



APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD

The Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Marta Townsend of Toronto to the Board. She replaces Dr. Robert Potvin who resigned from the Board for business reasons. Dr. Townsend graduated with a doctorate from Queen's University in 1974 and is presently a partner in Engel & Townsend. Prior to entering into private practice in industrial psychology, Dr. Townsend was the Manager of the Human Resources Operations Research Department at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In addition to her activities in private practice, Dr. Townsend has been active with the Ontario Psychological Association as a Board member, as Chair of the Ethics Committee and as President of the Section on Industrial/Organizational Psychology.

THERE'S MORE TO THE EPPP THAN MEETS THE EYE

Writing in the Bulletin just a year ago, one of the participants at an EPPP (Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology) item writing workshop described her experience preparing multiple-choice items. I read with interest and amusement how she described our coparticipants with "bowed heads", surrounded by mountains of texts, striving to produce sample items in our areas of specialization. My own experience in the credentialing process has demonstrated that there is more to the EPPP than meets the eye.

Developing an examination at the appropriate level of difficulty requires a critical judgment call. The candidates to be tested are expected to have knowledge that is considered "basic to entry-level professional practice in psycho-

logy" in the identified subject matter areas. Thus, one of the key objectives to developing such an accreditation exam is ensuring that the items fall within the appropriate range of difficulty. This issue was one of the most significant factors guiding our development of the potential exam items.

Ontario psychologists are making two other contributions to a valid screening method for judging potential candidates for our professional credential.

Those who participate in exam item writing workshops are also asked if they would be willing to act as reviewers of newly constructed potential examination questions. According to the procedural guidelines, three independent reviewers, with similar specialty areas, are simultaneously asked to review and edit a package of draft exam items for: (a) correctness, (b) subject-matter editing requirements, and (c) grammatical editing requirements. In addition, as raters they assist in judging the content validity of the items for licensure use. They are expected to assess each item in terms of four unique scales, namely:

- i) professional level for mastery of the knowledge;
- ii) level of importance of the knowledge to the assessment of entry-level job performance as a psychologist;
- iii) the degree to which a correct response to the item would differentiate adequate from inadequate overall entry-level job performance as a psychologist; and
- iv) the degree to which inadequate mastery of the knowledge required to respond to the item correctly might

lead to errors in professional judgment, causing harm to potential patients or clients.

Raters are asked to assign a number on a scale from one to either four or five (depending on the scale), so that a combined score across all scales could guide the Professional Examination Service (PES) in accepting or rejecting the item for the final selection of exam questions. The items that are reviewed and edited are then returned for further screening and adjustment before final acceptance or rejection by the Examination Committee of the American Association of State Psychology Boards in two detailed item-by-item reviews, in the specific subject areas of consideration. In addition, the Committee will review the item statistics prior to final scoring in order to check for poor items that may have been included in spite of the extensive review efforts.

Ontario psychologists have also been asked to contribute in the setting of a valid passing point for each form of the EPPP that is administered twice a year. The procedure by the Ontario Board used to evaluate the suitability of the passing point on each form of the exam administered is referred to as the Angoff procedure.⁽¹⁾ This method has been used in Ontario for the past two and one half years. It is a strategy that has been applied to set an absolute passing point for the group of candidates at each examination session. In theory, the passing point will discriminate between those candidates who meet the minimum performance standard at entry level, and those that do not.

There are four essential steps which lead to the determination of the passing point. They are:

- i) using a panel comprised of Board members and an equal number of interested psychologists;
- ii) defining what is minimally acceptable entry-level performance;

- iii) collecting judgments from the panel on each new form of the exam; and
- iv) combining the judgments to set a standard.

Psychologists are required to assess the probability that a candidate, who meets the minimum performance standards at entry-level, would choose the correct answer for each item. A probability value is determined for each of the exam items. Each judge's estimate of the minimally acceptable performance, over the exam as a whole, is the sum of the estimated probabilities for all of the individual items. The passing point is finally determined by calculating the average across all the judges' summed probability estimates.

This article should be of particular interest to those preparing for the next exam. You may be reassured to learn about the extent of participation from the population of registered psychologists in the United States and Ontario in writing and reviewing potential examination items. Furthermore, the participation of Ontario psychologists as judges in setting the absolute passing points for the Ontario candidates' exams, contributes to ensuring that there is an Ontario perspective.

For those who are registered, this article may encourage your involvement, in future, in such exam-related activities. Your contribution would be greatly appreciated not only by the candidates but also by the Board. You would gain the satisfaction of knowing that you have assisted in maintaining a credible and fair licensing standard for professional psychologists.

by Sharyn A. Ezrin, Ph.D.

- (1) Angoff, W.H. Scales, norms and equivalent scores. In R.L. Thorndike (Ed), Educational Measurement, Washington, D.C.; American Council on Education, 1971, 514-515.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVILEGE

Psychologists have called the Board to inquire about the confidentiality of their records in legal proceedings. The response calls for more discussion than is apparent at first blush. The following may answer some of the concerns; but if further questions arise, please call the Board offices.

It may assist to begin by defining the term. Confidential communication in this context is the oral and written information given in confidence by a client to his or her psychologist. The client expects that the information given and obtained will remain secret between the client and psychologist. The Standards of Professional Conduct in Principle 7 set out the obligation to protect the confidentiality of client's information.

"Psychologists shall ensure that their records and those they supervise are protected and the privacy of the client assured."

This is the psychologist's ethical obligation. There are situations in which this obligation will be changed. For example, Principle 5 of the Ethical Standards of Psychologists (1977) states as follows:

"Information received in confidence is revealed only after most careful deliberation and when there is clear and imminent danger to an individual or to society, and then only to appropriate professional workers or public authorities."

Thus, in life threatening situations, a psychologist may decide to inform the proper authorities about impending dangers or harm from or to a client.

Another factor which will alter the psychologist's obligation is the legal system. In the legal system, if information is held to be privileged, the per-

son who has received the information need not produce documents and/or give information except upon consent of the client. Privilege is that status given by the legal system to certain types of confidential documents or communications.

Historically, the judicial system has operated under the premise that it could operate for the benefit of everyone only if all information was made available to it. Over the years, the courts began to recognize the fact that situations existed in which the importance of keeping information secret was greater than the value of making information public. In Ontario, as well as in other Canadian jurisdictions, only three kinds of communication are generally regarded as privileged: communications between a solicitor and his or her client; communications between spouses; and communications made without prejudice with a view to achieving the settlement of matters in litigation. Psychologist's records are not privileged and thus the psychologist is obligated to produce his or her records when the psychologist and the records have been subpoenaed.

Two noteworthy items should be mentioned. First, the privilege and confidentiality of the information belongs to the client. Thus, when a client consents to the release of information he or she has provided to the psychologist, the psychologist cannot refuse to testify on the grounds that the documents or information are privileged. Second, even with the knowledge that the information is not privileged in the legal proceedings, it is not advisable for the psychologist to volunteer the information. The correct method would be for the psychologist to ask that his or her files be subpoenaed.

There have been instances in which a court has acknowledged and respected the confidentiality of a relationship on the grounds of public policy other than a solicitor-client relationship. In

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Dembie v. Dembie (1963), 21 R.F.L.46, the Supreme Court of Ontario, while noting that communications between a psychiatrist and patient were not traditionally privileged, would not force a psychiatrist to reveal what his patient has said during the examination. In Cronkwright v. Cronkwright (1970), 2 R.F.L.241, (Ont.), a clergyman refused to give evidence during a divorce proceeding concerning the communications between the parties whom he had counselled for the purposes of reconciliation. While the Court did not recognize or create a privilege, it did not compel the clergyman to testify. While other courts may have decided to compel a witness to testify, these cases are of interest in that Courts appeared to recognize the public interest in not compelling the professional to testify.

Under section 21 of the Divorce Act (R.S.C. 1970 Chapter D-8), communications made during attempts at reconciliation are privileged regardless of to whom the communications are made. The relevant sections read as follows:

21.(1) A person nominated by a court under this Act to endeavour to assist the parties to a marriage with a view to their possible reconciliation is not competent or compellable in any legal proceedings to disclose any admission or communication made to him in his capacity as the nominee of the court for that purpose.

(2) Evidence of anything said or of any admission or communication made in the course of an endeavour to assist the parties to a marriage with a view to their possible reconciliation is not admissible in any legal proceedings.

WE'RE MOVING

For the past three years, the Board has occupied offices on Prince Arthur Avenue.

The Board has now outgrown the available space and will be moving in March, 1985.

The new location is 101 Davenport Road, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 1H5. The telephone number remains the same: (416) 961-8817. The offices will be located in a building which is the new headquarters for the Ontario College of Nurses.

FEE INCREASE

In order to avoid a deficit in future years, the Board has submitted a request to the government for a change in the regulation respecting fees. Increases in fees will be required to keep pace with inflation to cover the cost of enlarged facilities and expanding activity.

The present facilities at 37 Prince Arthur Avenue have proved to be inadequate for the activities of the Board. The Board therefore has entered into a lease with the College of Nurses in its new building at 101 Davenport Road.

Increased public visibility has led to a greater demand for the Board's services, from both the public as well as the registered psychologist. In addition, there has been more government activity on topics requiring a response from the Board. In recent months the Board has made submissions to the government on the Health Professions Legislation Review, the Young Offenders Act, the Mental Disorder Project and the Heseltine Report. The indications are that these activities, accompanied by heightened operating costs, will continue as the government contemplates further issues, such as legislation respecting the determination of mental competency. The Board is proposing new fees, as follows:

1. Renewal Fee (Ontario)	\$255.00
2. Renewal Fee (outside Ontario)	85.00
3. Application Fee	165.00



CLAIBORNE JACKSON MOORE

The Board has been informed of the tragic and untimely death due to a car accident of Dr. Claiborne Moore, psychologist at Surrey Place Centre in Toronto. A scholarship fund has been established to commemorate her contributions and anyone wishing to contribute to the fund may send a cheque to "Surrey Place Centre - in Trust".

NEW PERMANENT REGISTRANTS SINCE JULY, 1984

Jo Alberts-Corush	Dorothy Mandel
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NEW TEMPORARY REGISTRANTS SINCE OCTOBER, 1984

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Brenda Mann	Jaan Reitav
Linda Olinger	Mitchell Shack
Robert Orr	Anne Vagi

ORAL EXAMINATIONS

The oral examinations were held in Toronto on December 12 and 13. Assisting the Board in conducting these examinations were the following psychologists:

George R. Ashman, Ph.D., Chief Psychologist, Kingston General Hospital;
Lise Chislett, Ph.D., Professional Counsellor, University Counselling Service; Adjunct Professor, University of Ottawa;
Carol Corlis-McMaster, Ph.D., Psychologist, Private Practice, Barrie;
G. Ray Engel, Ph.D., Consultant, Private Practice, Toronto;
John L. Fisk, Ph.D., Psychologist, Regional Children's Centre, Windsor Western Hospital;
Paul Gendreau, Ph.D., Regional Co-ordinating Psychologist, Rideau Correctional Centre; Adjunct Professor, University of Ottawa;
Margaret G. Howe, M.A., Psychologist, Private Practice, London;
Ron Langevin, Ph.D., Senior Research Psychologist, Clarke Institute of Psychiatry;
George Phills, Ph.D., Chief of Psychological Services, London Board of Education;
Marnie E. Rice, Ph.D., Acting Director of Research, Mental Health Centre, Penetanguishene;
Doris S. Roche, Ph.D., Psychologist, Private Practice, Ottawa;
William G. Ross, Ph.D., Psychologist, Windsor Western Hospital Centre;
Melvyn Segal, Ph.D., Psychologist, Private Practice, Ottawa;
Michael P. Sobol, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychology, University of Guelph.

LISTING OF PARTNERSHIPS

At its October meeting, the Board discussed the topic of partnerships. While the standards have not changed, it was felt that psychologists could be reminded of the standards which govern the listing of partnerships in the telephone directory.

APPENDIX B The Standards of Professional Conduct

2. ACCEPTABLE TITLES OR LISTINGS

Psychological service units organized within a partnership may use one of the following alternatives:

- (a) listed as individuals under the name shown on the certificate of registration issued by the governing professional body together with an acceptable form of vocational designation
- (b) a partnership title containing only:
 - (i) the surnames or the full names of two or more actual or active partners, or
 - (ii) where there are three or more actual and active partners, the surname or full names of one or more such partners plus the term "and Associate" or "and Associates" depending upon the number of partners whose names are omitted from the partnership title, or
- (c) a partnership title as above together with an individual listing of psychologists meeting the foregoing requirements.

The following are possible listings.

Mary Field, Ph.D.
Field, Smith and Jones
Registered Psychologists
8000 Eglinton Ave. E.
Wawa, Ontario

Mary Field, Ph.D.
Field and Associates
Psychologists
8000 Eglinton Ave. E.
Wawa, Ontario.

If only one of the partners were a registered psychologist the listing should read:

Mary Field, Ph.D.
Psychologist

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of Examiners in
Psychology



The OBEP Bulletin is a publication of the Ontario Board of Examiners in Psychology.

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