and New Zealand, Europe, some parts of Africa and South America, and most of the rest of Asia. I have had something like four national and international meetings cancelled in the past month. The Olympics were even postponed.
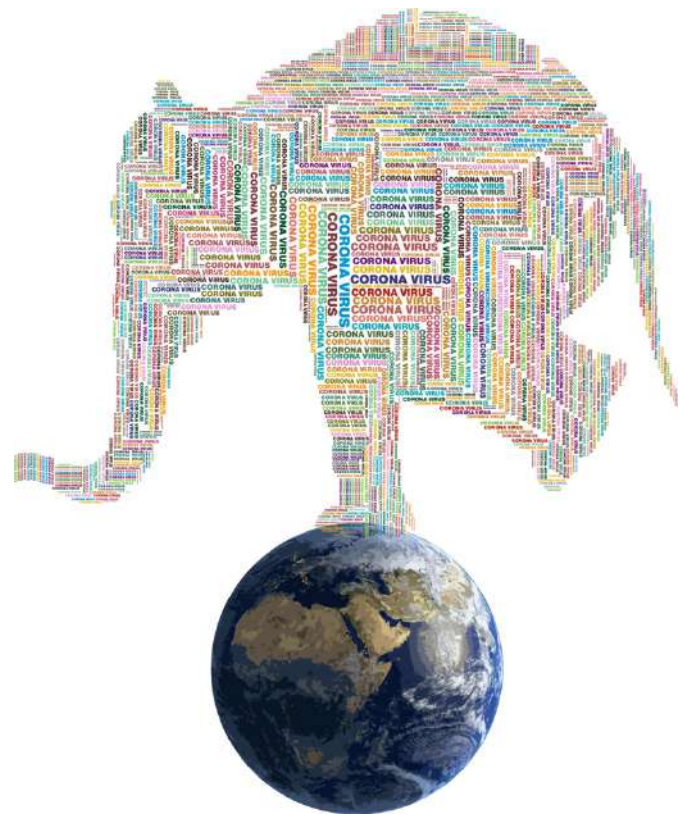
Why am I writing about disease instead of testing? Because Covid-19 has been declared an international pandemic illness. This disease does not respect international borders; in all likelihood, no disease does. And in so doing, it has emphasized the inherent nature and vulnerability

of our human existence. Its most pernicious effects affect people with certain similar characteristics including age and various health statuses. Across national borders, races, ethnicities, customs, and even genders and gender identities, we all have a basic humanity. We are all vulnerable and we all can experience fear on one hand, and joy should it pass by us and our loved ones.

That Covid-19 has transcended borders is a role model for international organizations such as the ITC, except that we bring knowledge and science across borders instead of death and destruction. I note too that it is interesting that one of the important considerations about the disease is the diagnosis itself and our ability to determine whether one actually has it. That is a measurement issue, albeit a medical one, but it is also a psychometric one. I heard a journalist on television news show report that presently for not one of the Covid-19 tests do we know either the Type I error rates (false positive) nor the Type II error (false negative) rates.

Certain components of that basic humanity can be been seen across human borders. There are certain characteristics known as etics. (Our own past President Fanny Cheung has written some of the best world's work on the emic-etic distinction, as did the recently passed eminent Professor Fons van der Vijver.) Etic research seeks to define common phenomena, characteristics, or constructs across cultures, which can be used to define a set of universal phenomena among all cultures.

To be sure, differences across cultures are exciting to observe and keep life fascinating, at least in my opinion. I happen to believe, however, that there are quite a few etics that describe behaviors all over the world; consider the need to achieve and the need for affiliation as examples. The latter has been stressed during quarantine due to the pandemic.

One of the earliest leaders of measurement in the United States and the world was Edward L. Thorndike. He is often attributed with certain quotes, although it has also been disputed whether Thorndike was first to report some of them and some even attribute the first statement of this to Rene Descartes, at least conceptually.

Thorndike wrote:
"Thesis 6. Whatever exists at all, exists in some amount.
Thesis 7. Anything that exists in amount can be measured." (1918, Page 16).

Early in my teaching career, I taught at a fine Jesuit university. I used to prostitute Thorndike's 7th thesis by adding, "and if it cannot be measured, it does not exist." With that addendum, I made at least one Jesuit priest upset. I do believe that such a statement is true for most human characteristics, but I am also enough of a logical positivist to believe that one should begin any measurement process with the idea that the construct under consideration can be measured, whether directly or indirectly. Looking for measurement and construct commonalities across borders is one of best areas where members of the International Test Commission have and continue to make contributions to each

other and the world of science. This work underlies our distinctiveness as a professional association.

There are a number of people I need to thank for their superb work for the International Test Commission this year! Professor Samuel Greiff and his staff, especially his adjutant, Lindie Van Der Westhuizen, prepared for a superb conference, only to need to postpone it after almost all the work was performed. Professor Stephen Stark and his editorial board continue to publish an excellent journal and Nicky Hayes has been superb in getting our fine newsletter out!

President-elect Aletta Odendaal has helped every step of the way for the past two years and I certainly must thank her for all her work for the association. My good friends, Paula Elosua and April Zenisky have handled the roles of General-Secretary and Treasure with aplomb, graciousness, and professionalism. Past President Dragos Illiescu has been exactly the counselor to the president and chief advice giver I had hoped he would be. He is a treasure!

The entire Council, including important committee Chairs, have done superb work for the association. In particular, I understand that two of our most valued members of the Council are dropping off this summer: Anna Brown and Neal Schmitt. Both have taken on important leadership

within the organization and will be sincerely missed!
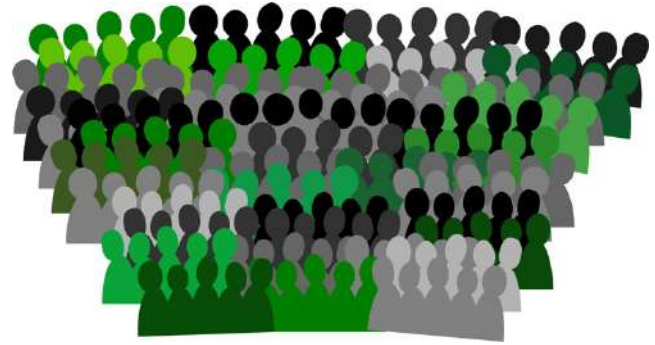
I had hoped to welcome you all to Luxembourg this summer. That proposition involved three suppositions: that the meeting was held, that you would have come, and that we would all survive. Please cross your fingers, pray, meditate, or whatever you choose to do to influence the Fates. I want us all to see each other in the summer of 2021. We will all remember this year. Let us hope that we remember 2021 as the year of a great conference, of our ability to see distant friends and colleagues, and experience a kind of professional rebirth. Be safe; be healthy; love life and our ability to live it. We have never been more one association and indeed one world with a truly shared humanity.

Kurt Geisinger
Buros Centre for Testing / University of Nebraska

Reference:
Thorndike, E. L. (1918). The nature, purposes, and general methods of measurements of educational products. Chapter II in G.M. Whipple (Ed.), *The Seventeenth yearbook of the National Society for Study of Education. Part II. The Measurement of Educational Products*. Bloomington, IL: Public School Publishing Co. p. 16.

From the Editor

## Nicky Hayes

Editor "Testing International"

Welcome to the latest issue of Testing International - and what an issue it is!

Sadly, we have to announce the postponement of the 12th ITC Conference, which was to be held in Luxembourg this July. The uncertainty and travel restrictions brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the hard decision to postpone the Conference for a year. Organisational details are still in flux, but we'll keep you informed.

But there's more news! In this issue, we are delighted to launch the ITC Learning Centre. This tremendous ITC innovation opens up testing qualifications across the globe: we may all be restricted physically right now, but we can still learn! The Learning Centre offers opportunity for professional qualification as well as for Continuing Professional Development. Thanks to the combined efforts of Dave Bartram, Pat Lindley and Dragos Iliescu, this issue offers a full outline of the Learning Centre's contents to date, as well as outlining its background and underlying principles. It's open to all members of the ITC right now, so do explore!

My thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue; and special thanks must go to Peter Macqueen, whose diligent compilation of international testing events is always such an important element of Testing International. Despite the cancellation of many of this year's events, Peter has continued to perform this thankless task, providing website addresses and other information wherever relevant. Do please let Peter or the ITC Secretary know if you are aware of any forthcoming events in your area. And do, please, send me any testing news or information that you think other ITC members might find interesting.

Nicky Hayes
Editor
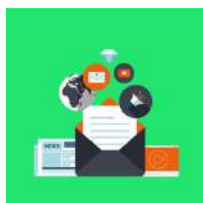
Your Newsletter Needs You!

We are always looking for new articles and ideas for Testing International.

This is our forum for professional discussions, information-sharing and opinions. So if you have anything you'd like to discuss, report or just raise as food for thought, we'd be delighted to hear from you!

Please send your contribution or idea to:

newsletter@intestcom.org

Many thanks!

Nicky Hayes, Editor

An afterthought

Conducting individual assessments safely is a challenge in these sensitive times. Wearing masks obscures facial expressions and lip-reading, and these can be important both to clarify verbal communication and for feedback. Consequently, many professionals are turning to remote assessments.

Most psychological associations are providing their own guidance for remote assessment, but sometimes it's useful to see what others are saying. Like many others, I've been involved in drawing up some of the guidance from the British Psychological Society. If anyone's interested, here is a link to their guidance document.

https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20%20Files/Psychological%20assessment%20undertaken%20remotely.pdf
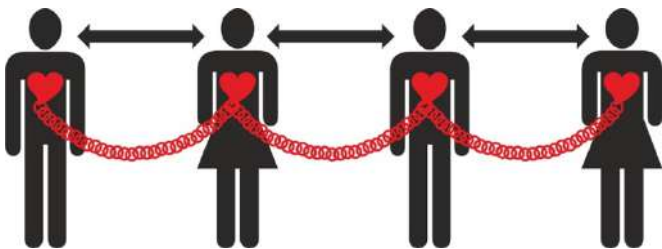
Conference News

The 12th Conference of the International Test Commission will now be held in 2021

Unfortunately, the impact of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) health crisis means that many countries have now adopted strict measures to slow the spread of the pandemic, including the restriction of travel to and from Europe, closure of borders and the cancellation of major events worldwide. We want to reassure our Community that the ITC and the University of Luxembourg (UL) have been closely monitoring developments. The UL has been coordinating closely with Luxembourg's National Health Authorities and preparing for all possible contingencies and eventualities. The health and safety of our community is of the utmost importance.

Given how quickly the situation has developed and the uncertainty this has produced, we regret to inform you that the ITC 2020 Conference **will not take place from 14-17 July 2020**. We are looking into potential options for postponement of the Conference to 2021, with the exact date to be confirmed. Please keep an eye on the ITC-conference Announcements page , which will be updated regularly as the situation develops.

Best regards and stay healthy,

The Local Organising Committee

Notice of Extraordinary Meeting

Extraordinary General Meeting
17th July 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the postponement of the 2020 Conference, we are required to use alternative platforms to conduct normal ITC business. New appointments to Council will have to be made. We will therefore hold an Extraordinary General Meeting, to be conducted virtually on the 17th of July 2020 in accordance with Bylaw 6.6, in order to attend to the election of office bearers.

There will be three vacancies for Council members, who are each elected for a term of four years. Elected Council members may serve up to two consecutive terms. The Council therefore invites nominations for these three positions.

All current ITC members are able to nominate or self-nominate people for these Council positions. To obtain a nomination form, please use email the ITC secretary at secretary@intestcom.org .

Nominations are also invited for the following Council Executive positions:

• President-Elect
• Secretary-General
• Treasurer

The nomination of Executive Officers is restricted by the Constitution to people who have been members of Council for at least two years prior to their election or appointment to office.

The ITC Learning Centre

After more than nine-months of intensive development work, we are pleased to announce the ITC's online Learning Centre. The idea behind this has been under discussion for some time, but work only started in earnest last year to create an online resource that will provide the ITC with a learning platform to deliver training in testing and test use to its members. In this first phase, *free access is being given to all ITC Individual Members* to online delivered open-learning materials dealing with many aspects of tests and testing for both initial training in test use and for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) - generally referred to as CE (Continuing Education) in the USA.

While there are many good academic textbooks and manuals on psychometrics and the design and development of tests, there is relatively little support for people who want to learn about practice in testing. Many Universities have excellent courses in psychometrics and testing, but they tend to be academic in focus and not to cater for the development of practitioner knowledge and skills. The ITC is keen to support individual and national initiatives relating to the development of competence and qualification in practical testing and test use underpinned by a sound knowledge of psychometrics.

In 2015, the ITC Council agreed to a project put forward by Dave Bartram as the immediate Past-President and Dragos Iliescu as the current President. It was aimed at developing a programme of courses to provide a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or Continuing Education (CE) resource for ITC Individual Members. This was initially to be aimed at practitioners who were already test-user qualified but needed some refresher training or updating, or those who practiced testing by dint of being a psychologist but had not had the opportunity to be formally qualified in test use.

The programme was also planned to provide the basis for a qualification procedure which could lead to a formal ITC qualification of competence in test use at the level defined in the EFPA Board of Assessment's standards as Level 2. This project would build on the work of Professor Dave Bartram and Dr Patricia Lindley, who had developed and published test user qualification open learning materials (aimed at what is now known as Level 2) back in the 1990s.
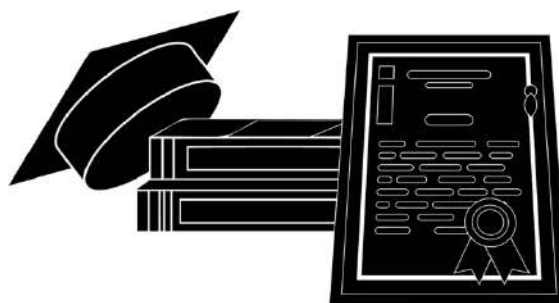
The aim was to provide an online Programme of Modules and Courses that would be free of charge for Individual Members of the ITC. For those wishing to develop, maintain or extend their knowledge and competence in test use there follows a description of the courses and materials from which they will be able to select what is relevant to their needs. For learners new to test use the complete programme of seven courses will provide an integrated set of materials for developing their practitioner competence.

The Learning Centre will be opened for users later this year with seven courses covering all the knowledge, skills and competences required for test use as specified in the EFPA Level 2 Standards on test use. (EFPA is the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations. The EFPA Board of Assessment has worked closely with the ITC on the development of testing standards over many years.)

Individual Members will be sent an email providing further details of how to register once the start date has been finalised by Council.

The ITC Learning Centre contents can be studied:

•	as a sequence of continuous courses leading up to an independently assessed qualification in test use: the ITC Certificate of Competence in Test Use (Level 2).

•	or as a series of 20 CPD Modules, where all the assessment is self-assessment.

Learners can work in their own time, at their own pace, and the whole process is self-managed.

There are plans to expand the coverage to more specialist topics (especially at EFPA's Level 3 standard) in Phase Two to cover more advanced areas of testing and test use such as:

•	applications of Item Response Theory,
•	uses of AI in test design and score reporting
•	test adaptation procedures.

The current seven courses and 20 CPD modules will be freely available to you if you are an Individual Member of the ITC. You will only have to register for the Learning Centre with the ITC.

The Structure of the ITC Test User Programme

In 2019, Dave Bartram and Pat Lindley joined forces with Dragos Iliescu to begin the work on updating, revising and expanding the original Bartram and Lindley paper-based open learning units. At the same time as they were doing this, they also transformed it for online delivery. The content is now delivered through an online learning platform. The domain name is www.itc-learning.net, and the domain is called the ITC Learning Centre.
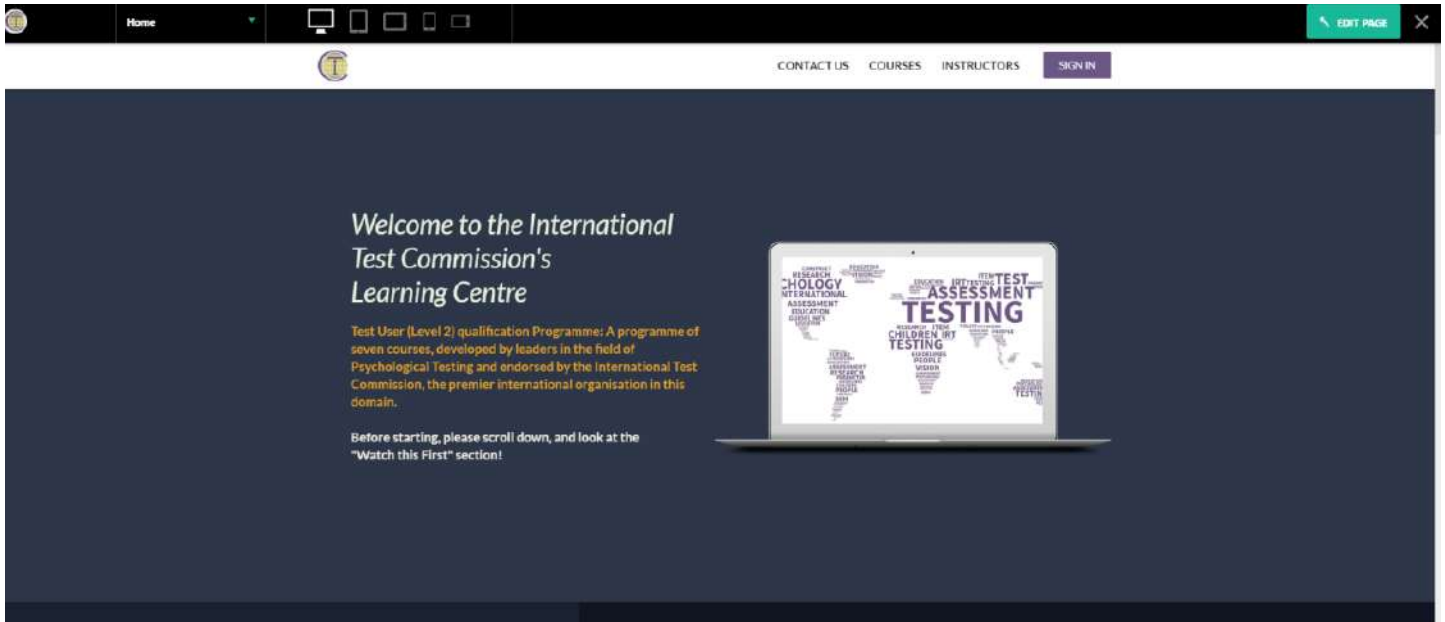
The approach taken provides learners with a set of online resources: test materials, test manuals, scoring keys and norm tables, sets of test reviews, and a set of modules for use in CPD/CE covering

psychometrics and practice issues. The learner works through these materials completing a self-assessment portfolio as a record of formative assessment. They can opt for taking the full programme of courses for the ITC Certificate of Competence in Test Use. If they do, they will have a series of summative assignments which will be graded by an ITC-appointed independent Assessor to provide an assessment of the learner's competence. (*Note that a charge will have to be made for this assessment to cover costs, but we will keep this cost down as much as possible.*) There will be no charge for covering the same material as a series of CPD modules as these would not require access to assessment resources through the ITC.

Employees of organisations that are Full or Affiliate members of the ITC are *not* automatically eligible for free access to the Learning Centre. You have to be a paid-up Individual Member. People who attend the ITC's biennial conferences will be Individual Members as the cost of 2-years' membership is included within the conference registration costs. Others may be Individual Members after having applied directly to the ITC and paid their US$45 pa membership subscription fee. The ITC will be pleased to discuss with Full and Affiliate members other arrangements for 'group' access to the Learning Centre for members of their staff, as well as other members of their organisations, or their clients.

The rest of this article provides an outline description of what is covered by the current materials and what is planned for future development.

In the ITC Learning Centre

When you enter the ITC Learning Centre at www.itc-learning.net, you are entering the LearnWorlds environment. All the content is from the ITC, but the functionality is provided by LearnWorlds.com.

When you first visit the ITC Learning Centre what you will see is the public 'landing page' view (i.e. the view open to members of the ITC and everyone else). If you scroll down, you will see material that you can access (including a video that describes how you register for the courses and use the online site).

Other things you will see include the courses, but the site may say you have to pay for these. To obtain free access to these materials, you first need to register with the ITC and get your registered login. You do this by completing the online form (click on 'contact us') or by emailing the ITC directly on learning@intestcom.org.

The website is live now so you can explore the landing page, but we will not be accepting requests for registration until later in the year.

Once you have been registered as an ITC Individual Member you will be enrolled for free on all the CPD Modules and on the 'bundle ' of seven courses (which have a face cost of US$700). You will be able to access all of these and all other courses by virtue of your ITC membership. This privilege lasts for as long as you remain a fully paid-up Individual Member of the ITC.

The seven courses in the ITC Test User learning programme
The seven Test User Courses are each presented on www.itc-learning.net as a set of Sections built from a series of activities. The seven courses (see Table 1, at the end of this article) cover a total of 430 activities, of which 277 are eBook learning – i.e. text-based online instruction. The other 153 involve the learner in assessments which are either formative (133 activities) or summative (20 activities). Broadly speaking, Courses 1 to 4 cover knowledge of the theory and practice of testing, while Courses 5, 6 and 7 put the knowledge into practice and focus on the learner's performance in practical assignments. All the externally graded assessment takes place on the Assignments in Courses 5, 6 and 7.

After you complete each Course you will be presented with a Course Completion Certificate. This confirms you have been through all the parts of that Course. You will need a full set of seven course completion certificates in order to be eligible for the ITC Certificate of Competence in Test Use. In addition, you will need to complete a final short multiple-choice exam and the 19 graded Assignments in Courses 5, 6 and 7. These will be externally graded by an ITC-appointed Assessor.

We estimate that to complete the full programme of seven courses is likely to take around 100 to 150 hours, including time spent on practical assignments. We would expect people to spread this time over a few weeks. However, there are no time limits and you can take as long as you want, so long as your ITC membership remains valid.

The CPD Modules

In addition to the seven-course model which underlies the Certificate of Competence qualification, there is an alternative structure for learners wanting to focus on shorter CPD/CE modules, rather than studying the whole package of seven courses.

The knowledge-based Sections of Courses 1 to 4 are ideal for use as CPD/CE and we believe that Courses 5, 6 and 7 could also be carried out as CPD without external input for the summative assessments. The complete Courses are rather too long in themselves for CPD/CE 'units' and the range of content within each Course is far greater than one would want from a single CPD/CE activity.

The sections of Courses 1 to 7 have therefore been combined into 20 CPD Modules, each containing

between one and four Sections (See Table 1). These are likely each to require between two and ten hours of study to complete. As with the seven Courses, completion of each CPD Module will earn a Module Completion Certificate.

Exceeding the EFPA Level 2 requirements

The learning materials are aimed at covering all the requirements set out in the EFPA standards on test use. If you are not familiar with the EFPA classification, you can go onto the EFPA website and download the standards documents. These explain the qualification matrix model of three levels by three contexts or settings[1].

Together the set of seven ITC courses are designed to develop competence at or above EFPA Level 2 and together the seven courses provide coverage of the use of tests in occupational, clinical and educational settings.

The choice of the EFPA standard as the framework is based on the fact that EFPA used the ITC Guidelines on Test Use as the framework for developing its more detailed set of standards for test use and its model of test use. These contextualise the standards in terms of three levels of practitioner competence (assistant test user, independent test user, and specialist in test use), and three main settings for practice (test use in occupational settings, in clinical settings and in educational settings).

Built-in assessment

The programme of courses is structured so that you work through it answering formative open questions, 'quizzes' and completing exercises as you go. File copies of these can be downloaded as PDF files and collected into a personal portfolio for each Course. By the time you finish all seven of the Courses or all 20 of the CPD modules, you will have a complete Assessment Portfolio which

---

[1] http://www.efpa.eu/professional-development/assessment. The key document is EFPA Document 115 (2013): *Performance Requirements, Context definitions and Knowledge & Skill specifications for the three EFPA levels of qualifications in psychological assessment* (Approved by the EFPA General Assembly 13-07-2013).

you can retain as a record of the work you have carried out. This may be useful in the future if you seek any formal qualification in test use.

It is possible to study Courses 5, 6 and 7 as a set of CPD modules without having to register with the ITC for its Certificate, and therefore without having to pay any assessment fees. This does mean, though, that you get no feedback on assignments and no grading. If you select them as CPD Modules, you will get module completion certificates for these as you would for the modules from Courses 1 through 4.

You therefore have choices: you can start out with the intention of gaining a formal qualification accredited by the ITC, by registering with the ITC for the Certificate in Competence programme. Alternatively, you can also complete all the courses as CPD Modules and then decide to add the independent assessment evidence needed to gain the Certificate of Competence. You would do this by registering with the ITC after you have completed the courses, to take the independently assessed course assignments from Course 5, 6 and 7.

The 'Test Pack' and other downloads

An extensive set of PDF document files can be downloaded by the learner. These provide support materials for the Modules and Courses and contain copies of the assessment activities. You can also download copies of:

•   The introductory course: "Preparing for the ITC Test User Programme". This is not assessed but provides important background information about getting qualified and accessing tests. You are strongly recommended to go through this before you start any of the other courses.

•   A short course that provides a basic 'refresher' in mathematics.

•   A detailed glossary of terms.

•   Extensive references covering material cited in the Courses.

In addition to the online course materials and the various PDFs you can download relating to the formative and summative assessments, you will have access to download a Test Pack, which contains a variety of learning support material specially designed for this programme. It has a cognitive ability test, an ability test battery's technical manual, a personality inventory booklet, scoring keys, norm tables, a personality test manual, and a test administrator pack of various checklists and log sheets. It also contains the Test Reviews Supplement: a set of 12 test reviews with accompanying information that is used in some of the Courses, especially Course 7, which deals with test choice.

The ITC Certificate of Competence in Test Use

Table 1 (at the end) outlines the seven Courses that together cover the requirements for the ITC's (EFPA Level 2) Test User qualification. While access to the courses is free for ITC Individual Members, assessment by an ITC-appointed Assessor for the award of the ITC Certificate of Competence *will incur a charge*. You will have to decide whether you want to register for the ITC Certificate before you start Course 5 as the externally assessed elements of the course are all in Courses 5, 6 and 7. If you complete all the courses using the CPD Modules you will not be externally assessed, but can elect to have that assessment later. Again, there would be a fee for this to cover the costs of the assessment.

The certification of competence from the ITC is important for people who want to be able to access tests and for one reason or another are not able to do so as they are not seen as having a formal qualification in test use. Attainment of competence on the ITC materials should qualify people to use tests in one or more of the defined settings (i.e. clinical, educational and occupational). However, it is important to acknowledge, that access to test materials is in the hands of test publishers and distributors, all of whom have their own criteria for deciding who they will register as purchasers or users of tests. Some may require applicants for registration to have a university degree or possibly a master's degree in psychology, others may require completion of some specific courses. The requirements will vary as a function of differences between publishers, countries of operation and the types of instruments you are wanting to obtain.

The ITC Courses have a mixture of generic content and context-specific content. For example, feedback and reporting of scores obtaining in clinical assessments may involve different knowledge and skill sets compared to feedback and reporting of scores obtained in occupational assessments. The competence you will develop if you successfully complete these courses is well in advance of that which is required on training courses that give general access to tests. But it will be up to you to find out from potential suppliers what their terms and conditions are.

We would also encourage you to seek additional instrument-specific training for the more complex psychological assessment tools if you intend using them as part of your practice. Most publishers offer courses that deal with use of the instruments they sell, and these include instrument-specific use and interpretation for people who are already qualified in general test use. The ITC Courses provide a solid foundation for this, but do not qualify you to use any and every test.

Procedures for registration and assessment for the ITC Certificate

 In outline, the procedure for registration in the Learning Centre will be as follows:

• You go online and complete the form on the www.itc-learning.net site to send your details to the ITC. Click 'Contact us' on the top right-hand side of the landing page (home page) and fill in the form provided.

Alternatively:

• You email learning@intestcom.org with a request to register as a learner in the Learning Centre.

Once you are confirmed as an Individual Member in good standing, you will be enrolled onto the members' bundle of 7 courses and will be sent an email asking you to set up your password and then log in. Your username will be the same as it is for your ITC membership.

Sign into the Learning Centre site and click on the 'Read Me First' course. Check out the introductory videos, and start using all the materials. If you want to register for the ITC Test User (Level 2) Certificate of Competence, you should apply to do this no later than when you complete Course 4 (send an email to learning@intestcom.org).

If and when you register for the Certificate, you will be sent an invoice to cover the costs of assessment. The cost has not yet been set, but you will be informed if you apply to be a registered user on the Learning Centre as soon as this decision has been made. (We expect the decision to be made before the site is opened for registered users later this year.)

You will be registered with an ITC assessor for Courses 5, 6 and 7. Your performance on summative assignments will be graded by the assessor on behalf of the ITC. For the final stage of the process you will be enrolled by your assessor onto 'Course 8', which is a simple multiple-choice online examination and a Certification awarding process.

It is still possible to have a formal assessment if you complete all the courses using the CPD route.

You will need to keep relevant evidence and get registered by the ITC to go back and do the eternally assessed assignments.

Use of all the materials is free for all registered ITC Individual Members.

If you are an ITC Individual Member, you will be able to register on the ITC Learning Centre website to work with these materials later in, 2020.(We expect this to be in September, but an email will be sent to all who are eligible.)

You will be expected to pay for any qualification options which may be on offer from the ITC (such as the Certificate of Competence in Test Use) which require the ITC to pay for additional staffing or resources. There will be no requirement to choose to do any particular qualification – you can simply use the materials for your own interest, self-development, and CPD.

We expect to expand the range of material available on the site, and to start to include some more specialist training materials in areas like test adaptation, use of AI in testing, multidimensional IRT models etc.

We hope you enjoy having access to this facility and look forward to hearing from you about your experiences with it once it is open.

We will also welcome suggestions for other topics which you would like to see learning support materials available for.

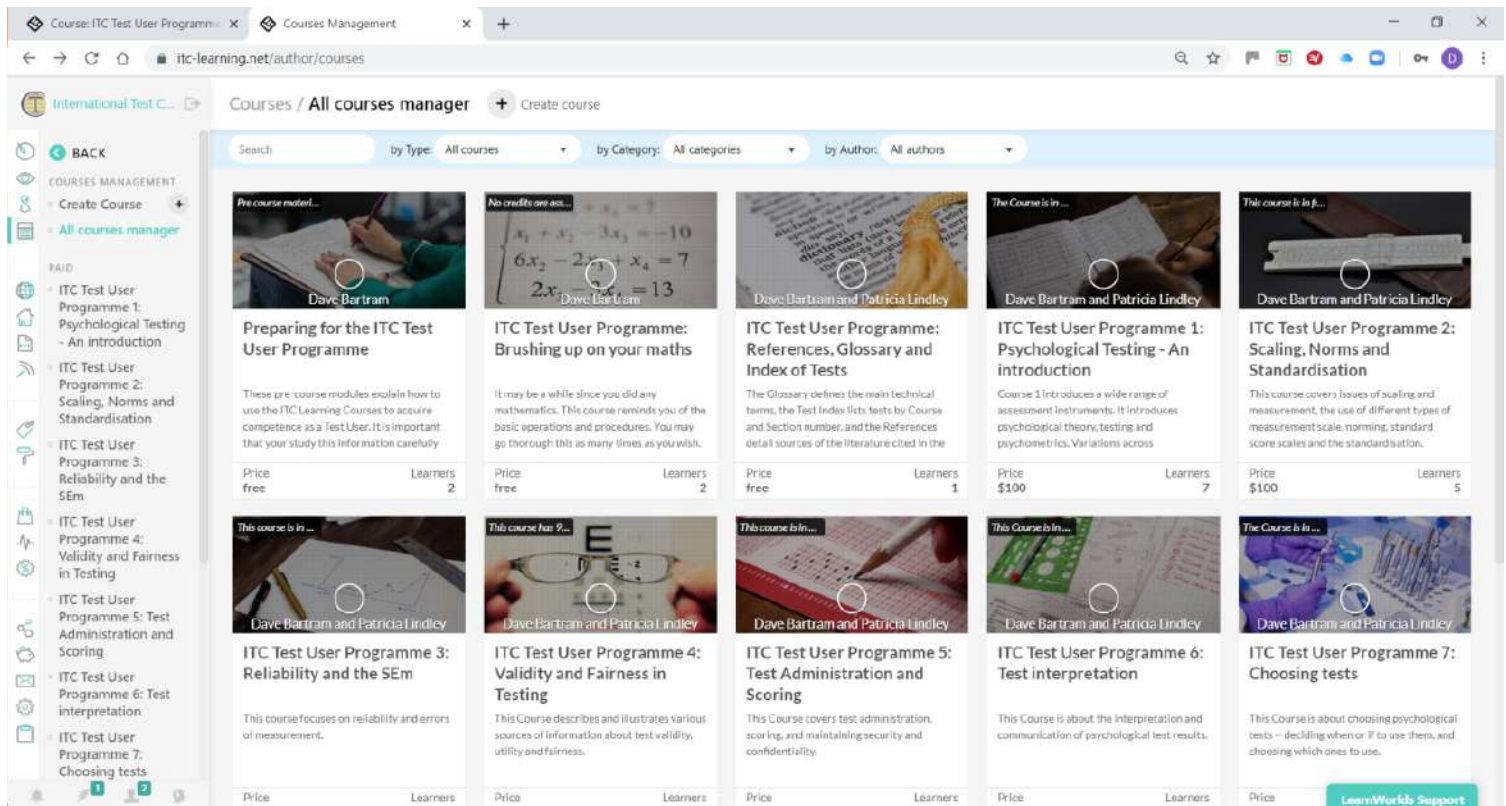**Dave Bartram, Pat Lindley & Dragos Iliescu**
4th May 2020.

Table 1. ITC Level 2 Courses.

Course Number	Title	Type of content
Pre-Course	*Read Me First. includes 3 short videos on how to use the Learning Centre tools*	Introduction to the learning centre platform and how to use it.
Pre-Course	*Preparing for the ITC Test User Programme: 7 sections*	Study guide, general background material on the qualification and on getting access to tests.
1	*Psychological Testing - An Introduction: 12 sections.* 4 CPD Modules: Sections 1.1 to 1.4, CPD Module 1-A, Section 1.5, CPD Module 1-B, Sections 1.6 to 1.8, CPD Module 1-C, Sections 1.9 to 1.12, CPD Module 1-D.	A long course, covering ability (maximum performance) and personality (typical performance) measures and use in all types of setting. Specific sections cover personality and personality assessment (1.6 to 1.8) and clinical and educational testing (1.9 to 1.12).
2	*Scaling, norms and standardization: 5 sections.* 2 CPD Modules: Sections 2.1 to 2.3, CPD Module 2-A, Sections 2.4 to 2.5, CPD Module 2-B.	A core part of the psychometrics knowledge base
3	*Reliability and Standard Error of Measurement: 6 sections.* 3 CPD Modules: Sections 3.1 to 3.2, CPD Module 3-A, Sections 3.3 to 3.5, CPD Module 3-B, Section 3.6, CPD Module 3-C.	A core part of the psychometrics knowledge base which includes coverage of item-response theory.
4	*Validity and Fairness in Testing: 9 sections.* 3 CPD Modules: Sections 4.1 to 4.4, CPD Module 4-A, Sections 4.5 to 4.7, CPD Module 4-B, Sections 4.8 to 4.9, CPD Module 4-C.	Validity and fairness considered in terms of validation in relation to a test's purpose and methods and procedures that are used across settings - work, health and education.
5	*Test Administration and Scoring: 4 sections.* Includes 3 graded assignments for the Certificate of Competence.3 CPD Modules: Part of Section 5.1, CPD Module 5-A, Sections 5.1 to 5.2, CPD Module 5-B, Sections 5.3 to 5.4, CPD Module 5-C.	Knowledge and skills focused on administration of tests. It also provides an introduction to scoring, score-reporting and providing feedback. This and the next two courses are very practice focused.
6	*Test interpretation: 7 sections* Includes 13 graded assignments for the Certificate of Competence.3 CPD Modules: Section 6.1, CPD Module 6-A, Sections 6.2 to 6.4, CPD Module 6-B, Sections 6.5 to 6.7, CPD Module 6-C.	Knowledge and skills focused on personality measures and test interpretation, feedback and reporting covering all settings
7	*Choosing tests: 8 sections* Includes 3 graded assignments for the Certificate of Competence.2 CPD Modules: Sections 4.1 to 4.4, CPD Module 4-A, Sections 4.5 to 4.7, CPD Module 4-B,	Knowledge and skills relating to making choices of which tests to use.
8	*Final Assessment*: A short multiple-choice Exam which leads to the issuing of your Certificate of Competence.	Learners who have successfully completed all seven courses and passed all the graded assignments, will be enrolled by their ITC Assessor for this final exam.
Support materials	*Brushing up on your mathematics.*	A short course reminding you of the basic operations and procedures.
Support materials	*Glossary, References and Index of tests* Programme Reference materials.	Glossary of terms, List of references for material cited in the courses, and Index to the tests described in the courses.
Support materials	*The Test Pack*	9 Downloadable PDFs consisting of tests, scoring instructions, norm tables, manuals, specimen sets of reviews etc.

Publication and Communications Committee Report
Neal Schmitt, Chair

The report on the International Journal of Testing by Steve Stark is contained elsewhere in this newsletter. The journal continues to publish excellent research on a variety of testing issues related to the global use of tests. Nicky Hayes continues to do an excellent job in preparing this newsletter.

We have continued to work on expanding the volumes in our book series. Previous published volumes include Schmidt, Houang, Cogan, and Solorio titled "Schooling across the Globe", a book by Dragos Iliescu titled "Adapting tests in linguistic and cultural contexts", "Next generation technology-enhanced assessment" by John Scott, Dave Bartram and Douglas Reynold, and "Higher education admission practices: An international perspective" edited by Maria Elena Oliveri and Cathy Wendler.

We are awaiting the completion of a volume by Craig Wells titled "Assessing measurement invariance for applied researchers" and a volume edited by Sumaya Laher on the history of testing across the globe.

Cambridge University Press is currently considering two proposals: a textbook on measurement by Stark, Wiernik, and Bornovalova titled "Introduction to Measurement and Decision-Making" and a book on technology in assessment by Woo, Tay, and Behrend titled "Technology and Measurement: Research and Practice."

As mentioned in our last report, the ITC and the authors are beginning to receive some royalties; our books will likely never be huge sellers, but we can use your help both in buying these volumes and advertising their availability to colleagues.

We hope to receive several new volume proposals in the near future including volumes on cognitive ability testing in various parts of the world by Scherbaum, Goldstein, and Yusko, a book on personality assessment by Anu Realo, and a treatment of the use of differential item functioning in various cultural contexts by Odendaal and colleagues.

We continue to seek volumes on other topics; if you have a topic you would like to explore with me, please let me know and I will provide feedback and help with the proposal process.

We are definitely pleased with the published volumes and those in various stages of preparation.

****

International Journal of Testing

News and Updates

Stephen Stark
IJT Editor in Chief
University of South Florida

The *International Journal of Testing (IJT)* is dedicated to the advancement of theory, research, and practice in the areas of testing and assessment in psychology, education, counseling, organizational behavior, human resource management, and related disciplines. IJT publishes original articles addressing theoretical issues, methodological approaches, and empirical research, as well as integrative and interdisciplinary reviews of testing-related topics and reports of current testing practices. All papers are peer-reviewed and are of interest to an international audience.

In recent years, IJT has published special and themed issues on a variety of topics, such as assessment of linguistic minorities, cognitive diagnosis modeling, noncognitive testing with situational judgment tests, biographical data, and interviews, and most recently *Challenges and opportunities in the Design of Next Generation Assessments of 21st Century Skills*. Earlier this year, we announced a call for papers on *New Technology in Assessment* and received a large number of abstracts that are under review (as well as new manuscript submissions on a variety of topics). To provide some relief to our regular reviewers during the trying months of spring, review requests were put temporarily on hold. However, we are now working through the backlog that created. Authors will begin receiving decision letters soon, with priority on the abstracts, and the timelines for submitting full manuscripts for the new technology issue, as well as revisions of others will be adjusted accordingly.

We remain interested in a "Target Article and Commentary" format for one issue, wherein an author is selected to write an article on a topic of broad interest that espouses a position or makes recommendations that are likely to generate discussion. When the article is ready, there will be a call for commentaries with a four-week window for submission. The commentaries will be reviewed, and a select number will be chosen for publication in tandem with the target article. If you have a topic and would like to be considered as a "target article author", please contact me by email (sestark@usf.edu).

Finally, I want to **thank everyone who has supported IJT** - our tremendously helpful editorial board, associate editors, ad hoc reviewers, and, importantly, authors. We were delighted to add **Dr. Elias Mpofu** as an associate editor in March and are always interested in receiving nominations for reviewing and editorial roles in the spirit of increasing our geographical and cultural diversity, as well as our base of expertise on testing research and practice.

If you have a paper you would like to be considered for publication in IJT, or if you are interested in reviewing papers for publication, please contact the editor, Stephen Stark, by email: (sestark@usf.edu).
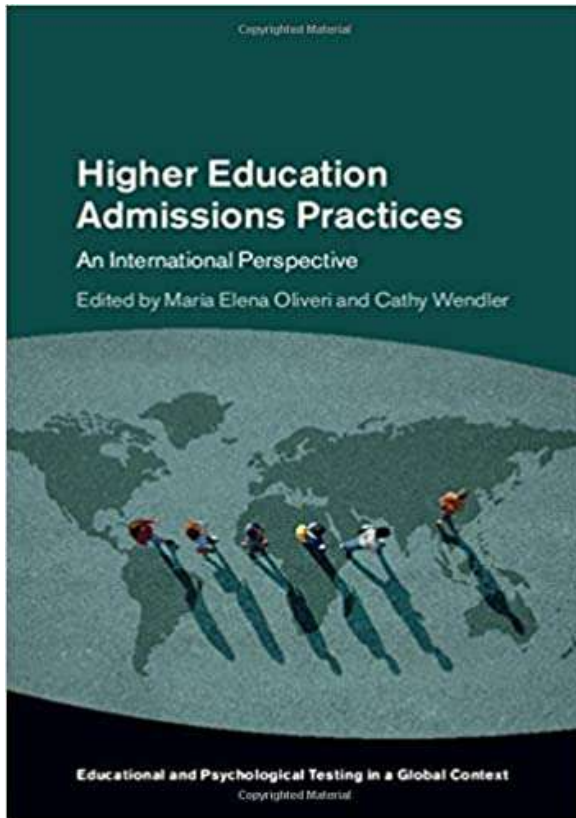
Higher Education Admissions Practices: An International perspective

Eds: Maria Elena Olivery and Cathy Wendler

ISBN: 978-1108472265

As the world continues to develop in a fast-paced manner, society is obliged to follow and, ultimately, to adapt. This endeavor rises many questions about sustainability and equity. One of them concerns the educational system and its challenges for the present and future. With a deep role in the economy and society welfare, education seeks to mold upon what the systems need all over the world, with implicit and explicit goals driven by the governments that meant to provide meaningful resources to their citizens.

Maria Elena Olivery and Cathy Wendler created and edited the *Higher Education Admissions Practices* book in order to put the analysis of educational tertiary level institutions in the limelight. The book examines how these institutions ensure that they will select the most fitted candidates for the studying program and how they ensure secure equity, from all perspectives. Compiled of contributions from researchers from different parts of the world, it describes the general theory of admissions and the flow of the process in great detail, with the aid of real examples from current practices across universities.

The book is organized into four parts, each of them focused on a specific topic regarding the higher education admissions practices. Each part is linked with present concerns like disparities and differences across the countries, as well as how each country tackles issues like funds, predictors for performance, cultural differences.

The first part bears the title of *Global Challenges and Common Admissions Models*. In the context of globalization and the requirements of a well-educated and skilled workforce, it seems that, obtaining a degree is no longer optional, but mandatory. In this perspective, universities are struggling with making an efficient and fair admission process, by formulating plans and strategies for attaining more students and guaranteeing their academic success. The authors compiled data-driven arguments from PISA examinations and OECD data and created a meaningful analysis of admissions practices. Within the six core chapters, the focus is on the main models, like eligibility-based and selection-based admissions models, open access, cultural context and the ethical dilemmas encountered as barriers in admission practices at a global scale.

In the second part, readers can get acquainted with the *Country Specific Admissions Practices*, where the authors discuss how the admission practices differ in Asia, Europe, Africa and South America. Throughout the seven chapters, the most outstanding admission model from each country is selected and analyzed in detail, in order to extract its value. The systems in South Africa, Israel, Cyprus, Sweden and Chile are discussed.

The third part, *Assessments Used in Higher Education*, is strictly about the methodology of admission assessments. Structured in three chapters, this part offers a glance at how the philosophy of admissions is centered upon the three different ways in which an institution could guarantee the right of studying to the rightful candidates. The first chapter overviews the classical manner in which an admission is done, by assessing the results and performance at written examinations. The second chapter is centered on how language admission test examinations are a part of the institution requirements, and the last chapter discusses a modern movement in admission methodology, which gives credit to character traits and individuality, as they are predictors for academic performance.

The last part, *Rethinking Higher Education Admissions*, describes the need for constantly rethinking the admission process. As the world is in continuous change, higher education admission is inevitably put under pressure to change its practices. Split into three chapters, the authors explore how, despite the success and high rate of academic performance predicted by variables like GPA,

secondary transcripts, letter of recommendation and so forth, other variables that uphold the key for academic success and the proficiency of workplace should also be considered. The main focus is on the ACT Framework, which is seen as a relevant way to predict academic success that offers an equal chance to all possible candidates.
The authors also emphasize how technology and mathematics can be used to narrow the interest of the individuals and to offer them the rightful choice of education. At the end of the book, a general view of the trends in higher education can be seen.

The book has a perfect balance of theory and examples, stemming from day to day practices as they are seen across the world, which makes it an easy-to-understand tool for both researchers and practitioners, as well as for non-professionals academics. In these troubled times, where issues like gender equality and political correctness abound, this book meets all the requirements to be a good fit for all readers, as it makes fair and unbiased analyses of the higher education admission practices. Written by a team of researchers and professionals in the field, this volume represents an interesting and scientific approach regarding such an important topic as higher education admissions practices.

Mirel Coca and Roxana Spînu

University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
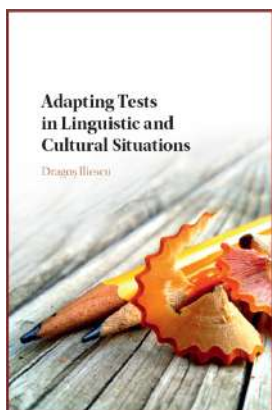
Adapting Tests in Linguistic and Cultural Situations

Dragos Iliescu

ISBN: 978-1107110120

In his monograph, *Adapting Tests in Linguistics and Cultural Situations*, Dr. Dragos Iliescu is generously sharing his extensive expertise and first-hand experience with cross-cultural import of assessment instruments.

Such comprehensive guidelines to exercise due diligence in test adaptation projects, combined with a vast array of applied insights make this book well suited for both neophytes in indigenization of psychometric tests, as well as seasoned researchers and practitioners. Starting from the very basics, the work offers an overview of the founding principles of testing, followed by a historical journey into test adaptation.

The book is structured in three main sections. The first addresses preliminary issues in test adaptation, thus setting a clear framework on what test adaptation is and what it is not, why, where and when a test adaptation is recommended, as well as for whom test adaptation is most relevant and how to proceed with the work lawfully and with competence. The second covers the weighty concept of equivalence held in conjunction with bias, as both pertain to three distinct topics: construct, method and item. Further, the domains of equivalence are examined from a linguistic and psychological (cultural and psychometric) standpoint. The third section is dedicated to critical phases in the adaptation process, which covers translation designs, issues related to test translators, pre-testing, norming and closing the process, including aspects pertaining to materials, publishing, copyright protection and documentation. Finally, the reader enjoys the intrinsic attractiveness of actual test adaptations examples from various topics and cultures.

Browsing the monograph feels like being guided at every step by a strategic thinker with a fine eye for detail, capturing all the available options out there, describing the pros and cons of each one of them, offering solutions to any potential problems that may arise during the process, while also amplifying and adding to the existing scholarship.

This is especially valuable as the test adaptation literature does not have a solid core of knowledge, and there is no compendium of best practices, or golden standard approach to test adaptation, yet. Therefore, researchers are required to apply their own professional judgement during every step of the adaptation process. This book then becomes a tool to assess all one's options, and provides a lot of help in making the best decision, with full awareness of the trade-off and likely outcomes.

What is more, this work summarises all the main points of the scientific literature (where empirically supported conclusions are currently not many), and weaves them with a practical perspective, and considerations for actually going through the adaptation process. To make it even more practical for the researchers or reviewers, the author has put together a checklist to assess the quality of the test adaptation process at different phases.

Lastly, this book invites all those responsible for test adaptation projects to consider themselves "researchers", rather than "adaptors", and to willingly adhere to all the rigorous standards of responsibility, quality and evidence of good science. The message of the book is clear: adhering to the scientific method as a "candle in the dark", when treading through the somewhat uncharted territory of test adaptation, will help guide and support the endeavour towards a successful outcome.

As a final thought, the book inspired us to perform our work as (future) scientists and practitioners with excellence, not just in relation to test adaptation projects but to any realms of science and practice we pursue.

Oana Istrate and Andreea Corbeanu
University of Bucharest - Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

---

If you are aware of an interesting or useful book relating to testing, and feel that it would be of interest to ITC members, please send your review to newsletter@intestcom.org

The ITC Young Scholar Program

The Young Scholar Program was created by the International Test Commission both to enable recipients to participate at the ITC conference, and to provide ongoing opportunities for scholarship recipients to network with one another and with experts in the field. This aimed to further their professional development and to address issues related to psychological and educational testing in developing and emerging economies.

The 2018 ITC commission to evaluate the young scholars consisted of the following members: Solange Wechsler (chairs), Fanny Cheung and Paula Elosua. The approved young scholar group candidates came from 7 countries: Abiy Aboret (Ethiopia), Anh Nguyen (Vietnam), Sabrena Gabriella Arosh (Malaysia), Ren Fen (China), Angela Lee Marsburg (South Africa), Carolina Rosa Campos (Brazil), Nariman Darvishov (Ukraine).

The candidates' requirements set for this award included the presentation of a poster at the conference in the area of Psychological / Educational Testing, the dissemination of knowledge about the work of ITC in the home country of the scholar (e.g., by writing a paper in a local professional journal or newsletter), active attendance in the parts of the 2018 conference program intended for sponsored scholars and active networking with the other ITC scholars after the conference.

Feedback was requested from all young scholars a year after they convened. Their feedback indicates that the young scholars continue to be involved with publications related to psychological assessment and were able to disseminate ITC goals and guidelines during their presentation in conferences or other meetings. They reported on the importance of participating at ITC conferences and meeting experts on the areas of psychological assessment.

Solange Wechsler, Paula Elosua & Fanny Cheung

Young Scholars' Evaluation Committee

A brief report from Ren Fen

Since receiving the scholarship from the International Testing Commission in 2018, a total of 7 academic articles have been published already, of which 5 are written in Chinese and included in CSSCI (Chinese Social Science Citation Index) and two can be searched in SSCI (Social Science Citation Index). In addition, 4 manuscripts are under review, of which 2 have got minor revision response. Besides, I was chosen as a China Scholarship Council visiting scholar in 2019, and now work in the University of Kent with reader Anna Brown.

Membership, Involvement and Marketing (MIM) Committee

Peter Macqueen, Chair

This was to have been a significant year for the ITC, with our Luxembourg friends and colleagues having dedicated much time and effort into producing a memorable Conference in July 2020. As I type this, in my home office, a decision has not been finalised on the exact timing and location of ITC '2021', but in the interim the ITC will be active. In particular, the ITC Learning Centre (referred to elsewhere in this newsletter), should be a great initiative that will enhance testing skills, and awareness, globally. It will be a major benefit to ITC members.

Membership and Fee Payment:

Thank you very much to our members (Full, Affiliate, Individual) who have paid their 2020 dues, and perhaps prior dues. Many professional bodies rely on income generated from Conferences in order to further their Mission. *The ITC is no different – and the cancellation of Luxembourg 2020 obviously means that we need to rely even more on the support of our members at this time.*

I would like to thank Ananda, in particular, for her efforts in securing our fee revenue.

Social Media:

This was to be an important Agenda item at our July 2020 Council meeting in Luxembourg, and should form part of our virtual Council meeting in July. We have a very interested ITC member and early career psychologist from Malaysia, keen to be engaged in enhancing our communications via social media. However we need to work through how this will function (including the interfacing with several ITC committees) and ensure that the potential benefits are realised without some of the issues that can arise from poorly regulated channels.

At the same time, this is the very time when many people are increasingly using technology and social media: for communication, information, skill development, study and collaborative activities.

We do have a LinkedIn account https://www.linkedin.com/in/itc-international-test-commission-263313101/ Currently with 287 connections (17 May 2020), we plan to update the site and make more regular use of LinkedIn. Although not discussed yet, I imagine that the ITC Learning Centre will make an appearance here from time to time.

And for those into Twitter: please note the following for Luxembourg, including the link to the sad announcement from early April. https://twitter.com/ITC2020LUX

Upcoming Testing Events:

In fostering or supporting relevant professional events around the globe, it would be great for the ITC to be more aware of such so that they can be listed (if not promoted) on the ITC website, or within Testing International, this newsletter. Of course, many conferences have been cancelled for 2020, although some have offered virtual programmes, albeit somewhat limited.

If you are aware of any upcoming testing oriented conferences in 2020 and 2021 (virtual and/or physical), please let us know!

Key contact address:
     secretary@intestcom.org

PLEASE SEND US YOUR SUGGESTIONS

Ananda van Tonder (Office Manager) or Paula Elosua (Secretary-General) will direct your email for action.

Upcoming Events

Here are some of the events of which we are aware, as of 17 May 2020:

AFRICA:
The 42nd Language Testing Research Colloquium
(ILTA) 9 – 13 June 2020 at   Hammamet **TUNISIA**.
PHYSICAL CANCELLED: Check website:
https://www.iltaonline.com/page/LTRC2020

The **International Association for Educational Assessment** (IAEA) 12-16 October 2020 at Accra, GHANA   **CANCELLED: Check website**:
https://iaea2020.org/

41st Annual Conference of Assessment Centre Study Group of South Africa (ACSG) 15-19 March 2021   Note: no information available yet: **check website:**
https://acsg.co.za/conference-information

ASIA:
23nd Japan Language Testing Association (JLTA) Conference, JAPAN
Was scheduled for 5 - 6 September 2020   , **Now possibly "after December": check website**
http://jlta2016.sakura.ne.jp/?p=1503

6th Annual India-ATP (I-ATP) Conference 2020
Details to be announced (2019: November, New Delhi) **(Check the main ATP website: to be updated)**
https://www.testpublishers.org/india-atp

EUROPE:

12th ITC CONFERENCE
Themes: Diversity and Equity in a Globalised Digital World 14 – 17 July 2020   LUXEMBOURG
Now scheduled for July 2021. Details to be arranged
https://www.itc-conference.com/
https://twitter.com/ITC2020LUX

European Association of Test Publishers (E-ATP) Conference
30 September – 2 October 2020   London   UK
Check website for status
https://www.testpublishers.org/european-atp-conference

32nd International Congress of Psychology
Theme: Ψ in the 21st Century: Open Minds, Societies & World 18 – 23 July 2021   Prague CZECH REPUBLIC
 Postponed from 2020
https://www.icp2020.com/

MIDDLE EAST:

no information to date

NORTH AMERICA:

Association of Test Publishers (ATP) Conference
Previously March – April 2020; San Diego CA
PHYSICAL CANCELLED; NOW VIRTUAL
Northern Hemisphere "late spring/summer"
 http://www.innovationsintesting.org/

The **35th Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) Conference**
Previously April 2020; Austin TX
PHYSICAL CANCELLED; NOW VIRTUAL
to be provided 16 – 30 June 2020
https://www.siop.org/Annual-Conference

National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) Annual Meeting
Theme: Making Measurement Matter 10–13 September 2020   Minneapolis   MN
NOTE: This is tentative: Check website for status
https://www.ncme.org/home

62nd International Military Testing Association (IMTA) Conference
5-9 October 2020 Raleigh NC
Check website for status
http://www.imta.info/Conference/Conference_Home.aspx

OCEANIA:
There are no specific Testing events scheduled although broader conferences will offer sessions related to testing and assessment.

Australian Psychological Society (APS) Conference
16-18 October 2020   Brisbane   AUSTRALIA
Physical or virtual: TBA
https://www.psy2020.com.au/

SOUTH AMERICA:

10th Congress of The Brazilian Institute of Psychological Evaluation (IBAP)
2021   BRAZIL
Details to be announced
www.ibapnet.org.br/   *(In Portuguese)*

38th Congress of Interamerican Society of Psychology (SIP)
12 – 16 July 2021   Asunción   PARAGUAY
check website for details
https://sipsych.org/congress/   (Spanish, English and Portuguese versions)

The Use of Video Conferencing Technology

Many of us are now using one or more of a range of software applications for keeping in audio-visual contact with family, friends and colleagues. Zoom has certainly become popular, although there have been concerns about privacy, as revealed in Singapore in April. https://tinyurl.com/yaefromg

For normal collegial interactions, there are probably few issues, but it is worth noting the formal position of some bodies. For example, this was released by the Australian Psychological Society (APS) in March 2020:

> *The APS does not recommend using platforms such as Skype, Zoom and Whatsapp to provide telehealth services to your clients as they are not compliant with the Australian Government's National Digital Health Strategy and leaves psychologists vulnerable to contravening their confidentiality obligations under the Code of Ethics.*
> The APS further adds: *Free versions of these applications (i.e. non-commercial versions) may not meet applicable laws for security and privacy. Practitioners must ensure that their chosen telecommunications solution meets their clinical requirements and satisfies privacy laws.*

The APS has instead recommended use of COVIU. Similarly, the Australian Department of Defence prohibits use of much popular software given the caching or storing of data off-shore. However, the (DoD) Joint Health Command has approved, also, use of COVIU.

Despite the above (with its focus on telehealth), many of us will still find great benefit in drawing on the applications mentioned above, along with others such as FaceTime, Duo, GoToMeeting, Bluejeans, Webex and MS Teams etc. And of course, to facilitate remote teaching and learning,

universities are making use of technologies such as Collaborate Ultra. A 'Google' of "Recommended Video Conference Software 2020" produces 7 million + hits. Similar to testing and assessment you probably need to consider:

- To what extent is it 'fit for purpose' given technology of participants? (and what features are required?)

- Quality (audio and video)

- Limitations (eg 40 min time limit for free Zoom software, with 3 or more participants)

- The utility (benefits – cost)

- Reliability and system stability

- User acceptance, training, and ease of use

- Security and confidentiality

Now is a good time to trial various software….and there is a very good chance you will still be making good use of such even when we can put much of COVID-19 well behind us.

Peter Macqueen
p.macqueen@compassconsulting.com.au
Brisbane, Australia
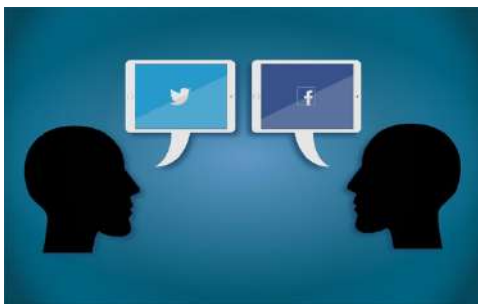
Food for Thought

The increased use of videoconferencing and video-based consultations brings the question of confidentiality to the fore. We have tended to assume that exchanges between client and professional are, and always should be, confidential. However, covert recording is not only possible, but owing to modern technology, very easy. In one court case in the UK, it was even described as accidental, in that the client had been unsuccessful in stopping a recording when asked to do so. The event was described as "regrettable" by the judge, but evidence from the recording was still accepted by the court.

What follows is a discussion piece, previously published in the British Psychological Society's "*Assessment & Development Matters*". It's a cautionary tale, based on real events but adapted as fiction.

Once upon a time*...   *A Cautionary Tale

Once upon a time there were two psychologists. They were both highly qualified and respected in their professional fields, and had been in practice for many years. They worked together as part of a team in a large organisation, and both of them were often asked to administer tests to people who worked in that company, or who were being considered for a job.

One day, they had to carry out neuropsychological assessments on two people who were being considered for promotion but were thought to have some neurological limitations. Both people - let's call them Jane and Joan - had been working in the company for some time - one for three years and the other for five. The psychologists administered the usual set of tests, wrote their reports, and thought no more about it. When HR received their reports, they decided that it was unlikely that either Jane or Joan would be able to cope with the demands of the new roles. They let them know about the decision, continued to interview other candidates for the relevant posts, and also thought no more about it.

What they didn't know, however, was that Jane and Joan had both felt a bit uneasy about the testing, and had covertly recorded their test sessions. They took these recordings to an employment solicitor, who looked into them in detail. That solicitor also managed to obtain the test manuals, which detailed the precise procedures for administering those tests.

The psychologist who administered Jane's tests had 18 years' experience, and was known to be meticulous in his professional practice. His persistence in attending to the tiniest detail of paperwork or procedure had often been an irritation to other members of the team. But in this case, it paid off. The solicitor worked though the covert recordings and the relevant test procedures, and found that everything had been carried out in an exact and professional manner.

Joan's assessment was a different matter. While the psychologist concerned was always professional in his interactions with clients, in the office, he often expressed his exasperation with unthinking bureaucratic demands, although he still completed his paperwork as required. He had been carrying out assessments for 23 years, so the tests he was using were very familiar to him. But when the solicitor compared the written test procedures with the covert recording, he found a number of instances where the psychologist had deviated from the instructions - only slightly, but in ways which might have made a difference.

In one instance, for example, the offical instruction was:
"Now I am going to say some numbers. Listen carefully, I can only say them one time. When I have finished, I want you to say them back in the same order. Just say what I say."
Instead of that, the psychologist had said
"I'm going to give you some numbers now, and you need to repeat them back to me."

There were many examples like that, throughout the testing process, and the solicitor argued that although these changes appeared trivial, they could make a significant difference to the way the client responded to the question. Moreover, there were so many of them that it challenged, and possibly even invalidated, the whole assessment process.

When the psychologist became aware of this case, he was shocked. He had been sure he was carrying out all the tests in the right way - but the truth was, he had become so familiar with his tests that he often used his own phrases without really being aware that he

had changed anything. The other psychologist used to check the test manuals regularly - well, he would, wouldn't he? But it had paid off.

Of course, the covert recording was wrong, and the court case would have become very complicated if the company hadn't agreed to settle with Joan out of court. The psychologist concerned had some long discussions with HR and senior management, and eventually decided to take early retirement. Did he fall or was he pushed? Who can say?

Moral: Do be careful about the way you're administering your tests, won't you?

This is a fictional account very loosely based on some real-world experience.

Nicky Hayes