CODESP NEWS

CODESP ACTIVITIES 2000

It has been a very exciting year at CODESP with the addition of new staff and our conversion to ParTest's updated Computerized Item Banking system. Par-Score was also upgraded and a new optical scanner was purchased to provide improved test scoring and item analysis services to participating districts.

During October and November 1999, we answered, on average, 197 employee selection material requests from our members per month. This year, during the same time period, CODESP staff answered an average of 408 requests per month. We have interpreted this huge increase as a sign that our new CODESP-Computerized Item Bank (C-CIB) test request process has been successful.

With the help of a talented webmaster, CODESP staff created an interactive website (**www.codesp. com**) making it possible for members to request selection materials on-line.   Member e-mail address hyperlinks and a Message Board were also made available on the website. Check the web page often as we maintain a list of test materials available and meeting schedules.

This year sixty-eight agencies contacted CODESP regarding membership information with 23 new districts becoming members. Many of these districts joined because of wonderful referrals. We really appreciate the great work of members in relaying information about our services to other districts.

As CODESP membership and available services have grown, so has our staff. In February, a Selection Analyst, Charles Viramontes, was hired. During the summer, a graduate student Intern/Clerical Assistant was employed to write new and update existing test items. This was so successful that we hope to hire interns every summer. In November, an Administrative Assistant, Janet Cheng (see page 3), was a welcomed addition to the CODESP staff.

Over 600 new written test items were entered into our C-CIB item bank this past year and many of our older items were updated. We have also updated our supplemental application forms and developed additional sample test materials during 2000. One hundred forty interviews, 21 writing simulations, 15 performance examinations and 41 supplemental application forms are currently available to our members. Sample job descriptions are also available upon request.

In 2000, CODESP staff provided presentations at four conferences throughout California. Membership Training Programs were held in San Luis Obispo, Fresno, Encinitas, Redwood City, Huntington Beach, Culver City and Fountain Valley. CODESP staff also visited several member districts to provide individual training.   We hope to see you at a training meeting in 2001!

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
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As we come to a close of 2000, CODESP staff would like to send holiday greetings to our members and friends!

During this time of year, the mail moves slower and you may need to plan ahead to guarantee that test materials will arrive on time. By improving our process we have decreased the turnaround time for members receiving CODESP selection materials, but we cannot make the U.S. Postal Service move any quicker. Please use the website or fax for selection requests as much as possible to avoid mailing delays.

Don't forget, CODESP offices will be closed December 25 — January 1, and mail service to our offices will be limited during this time.

JOB PERFORMANCE PREDICTORS

During the Fall PTC Conference, Dr. Harold Bernstein from Baruch College in New York, gave a presentation, *Personnel Selection: Is this the Final Answer?* He and his colleagues have done extensive research on the differences between cognitive (i.e., I.Q., knowledge to perform specific job tasks) and non-cognitive (i.e., personal characteristics) abilities and their effect on predicting job performance.

Historically, the primary focus of personnel selection research has been to identify individuals who have the ability to perform particular jobs. A wide range of testing procedures have been developed for selection and promotion purposes, including cognitive ability tests, structured interviews, personality inventories, and work simulations. The literature demonstrates some solid support for the validity of many of these devices, although the capabilities of the each method vary in their ability to predict job performance.

Currently, measures of cognitive ability are the best available predictors of job performance. Recent studies suggest that cognitive ability consistently demonstrates the highest validity for both entry level and advanced positions. Dr. Goldstein believes that there are more variables in predicting success on the job and that many have been neglected by popular testing methods. It is his opinion that this neglect is caused by most job analysis inventories lacking non-cognitive factors, such as personal characteristics. Since most job analysis procedures focus on KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities) there is a potential for bias toward cognitive and psychomotor skills, and against non-cognitive components.

Job analysis is performed to gather information on the critical competencies required to effectively perform the tasks of the job. Tests are then developed to measure these critical competencies. When the job analysis is overloaded on cognition, regardless of the importance of non-cognitive factors, they do not realistically capture the primary goal of personnel selection, which is validly predicting job performance. Job analysis needs to be broadened to properly capture non-cognitive aspects of performance including those required to operate in today's work force (e.g., working with a diverse work force, customer relations).

To increase the validity of the job analysis process, inclusion of a variety of competencies is necessary in areas such as: judgment; planning; organization; motivation; leadership; oral and written communication; delegation; human relations; attention to details; initiative; work orientation; effectiveness under stress; personal adjustment; and control. These competencies can also be included on interview rating scales to increase the weight given to personal characteristics.

Other studies have shown that cognitive ability may predict better performance during the initial learning stages on a job while non-cognitive predictors may predict better later when motivational issues become more important in terms of job performance. In many positions, personality factors prove to be more important in the long run than cognitive skills. Relying solely on a written test may affect the validity of your examination process. Are entry level cognitive skills for a school custodian more important than motivation, initiative and human relations skills? If employers are not happy with the quality of their entry level employees, especially in the area of personal characteristics, a review of the existing testing methods used should be conducted.

From the extensive research studies that have been conducted, validity can be shown in both cognitive and non-cognitive testing methods. To ensure that all aspects necessary to predict job performance are tested, a multi-faceted approach seems to be the most effective. Testing a variety of abilities using different formats (e.g., written, interview, work simulations) is the optimum method. This can be accomplished by carefully analyzing the important elements of the job, including the personal characteristics necessary to perform the job, and choosing the most appropriate test method to determine these characteristics. Dr. Goldstein believes that selection methods are critical because the people make the place.

References: *g. Is this Your Final Answer?* An article by Harold W. Goldstein, Sheldon Zedeck, and Irwin L. Goldstein.

WELCOME NEW CODESP STAFF MEMBER!

We would like you to join us in welcoming our newest staff member, Janet Cheng. Janet began employment as Administrative Assistant with us on November 27. She is a graduate of CSU Long Beach with a degree in Anthropology and minors in Linguistics and Spanish. She also holds a Technical Writing Certificate. Previously, she was employed with Coastline Community College. Janet will be assisting staff in bookkeeping, billing, test item editing, filling C-CIB request orders, etc.

SURVEY WINNER!

School District was the lucky winner of the drawing to receive a $100 discount for the 2000-2001 membership year. Congratulations!

The survey results provided us with valuable information that will be used to plan training meetings and to develop selection materials.

For those of you who requested additional training on the C-CIB process, we will be contacting you soon. If your need is immediate, please call or e-mail us.

Although we have added test items recently in the area of Information Technology, our survey results show that this area is still in a constant need for updated test items. We hope to meet that need during 2001.

The Riverside area drew the highest number of votes as the location where members would most like to attend a training meeting. Following close behind was San Bernardino. A meeting will be scheduled in this area within the next three months.

We appreciate the quick response to the survey and the many supportive comments received.

WRIPAC

The Western Region Intergovernmental Personnel Assessment Council will be holding their next conference on January 16 —19, 2001 at the Mission Inn in Riverside. There is no cost required to become a WRIPAC member. Participants are welcome from any public agency involved in employee selection. Conference information can be obtained from Roxanne Cochran (909) 387-6086.

For hotel reservations call (909) 784-0300, ext. 5036.

SUPPORT STAFF TRAINING

On Thursday, January 11, 2001, the California School Personnel Commissioner's Conference at the Doubletree Hotel in Orange will begin with a Support Staff Training Session. The sessions will be held from 9:30 a.m. — 4:15 p.m. Topics include: *Exam Planning, A — Z* (CODESP); *Analyzing Test Results*; *Finding and Training Raters*; and *Dealing With Difficult People.* The cost of the session is $25 and it is not required that participants be from a merit system district to attend. Contact Suzy Seymour at GGUSD to register at sseymour@ggusd.k12.ca.us or 714/663-6368.

"I DON'T HAVE TIME"

Nothing makes CODESP staff more anxious to train members on the C-CIB process than the statement, *"I don't have time."* By using our upgraded computerized item banking process members will not only save time, but will also improve the quality of their employee selection process.

The first step, in any examination planning process, is to review the district's testing history. Make a list of the classifications that require the most frequent test administrations. Begin by submitting C-CIB Requests for these positions either through our web page or by fax. Tests can be developed with your subject matter expert's assistance by completing the Test Request Form that is provided when C-CIB test items are sent to your district. Fax the completed Test Request Form to CODESP and within a few days a test and key will arrive.

When new tests are required, submit a C-CIB Request Form for each position. Remember, sample test materials such as supplemental application forms, interviews, work simulations, writing exercises and performance examinations can also be obtained through this process. Job description samples are also available.

If your district is still creating tests by typing and reusing out-of-date material, let CODESP staff get your district started on saving time!

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