

spa exchange

Volume 24, Number 1

Winter 2012

President's Message Radhika Krishnamurthy, PsyD, ABAP Florida Institute of Technology

I began writing this message shortly after returning from the September meeting of the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) Board of Trustees in Washington DC, brimming with the honor of holding the gavel and the pleasure of leading this beloved organization together with an energetic and dedicated group of board members. Inevitably,



in this context, I find myself reminiscing about when I started on the SPA journey as a graduate student, awestruck at the quality of presentations I witnessed at my first annual meeting and yearning to become "one of them." SPA claimed me there and then, heart and soul, and set the direction for my professional career. The years that followed brought me a growing circle of good friends and respected colleagues, new learning (and invigorated teaching of what I learned), fresh ideas, and cherished memories. My life at SPA has been, and continues to be, very good!

SPA has undergone tremendous transformation over the last few decades, thanks to the wisdom and labors of our past presidents and board members and the active participation of our members. We are in excellent financial shape and are well positioned to move ahead with various initiatives. Most central among our current initiatives is the Proficiency implementation effort headed up by Mark Blais (see his update in this issue). This is clearly a major commitment and ongoing enterprise for us that should bring SPA greater visibility in the years ahead, and we should certainly devote much of our energies to it. At a broader level, I would like to bring heightened emphasis to the *depth* and *quality* of personality assessment work during my presidential term, which dovetails with our proficiency goals. Challenges to the quality of assessment work come from several directions, including cutbacks in assessment coursework in clinical psychology graduate programs and provisions in several states for lesser trained mental health professionals to engage in some types of psychological

assessment. However, lest we dwell on the negative, I am reminded that we are fortunate to see exemplary assessment practices among members of our assessment community, which deserve broadcasting.

Even as we charge ahead with our current initiatives, I see this as an opportune time in SPA's history to refocus on

our vision for the organization—examine the big picture, thoughtfully consider future directions—and to step up strategic planning. To this effect, I invite the insights of past presidents and plan to develop a mechanism to have conversations with them at the annual meetings. We also need to build our education and training mission (note: Irv Weiner brought attention to this issue in his President's Message in the Winter 2007 issue of the *SPA Exchange*). A large number of our members are involved in teaching, practicum supervision, and internship training, and our 2006 *Standards for Education and Training in Psychological Assessment* serves as an important guide in this area, but we could do more as a Society to advocate for strong assessment training. Over several years, we have done exceptionally well in practice-related advocacy, thanks to the efforts of Bruce Smith, our Public Affairs Director, in developing SPA's relationship with the American Psychological Association's Practice Directorate. This year we have taken steps to establish a renewed link with the American Psychological Association's Education Directorate and we hope to progress to fruitful collaborations in the years ahead. We also aim to build and strengthen collaborations with like-minded assessment organizations.

SPA's greatest asset, and our core strength, lies in our membership. I am proud to observe that our current membership draws from 30 countries; indeed, we are a unique international group! Our members are active contributors to the annual meeting sessions, *Journal of Personality Assessment (JPA)* publications and *Exchange* articles, and impressive in their

assessment research, practice, and training. However, it is a sad fact that our membership has been slightly but progressively dwindling over the last decade. I'd like to take this opportunity to call upon our members to help SPA grow. Many of you are on boards and committees of other professional organizations where, as "insiders," you can be influential in spreading the word about SPA. Invite your colleagues to check out our website, take membership applications (which can be downloaded from the website) with you to meetings, and contact Paula Garber at the central office if you'd like to receive some SPA brochures. Faculty, encourage your students to join SPA and attend our annual meetings. Practitioners, talk to your colleagues in your local communities about SPA. Such concerted efforts would go a long way toward building our organization to being a force to be reckoned with.

Let me now step back to the board meeting discussions and share a few updates that may interest you. We are pleased to report that for the third year in a row, there will be no increments either in membership dues or in annual meeting registration fees. Rather, in recognition of the fact that the future of SPA lies in the hands of current early career psychologists and students-in-training who are invested in personality assessment, we are (a) expanding travel grants for student

...continued on page 12

In this issue...

President's Message.....	1
Special Topics in Assessment	2
The Assessment of Personality	
Processes	3
Ethical Considerations in Assessment	
Report Writing	4
Advocacy Corner	5
The Teacher's Block	6
Psychologists Giving Back.....	7
Reviving the Rorschach in the United Kingdom	8
SPAGS Update.....	9
Meeting Announcements.....	10
From the Editor	Back Cover

Special Topics in Assessment An Introduction to the Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS): The Promise and Challenges of a New System

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The publication of the Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS) manual (Meyer, Viglione, Mihura, Erard, & Erdberg, 2011) in August marked a concrete and important step in the dissemination of this new Rorschach system. In addition to its notable (and heavy!) arrival, Greg Meyer and Joni Mihura (along with co-authors Donald Viglione, Robert Erard, and Phil Erdberg) have embarked on a series of workshops to present the system in detail. The workshops began last year in Prague, Israel, and Italy; continued with the Society for Personality Assessment this spring in Boston; and have been presented throughout the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Tokyo, and soon to Norway. I have had the opportunity to attend several of the foundational R-PAS workshops over the past few years and was in attendance at Widener University in September for the first workshop after the publication of the R-PAS manual. Sharing the audience was a large group of clinicians, doctoral students, professors, and clinical supervisors all interested in assessment, many of whom were hearing about the R-PAS for the first time. In this regard, this edition of Special Topics in Assessment will provide a brief introduction to the R-PAS, along with some thoughts about issues that clinicians might encounter when considering adopting the new system.

The goal of the R-PAS is to provide a "clinically rich, evidenced-based, logically transparent, user-friendly, internationally focused system available for applied practice" (Meyer & Mihura, 2011, p.1). While these goals could easily be said to be shared by the current Comprehensive System (CS; Exner, 1993), the R-PAS provides an alternative, building on many of the strengths of the CS while offering important differences.

A case for each of these core elements is presented by the authors in the more than 500-page manual. One of the first differences to note in the R-PAS is a change in administration procedures as compared to CS, which addresses the persistently debated issue of response (R) variability and its effect on validity. The R-PAS adopts key elements of the "R-Optimized" administration procedures (Viglione & Meyer, 2007) in

which the administrator asks for "two... maybe three responses" per card, allowing prompts (for only one response) and pulls (after four responses). Limits on the number of responses to the Rorschach have traditionally been viewed as a constraint on the projective process; R-PAS asserts that these administration procedures produce records which fall in the optimal range of 18 to 28 responses. This is thought to not only maximize validity (e.g., due to R's effect on variables) but also eliminates the taxing effects of excruciatingly long records and the re-administration of protocols with less than 14 responses.

The value of a Rorschach system which rests on a solid, empirical foundation, as we have learned with the CS, is a high priority for the multitude of applications of the Rorschach. This principle is operative in the choice of variables included in the R-PAS, which drew from exhaustive (and seemingly exhausting) meta-analyses conducted on 70 of the major CS variables (Mihura, Meyer, Dumitrascu, & Bombel, 2011). These analyses reveal that some of the frequently used CS variables did not have the same degree of research support as some of the other variables. Yet, the inclusion of the more robust variables places interpretations on much firmer ground. And while support from the empirical literature was an important consideration, the R-PAS creators also prioritized variables which involved a behavioral representation in the response process, those which experienced practitioners tended to use (based on practice surveys), as well as eliminating variables or calculations to reduce redundancy.

Assigning Form Quality (FQ) to Rorschach responses has weighty implications, and the R-PAS set out to sedulously improve this process by reducing subjective elements through research. To determine adequacy of fit, more than 13,000 objects were rated about 10 times by more than 500 judges from around the world. These were eventually narrowed down to more than 5,000 for which FQ codes, frequencies, and average ratings were gathered. The intent of this process was to update the CS FQ classifications and to utilize international data to inform ratings. There is also the prospect, at some point in

the future, of an online repository for most FQ decisions.

Continuing on the theme of empirical grounding, the R-PAS also uses the international normative samples for the CS (Shaffer, Erdberg, & Meyer, 2007) as a basis for modeling what protocols would look like if R-Optimized administrations procedures were used. In terms of R, these protocols almost exactly replicate the card-by-card and total number of responses for CS administration. From here, a normative sample of 640 protocols was generated. Ultimately, the goal is to create a normative sample from newly collected R-optimized protocols, which is currently in the works.

One of the more interesting aspects of the R-PAS is seen in how the raw data is transformed and presented for interpretation. Whereas the CS was reliant on a clinician's intimate familiarity with a myriad of means and standard deviations of variables and indices, the R-PAS transforms raw scores to percentiles and standard scores ($M = 100$, $SD = 15$) which allows for the graphic portrayal of data akin to most other psychological instruments. Similar to the CS, there is a page which sequences the coding for all of the responses. The next page shows an accounting of codes and calculations mostly at the protocol level, similar to the upper portion of the CS Structural Summary. The summary data, analogous to the bottom portion of the CS Structural Summary and constellations page, is presented on two profile pages. On Page One are scores with the most empirical support, while Page Two includes variables with some support and those which have strong clinical utility. These pages are logically organized into five domains: Administration behaviors, Engagement and Cognitive Complexity, Perception and Thinking, Stress and Distress, Self- and Other-Representation. For each score the raw, percentile, and standard scores are listed. In addition, the R-PAS includes norms which consider the concept of complexity: that is, variability owing to the Rorschach's "first factor." This is most helpful for scores which fall outside of the normative range (i.e., beyond one standard deviation from the mean).

...continued on page 12

The Assessment of Personality Processes

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Movement toward dimensionalizing personality disorders in the *DSM-5* has led to an increasing appreciation for the role of traits in mental health. This is a positive development for personality assessors to the extent that it will enhance the field's recognition of the importance of assessing the personality context of psychopathology. However, the movement toward dimensional models has also spurred an increasing emphasis on stable elements of personality. While stable traits are important for clinical predictions, patients and clinicians are often more interested in what has recently changed to make things worse and what can be done to make things better. Our standard assessment processes are usually cross-sectional, so even if we are (unwittingly) assessing dynamic characteristics, we rarely assess their actual dynamics. Supplementing an understanding of stable characteristics that describe a person's personality with a conceptualization of dynamic factors that affect functioning can generally be expected to potentiate a more thorough formulation and more accurate clinical predictions. Recent advances in assessment methods are making the assessment of personality processes increasingly possible.

Although dimensional models and stable traits have regularly been conflated in the literature, dynamics are usually measureable along dimensions, too. Furthermore, such dynamics often take the same structure as stable dispositions. For instance, personality assessment researchers have begun using intensive repeated assessment methods to study mood dynamics involving negative and positive affectivity, which are closely related to the dispositional traits of neuroticism and extraversion. In these studies, participants rate their mood at regular intervals after being prompted or following an important event on smartphones. Among a number of interesting findings in this literature is the demonstration that, while borderline patients do not differ in their mean levels of affective experience over time relative to depressed patients, they are considerably more variable in affective experiences over time (Trull et al., 2008). Others have applied similar methods to the interpersonal characteristics of dominance and warmth, which are closely

related to extraversion and agreeableness. For instance, Sadikaj, Russell, Moscovitz, and Paris (2010) showed that the negative affects experienced by borderline personality disorder participants persist longer if they perceive the person with whom they are interacting as cold.

We are also learning more about how processes play out within interactions over very frequent time scales. Under the interpersonal principle of complementarity, dyads are expected to behave reciprocally on dominance (i.e., if one person is dominant the other person should be proportionally submissive, all things equal) and similarly on warmth. Sadler, Ethier, Gunn, Duong, and Woody (2009) recently applied an observational coding method to test the principle of complementarity in dyadic interactions. Measurements were taken of participant warm and dominant behaviors every half-second over a brief interaction. Time series of both dimensions were then related across participants, over time to test complementarity using spectral analytic methods, which fit the data to wave models. This method demonstrated that our interpersonal behaviors do, indeed, tend to behave in a wavelike fashion, and showed robust complementarity effects.

Our lab and several others have been applying this momentary assessment method to clinical issues. In a recent unpublished study, Kate Thomas and colleagues used it to differentiate therapists in terms of interpersonal process (Thomas, Hopwood, Ethier, & Sadler, 2011). For instance, not only is Carl Rogers warmer than Fritz Perls, he is also more in sync with his patient, meaning that his warmth and his patient's warmth cycle together over time in a manner that is more closely linked than for Perls. Data from our lab also suggest that individuals tend to be appreciably colder to a borderline than non-borderline dyadic partner on average, and that processes in borderline dyads are more tightly linked in terms of warmth than processes without a borderline dyad. This latter effect is consistent with the notion that borderline patients are highly perceptive of and reactive to affiliation cues, and the former effect likely resonates with reflective

clinicians who have treated (and perhaps occasionally and inadvertently mistreated) borderline patients.

Ten years ago many people did not have cellphones, and today most people have smartphones. The increasing familiarity and availability of communications technology among the general public coincides with the burgeoning use of this technology in personality research. The next logical step is for personality assessors to begin taking advantage of these advances by developing clinical applications of repeated assessment methods. Imagine the potential to test clinical hypotheses about core maladaptive cycles; the therapeutic process; or the link between symptoms and hormonal, environmental, seasonal, and pharmacological variables. Perhaps 10 years from now, in addition to collecting data using questionnaires, blots, interviews, and other tasks, competent personality assessors will ask clients to provide ratings of their mood and interpersonal behavior in real-world interactions via smartphones for a few weeks, or code moment-to-moment dyadic interactions during the assessment process with the clinician or between patients and important others.

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Ethical Considerations in Assessment Report Writing

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There is wide variability in psychological assessment report writing. There is variability in format, content, style, and purpose. In addition, there is very little available literature regarding assessment report writing. Until a few years ago, there was almost none. Report writing is also seldom addressed in graduate education. Assessment courses tend to stress test administration, scoring, and interpretation. Many programs intend their students to perfect their report writing at practicum and internship sites. However, this type of supervision is extremely time consuming and may not always take place in a busy clinical setting. In addition, there is wide variability in psychological assessment reports. Thus, this becomes a circular problem.

There are several ethical considerations regarding assessment reports. The first issue that needs to be considered is what to include in the background information section. A comprehensive clinical history can be extremely helpful in interpreting test results. However, once a report is completed, the psychologist has no control over where that report goes. That decision is made by the client, or by the court in the form of a court order. After the client has authorized the release of the report to a third party, there is even less certainty about who may have access to it. This is an important consideration when including sensitive details in the background information section. Sometimes, clients will ask that certain information be removed from the background section, particularly if the report is being sent to a school. Some parents do not want their child's teacher to know that they had a substance abuse problem, or that in their youth they were arrested for disorderly conduct. This raises questions for psychologists about when and to what extent to comply with these requests. In general, most psychologists are willing to leave out sensitive information when it is not essential to the referral question or test findings. When testing a client for a learning disability it may not be necessary to indicate that the child's parent had an affair, or to include the parent's legal history. Conversely, it would not be ethical to omit the information

that a child who usually takes medication for an Attention Deficit Disorder was not given his or her medication the day of testing. This has occurred when parents want their children to appear more impaired to qualify for additional services. It would also be inappropriate not to indicate that a person was under the influence of illegal substances during testing if this was the case.

Another ethical issue with regard to background information has to do with confidentiality. Often sensitive information such as medical or legal history is included about a variety of family members. These individuals may not even know that testing is taking place, much less that they are being included in the report. Many reports indicate that a maternal uncle was schizophrenic, a grandparent had a substance abuse problem, or a relative committed suicide. Because it is not known who will eventually see these reports, possibly an employer of a person mentioned, it is important to protect their confidentiality. This issue is seldom addressed in discussions of ethics or assessment.

In discussions of forensic assessment reports, it is often mentioned that the information reported should be accurate and that the conclusions should be based on data. This is important for all assessment reports, not just forensic reports. Standard 9.01 of the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2002) states that psychologists are urged to "base the opinions contained in their recommendations, reports, and diagnostic or evaluative statements... on information and techniques sufficient to substantiate their findings" (p. 1073).

Psychologists should also indicate in assessment reports whether they deviated from standardized administration procedures. For example, was there a fire drill in the middle of the Rorschach, or was an interpreter used for a client who did not speak English? It is also important to note in the report if the test was normed on a population different from the

person being tested. Some tests were normed on a clinical population, but may be used on a prison population, or to determine entrance to the seminary or appropriateness to be adoptive parents. Any deviation or limitation within the testing situation should be noted in the report and taken into account when drawing conclusions from the data.

The most important part of the assessment process is clearly communicating the test results and providing the recommendations. However, an important question is, "For whom is the report written?" Most reports are written for the referral source who is usually a mental health professional. As a result, it is often difficult to understand psychological reports because they are filled with jargon. According to Harvey (2006), the average reading grade level for current models of psychoeducational reports is 18.5 while the average reading grade level for clinical, neuropsychological, and forensic reports is 20.3. Thus the models from which graduate students in psychology learn to write assessment reports are consistently written "at a level at which the writing is in danger of being misunderstood or ignored" (Harvey, 2006, p.9). Other studies (Cuadra & Albaugh, 1956; Rucker, 1967; Shively & Smith, 1969) found that even psychologists had difficulty understanding a significant amount of the key material presented in assessment reports. Pelco, Ward, Coleman, and Young (2009) state that the "literature is unequivocal in its conclusion that the use of technical terminology and phrases in written assessment reports hinders readers' comprehension of the report" (p. 20). In the more than four decades since these studies began, little seems to have changed.

What has changed is client access to records. In most states, clients have access to their mental health records, unless they contain information that would be harmful for clients to see. However, psychologists must have a sound clinical reason for any refusal to provide records to a client. In states that do not have guidelines about a client's access to records,

...continued on page 13

Advocacy Corner

Bruce L. Smith, PhD
Public Affairs Director



Many of the same issues that we have been dealing with continue to occupy the advocacy agenda, while some new ones have cropped up as well. Because of our growing collaboration with the American Psychological Association, the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) has been able to leverage our advocacy efforts more significantly in recent months.

The issue of untrained clinicians requesting the right to conduct complex assessments under various non-psychology licenses continues to pop up from time to time. The latest was in Michigan; as of this writing, we have been able to forestall this effort—at least for the time being—through a collaboration between SPA and the Michigan Psychological Association, largely through the efforts of Bob Erard. We continue to work with psychologists in Montana in order to help draft regulations for masters-level clinicians to do assessments (i.e., regulations that will ensure adequate training and education).

In order to bolster this effort, we are reviewing the Standards for Training that SPA promulgated in 2006 and updating them where necessary. We are also talking with the American Psychological Association about the possibility of having practice guidelines for assessment that would parallel the guidelines that are currently being developed for treatment. Documents such as these can serve to enhance the practice of assessment in the professional community.

We have been alerted to a new issue by the Practice Organization of the American Psychological Association. Since the enactment of federal mental health parity legislation (legislation that ensures that mental health services are covered equally with physical conditions by insurers), the Practice Organization has been monitoring compliance on the part of third-party payers. Although the issues

haven't been tested in court, the Practice Organization's lawyers are of the opinion that practices such as requiring pre-authorization for psychological tests when such are not required for comparable medical tests, restricting the number of hours that can be spent doing psychological assessment, or reimbursing lower fees for assessment may violate the law. We have been asked to collect information about practices by various insurers that may be in violation of the parity act and forward them to the American Psychological Association. This is an excellent example of our working together to improve the lot of assessment psychologists. As you know, I have put out a request for members to forward to me specific experiences with insurers, and have already received more than a dozen such reports. These will be of tremendous help as we work to ensure that the law is followed faithfully.

Recently, I was contacted by a member in Colorado whose use of the Rorschach in a custody case was being challenged by opposing counsel. We shared with her references and other documents that might be helpful in defending her assessment. She reported that the evidentiary hearing went very well, although at the time of this writing a decision had not yet been rendered. In instances such as this, the collective wisdom of SPA members can be of tremendous help, and I encourage any of you who have similar problems to contact the Central Office.

Once again, let me end with a plea: We can only advocate for assessment and fight back challenges to competent assessment practice when we are kept abreast of developments. If any of you have difficulties with insurers, state licensing boards, state legislatures, or the courts, or if you hear of such problems with colleagues, please alert the Central Office. There is considerable collective wisdom in our organization, and we can often be of great help.

Notes From the Foundation

Bruce L. Smith, PhD
President, SPAF

Through the generosity of many of our members, the assets of the Society for Personality Assessment Foundation (SPAF) continue to grow. In particular, we have now begun to accrue funds for research over and above what is needed for the current Utility of Assessment Project. It is my hope that we will continue to grow this part of the fund, so that we can fund important research in assessment. At the Board meeting in September, we discussed ways in which we can encourage research.

We are also increasing the funds available to assist students, both in dissertation research and in attending the Annual Meeting. As you know, students are the future not only of SPA, but of assessment as a field, and it is gratifying to think that we can do more to encourage them in their careers.

I am pleased to announce that Jennifer Tackett, PhD, from the University of Toronto, has been named the 2012 John E. Exner Scholar. Dr. Tackett has an impressive resume of research

in child psychopathology and its assessment. Congratulations!

Finally, let me remind you of the SPAF planned giving program. By making SPA a part of your estate planning, you can know that you are helping not only the organization, but assessment psychologists who will follow in your footsteps.

The Teacher's Block

Teaching Activities to Enliven the Personality Assessment Class

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Teaching personality assessment can be exciting, but it can also have its moments of tedium. The weekly routine of teaching test administration, scoring coding, interpretation, report writing, and a methodology for integrating information across tests can leave the teacher occasionally “zonked” and students “dazed.” Everyone needs at least a week to recover from each class! What can the teacher do to add some fun to the class? Here are nine ideas that might help liven things up, if and when time permits.

- **Teaching About Transference:** Have students interpret a Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) only as it pertains to potential transference manifestations that might emerge in a therapy situation. In many ways, the TAT is an ideal analog measure for expressive therapy—the client has some structure, some control over what they say, and freedom to create a narrative emblematic of the way they perceive self and others. Invite the students to read each story as if a client were actually communicating to a therapist. This exercise can help students further appreciate the meaning of disguised, latent implications of thematic analysis. For example, if the boy in TAT card 1 refuses to practice, does it also imply that the initial phase of therapy might be fraught with a silent resistance? If the boy in card 12 M is miraculously cured of a disease by the other figure does it suggest an idealizing fantasy? Think of this exercise as a chance to demonstrate to students how transference emerges outside of the client’s conscious control.
- **Great Debate.** Assign students to different groups in which they have to research and debate, with the teacher as moderator, the pros and cons of different approaches to some of the more popular “objective” personality tests. There is no better way to highlight issues than to debate them, and reviewing the literature on a few tests is bound to increase the knowledge base of everyone.

- **Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS), Rorschach Interpretation Assistance Program (RIAP), and RorSCAN.** Take a protocol (you can make up a case here), score it per the different Rorschach methods (R-PAS and Comprehensive System), and then ask students to discuss how the different software systems understand the same person. New insights about the person will emerge as students hear each other talk and hear the teacher explain things that might be harder for students to articulate. This exercise will also help students further appreciate software sophistication and nomothetic analysis.
- **The Rorschach Coding Challenge:** This is similar to a quiz show. Have students work in small groups, put a Rorschach response on the screen, and have them code the response. Try it with 4 to 5 “brain teaser responses.” May the best coding team win!
- **Moot Court:** Imagine a forensic or neuropsychology case that also integrates personality assessment. Make up a case and give the test data to students. Have students present and defend the findings—some students serve the defense team, whereas others are the prosecuting team. The teacher is arbiter to ensure safety!
- **Assessment Supervision:** Have students pair off, exchange and review each other’s work, and then meet the following week for “supervision.” The teacher sets the rules regarding professionalism, what to say and how to say it, and shows the class, through an example, how to do it. No red pencils, please!
- **Content Versus Structural Analysis:** Provide background information of a case (e.g., reason for referral, developmental history). Then give one half of the class the structural summary only and one half of the class the response content only. From this information the two groups are

asked to create a personality profile of the client, but using only the data provided to their group. This exercise will really demonstrate the value of both structural and content analysis.

- **Celebrity Profile:** There are so many to choose from ... have each student pick a media figure, create a psychological profile integrating three personality tests: What would the person look like and why? Students can choose their preferred tests. They have to provide background to the case (brief bios of most high-profile celebrities are probably accessible somewhere on the web). This exercise will certainly make students think outside the box. Just be careful not to take it a step further and say, “Hmm, interesting that you chose ... for your celebrity profile. I wonder what that tells us about ...!”
- **Writing From Multiple Voices:** Have students work in small groups. Each student takes a turn in writing a sentence for one section of a report. For example, have the students practice writing a section of the report titled “Reality Testing,” and provide different test scores that will go into this section. Then, let the game begin! One student writes a sentence, followed by another student writing the next sentence, and so on. This exercise provides a nice opportunity for students to practice their writing skills while learning from each other. At the end, small groups compare how they wrote the section. It will be interesting to see how they choose to express inferences about the same data.

In closing, teaching personality assessment is often procedure-heavy, time-intensive, and difficult. The teacher who can figure out creative and interactive ways to introduce concepts and engage critical thinking can help students develop insights about personality assessment that are hard to capture through the usual instructional modalities.

Psychologists Giving Back

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Each time I get on an airplane, especially for international flights, I ask myself: “Are my affairs in order?” “Are the people and things I care about going to be taken care of in case my plane crashes?” “Will the people and endeavors I valued in life be reflected when I die?” This is undeniably neurotic, but also a reflection of having spent years donating time for academic and community causes, and also having accumulated financial assets from the gift of the practice of psychology. Who will inherit the things I’ve worked for? Can I use my assets to register my values for future generations? Sometimes families or organizations set up a memorial fund for the deceased one’s valued charity or charities, but will my family know that, for me, this would center on assessment psychology?

These questions propelled me to begin the difficult task of estate planning. It’s probably safe to assume that most people plan to leave their estate to relatives: their spouses or children, even grandchildren. Some think of leaving a portion to a valued cause, such as the rescue of animals, or the homeless mentally ill. It is less common to think of gifts to professional organizations.

During our professional lives, we are encouraged to “give back.” Our Ethics Code (American Psychological Association, 2002), under General Principle B, states that psychologists “are aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities to society and to the specific communities in which they work” (p. 1062) and “strive to contribute a portion of their professional time for little or no compensation or personal advantage” (p. 1062). While this may be interpreted as giving time while we are alive, it can be understood as an aspirational value for estate planning. It can also motivate us to give in memory of valued colleagues who have died.

The American Psychological Foundation (APF) has encouraged donations from psychologists. Started in 1953, the purpose of APF was to provide a way for psychologists to make voluntary donations to promote and communicate the contributions of psychology to society, and to support and encourage students and young psychologists in their careers. Psychologists can contribute to APF easily by checking a box on the annual dues

statement. Former President of the American Psychological Association Raymond Fowler (2001) wrote recently that a growing number of American Psychological Association members are making bequests to APF in their wills through the APF Legacy Club. The APF sends letters to the loved ones of those memorialized with donations, and the APF newsletter acknowledges gifts. Fowler indicates that the APF’s assets have increased from \$1 million in 1991 to \$11 million. This has provided APF with the resources to conduct research into topics of value to psychology and to provide scholarships to gifted and deserving students to study psychology.

But what about assessment psychology? The Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) has the structure and values to receive such donations, but not the donors. As psychologists, our resources may be modest at the beginning and middle of our careers, taken up by educational loan repayment, establishing a practice, and raising children. In the last third of our careers, however, an active professional life can produce a very good income—one which permits more thought about giving back.

When I began the task of “estate planning,” I thought about the professional life I’ve had, and the things I’ve valued the most. As a young psychologist, I was consumed with a love of assessment: the Rorschach, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and other instruments that took the client’s answers and turned them into a picture of their personality. At the same time, the teaching of assessment was being curtailed or eliminated in graduate programs across the country, and, frankly, denigrated by many. Teaching assessment in a largely unsupportive environment at UCLA, it was joining SPA that provided the support and vision about assessment that gave me the resolve to continue. Of course, careful psychological assessment has also been a mainstay of the forensic mental health evaluations that have occupied most of my career. I have loved conducting psychological and forensic assessments, and I have loved teaching psychological assessment. The answers to my questions about estate planning were obvious.

The beauty of estate planning is that assets can be split in ways that reflect your values. While spouses, partners, children, and grandchildren rank high, even a gift of a portion of an estate can be meaningful to an organization that struggles for funds. This is usually framed as a percentage of the estate, as in “I wish to leave 20% of my retirement accounts to ...” For many, there may be more than one beneficiary. In my professional life, for example, UCLA has been extremely important, and I wish to make a provision for the ongoing teaching of assessment psychology through a dedicated chair in assessment psychology. I also wished to make a provision for SPA. Gifts can be earmarked for scholarships for training, or for awards for exceptional contributions, or they can be more general. Our wills can also request that a funeral notice request donations to SPA in lieu of flowers or other memorials.

SPA offers many ways that donated funds can be used to enhance the specialty of assessment psychology. The mission of SPA is “the development of methods of personality assessment, the advancement of research on their effectiveness, and the exchange of ideas about the theory and practice of assessment.” You can donate to dissertation grants, student travel grants, the Mary Cerney Student Award, the Exner Scholar Award, the Utility of Assessment Research Project, or you can give an unrestricted gift.

I am very grateful for the professional life that psychological practice has provided. I’m grateful to assessment psychology mentors, some of whom have retired or passed away. I’ve had a very rich professional life in psychology and assessment psychology, and giving back reflects my gratitude as well as my investment in the next generation. Currently earned dollars must go for current expenses, but when the daily issues of survival are gone, we can leave a memory and a legacy through giving back.

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Reviving the Rorschach in the United Kingdom

Kari Carstairs, PsyD, C. Psychol, ABAP

Carstairs Psychological Associates Ltd.



I had the good fortune to be introduced to the Rorschach by Dr. Clifford DeCato. I was in graduate school in Philadelphia in the late 1980s with the ambition to become a psychoanalytic psychotherapist. I started graduate school thinking that testing was just about pigeonholing people—the real understanding came from the intimacy of the psychotherapeutic relationship. Dr. DeCato's enthusiasm for testing made me think again. His insistence on a careful scrutiny of the test data, combined with his delight in what was quirky, different or unique about a person, inspired me. Thanks to him, my first text in analyzing the test data was *Perceptanalysis* by Piotrowski (1979), from which I learned about the “principle of interdependence of components.”

In time, I was introduced to the Comprehensive System (Exner, 1986) by Dr. Virginia Brabender. I left graduate school to return to the United Kingdom in 1991, where I took up a post in adult mental health that included two days a week at a psychiatric admissions ward. Being asked to provide an opinion on some of the patients there, I naturally used the Rorschach as part of my battery of psychological tests. I was startled to discover that no one in the hospital had any knowledge of the test. When I made further inquiries of fellow psychologists who had trained in the United Kingdom, I met with a mixture of ignorance, skepticism, and even in some cases outright contempt and hostility. I was amazed. Here was a test that was widely respected in the American community where I had trained, and in the United Kingdom it was being reviled. Surely a trip across the Atlantic did not invalidate the test?!

I did not abandon the test. Instead I became curious about the situation, and I noticed that those who were of a cognitive behavioral persuasion tended to be uncomfortable with the idea that the test might reveal something about a person without that person being aware of what was being revealed. And so they often dismissed it as no better than tea leaf reading, whereas those of a psychoanalytic persuasion tended to ignore testing altogether. I learned that there was a time in the United Kingdom when the Rorschach was more

popular, but it had declined in large measure because of criticism from a very influential British psychologist, Dr. Hans Eysenck (McCarthy Woods, 2008).

In time, some of my British colleagues developed a curiosity about the test, once they saw what it could offer through case presentations that they allowed me to give in the psychology department. Out of this came an introduction to the Rorschach in 1995, which I presented to 12 psychologists, 4 of whom went on to train with me over a period of a year in the clinical application of the test.

I also found the British Society for Projective Psychology, a small group who met in North West London at the home of Dr. Geoffrey Elkan, and here I could talk about Rorschach cases. Some of the group used the Klopfer method (Klopfer & Davidson, 1962) and some used the Comprehensive System. This helped to combat my sense of isolation in my workplace.

In February 1999, I had the honor of presenting a case to Dr. John Exner. Dr. Exner was invited to London by Roger Ramsden from the British Society for Projective Psychology. The venue for this event was *HMS Belfast*. Originally commissioned in 1939, this former World War II battleship served in the D-Day Normandy landings, and it was converted into a museum in 1971. It was a delightful backdrop to the day.

At dinner, I was curious to ask Dr. Exner for his views on why the Rorschach had declined in the United Kingdom. He made an interesting political comment about how a society which has nationalized the health care delivery system will look at the provision of services for the population as a whole, whereas the Rorschach is quintessentially a study of the unique psychology of the individual.

Then I worked pretty much in isolation for eight years in relation to the use of the Rorschach as the British Society for Projective Psychology sadly disbanded after Dr. Elkan's death. During this period, I built up my practice providing Court reports in civil, criminal, and family cases. I found that the test was very useful in this setting. For example, I recall one very high-profile fraud case in the

Old Bailey where the issue was competence to stand trial, and I obtained one of the very few Contaminated (CONTAM) responses I have come across in my practice. This enabled me to illustrate for the Court the nature of the thought disorder in the examinee and also to provide the psychometric data to show how rare such a response is.

I was delighted when I met Dr. Justine McCarthy Woods in 2007. She trained in the United States as well, and she works at the Tavistock clinic where she set up the Rorschach Practitioner's Forum. The test had returned to its original home where hopefully it will flourish in this country again!

Justine is now the President of the British Rorschach Society, and I am the Vice President. Together, she and I have put on two training programs at the Tavistock which were well received. Our Treasurer is Dr. Ruth Armstrong, one of the psychologists whom I originally trained in 1995. Our secretary is Dr. Sarah Birch, who works with me in my company. There are 21 members, and we hope to attract more in time. Some of our members have started to disseminate their knowledge of the test (Peden, 2010).

We have a lot of work to do to get the test back into mainstream psychological practice. The two main priorities are training other psychologists and developing a normative study. Watch this space!

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SPAGS: Current and Future Activities and Initiatives

J. D. Smith, PhD
University of Oregon



I am currently on a crowded flight back to the Pacific Northwest from the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) fall board meeting in Washington, DC. As the current President of the Society for Personality Assessment Graduate Student Association (SPAGS), I attended the meeting as the student representative. I would like to update you all regarding the current and planned activities and initiatives of SPAGS and some other SPA happenings pertinent to student members.

In short, this is an excellent and exciting time to be an active student member of SPAGS! Many current initiatives of SPA, and SPAGS in particular, will significantly benefit the student membership and also help students as they transition to early career psychologists. SPA continues to support and provide substantive opportunities for student involvement at the annual meeting. Students are allowed to present papers and posters on various topics in personality assessment and there are awards for the three most outstanding posters at each of the two poster sessions. Congratulations to last year's winners! This year's meeting in March in Chicago, IL, will feature a number of full and half-day workshop offerings that will surely be of interest to students, including workshops on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Rorschach, Personality Assessment Inventory, Adult Attachment Projective Picture System, Therapeutic Assessment, and many other interesting topics. Students can volunteer to help out with workshops, allowing them to attend the workshop for free and also get a reduced rate registration fee to the conference. Volunteering is a great way to meet other students and attendees and receive training from the experts in our field. This year also marks the beginning of the SPA-led initiative to develop standards for proficiency in assessment psychology. Dr. Roger Greene will be presenting a proficiency-level introductory workshop on the MMPI. The Proficiency standards and requirements for achieving proficient status are shortly forthcoming.

The SPA Board has voted to increase and expand its support for student research and involvement at the annual meeting through a number of mechanisms. Student members

presenting research at the annual meeting can apply for financial assistance to travel to Chicago. SPA has been able to provide at least some support to all students who applied for travel funds in the past few years, and this will assuredly continue for the foreseeable future. The Board has increased the budget for student travel grants for a second consecutive year: up now to \$10,000 total, including the \$1,000 donation from Psychological Assessment Resources. The Board also affirmed its support of student scholarship by holding firm its budget for dissertation grants. I strongly encourage students to apply for these sources of funding support.

The SPA Board has also taken two laudable steps that demonstrate significant support for early career psychologists, which we all shortly will be. Assessment psychology is often given short shrift in the larger field of psychology, and we are in need of innovative assessment scholars to further empirical research efforts, as well as proficient practitioners, supervisors, and instructors of personality assessment in graduate, internship, and postdoctoral training programs. In a very generous and forward-thinking move, the Board unanimously accepted a motion to establish an Early Career Travel Award. Ten awards of \$500 each will be given to support and encourage attendance at the annual meeting. Unlike the student travel grants, early career travel award applicants need not be presenting at the annual meeting to receive the award. It is intended for young psychologists within the first three years after receiving their doctoral degree to share their research and clinical work, obtain training, establish connections in the field, and develop a professional interest in the field of personality assessment. The second step the Board took was to alter the membership fee structure for the first three years after receipt of the doctoral degree, easing the financial transition from student to psychologist and encouraging continued involvement with SPA.

SPAGS has also been busy recently, continuing successful activities and working on new strategies to engage the student membership in SPA, provide valuable training opportunities, and encourage scholarship in personality assessment. Our primary focus

continues to be the annual meeting, but we are making an effort to increase student activity in SPAGS year-round. Our two primary avenues for student discussion are via the Google Group (<http://groups.google.com/group/spags>) and a Facebook group (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=113651742016261>) unveiled last year. The Technology Committee manages these two groups. There has been limited activity recently, but we expect it to pick up as students prepare for the Chicago meeting. I'd like to encourage students to utilize the Facebook page and Google Group to communicate with each other, collaborate, ask questions, and generally connect with fellow student members.

SPAGS's events at last year's annual meeting in Boston were a great success. The social hour, with complimentary hors d'oeuvres courtesy of SPA, was well attended. We thank Tom Widiger for chatting and hanging out with us. We plan to again invite a well-known guest to the SPAGS social in Chicago as well, and we will again be providing refreshments. New this year for the annual conference will be a SPAGS-sponsored symposium bringing together experts on a specific student-related area of interest. The SPAGS Education Committee has put together an excellent group of presenters to discuss locating and securing internship and postdoctoral positions in assessment psychology. Drs. Mark Blais, Nancy Kaser-Boyd, Robert Archer, and myself will be providing varied perspectives and guidance geared toward students seeking careers in both practice and research. We hope the symposium will attract student members and reduce some of the mysticism and inherent anxiety surrounding these processes. The Membership Committee plans to send a flyer to training programs advertising this symposium and workshops of interest to prospective student members to encourage attendance at the annual meeting and membership in SPAGS and SPA.

We are also nearing election time for next year's SPAGS board. Past-President Aidan Wright will be coordinating the election process. I would like to encourage you all to consider running for a position. SPA greatly values its student membership and we need motivated students to continue to

...continued on page 14

spa exchange

SPA Annual Meeting

March 14–18, 2012

The Westin Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL

Throughout its history, the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) has been broadly concerned with both the science and the practice of personality assessment, and our scientific sessions and workshops reflect that diversity. We recognize that personality assessors worldwide work with diverse populations, use a wide assortment of tests and methods, apply a variety of perspectives, and practice in a broad range of evaluative contexts. Accordingly, our theme for the 2012 SPA Annual Meeting is “**Expanding and Enhancing Personality Assessment.**” We encourage presenters to address this theme in the work they are presenting. However, we will also offer topics addressing all facets of the theory and practice of clinical or applied personality assessment, including the development of evaluation instruments; research on the effectiveness and application of assessment instruments in clinical, forensic, and organizational settings; professional development; ethical practices and concerns; and clinical case discussions.

The promotional brochure with registration information will be available the first week of December 2011 on the SPA web page, www.personality.org.

The SPA Annual Meeting offers:

- Excellent workshops, symposia and discussions on psychological assessment: MMPI-2, PAI, MCMI-III, Rorschach, TAT, and other instruments
- Empirical, theoretical, and case study formats
- Many presentations by nationally known experts

For Students:

- Reduced fees
- Volunteer opportunities (with perks)
- A student luncheon
- See and hear your favorite textbook authors

Master Lectures:

- Master Lecture I: *Nancy McWilliams, PhD*
- Master Lecture II: *Lee Anna Clark, PhD*

Annual Meeting Registration Fees:

	By 2/14/12	After 2/14/12	Onsite
Member/Fellow/Associate	\$215	\$265	\$280
Non-Member	\$285	\$335	\$350
Student	\$75	\$90	\$90
Member/One-Day Fee	\$145	\$145	\$160
Non-Member/One-Day Fee	\$165	\$165	\$180
Student/One-Day Fee	\$50	\$50	\$50
Student Volunteer	\$50	\$50	\$50
Student Luncheon	\$10	\$10	\$10

Workshop Fees:

Member or Conference Registrant	Full-Day \$175	Half-Day \$105
Non-Member or Non-Conf Registrant	Full-Day \$225	Half-Day \$140
Student	Full-Day \$90	Half-Day \$50

Workshops:

Workshops will be held on Wednesday, March 14; Thursday morning, March 15; and Sunday, March 18, 2012. No workshops are held on Friday, March 16, or Saturday, March 17. Enrollment in the workshops will be filled on the basis of completed workshop registration forms and fees received. A complete list and description of the workshops will be available in the promotional brochure, which will be posted on our web site the first week of December 2011.

Accommodations:

The Westin Michigan Avenue: North Michigan Avenue is the upscale hub of downtown Chicago, and The Westin Michigan Avenue Chicago is perfectly positioned to make the most of it. It is located on Chicago's famed Magnificent Mile, steps from Lake Michigan, award-winning restaurants, and premier shopping. The exhilarating excitement and unique culture of Chicago will be at your doorstep. To learn more, see the hotel's web page at <http://thewestinmichiganavenue.com>. Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel. To get the special conference rate, please inform the hotel that you are with the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA).

The Westin Michigan Avenue

909 North Michigan Avenue

Chicago, IL 60611

Tel Reservations: 312-943-7200 (fax: 312-397-5580)

Online Reservations: <http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/spa2012>

Room Block Dates: March 11–18, 2012

Reservation deadline to receive the conference rate: February 27, 2012

Rates: \$179 single/double; \$459 and up suites; \$20 for an additional person; children up to 17 years of age who share with their parents stay free of charge.

SPA realizes that you have a number of options when securing your accommodations for the SPA Annual Meeting. We would like you to know that, in order to secure the block of rooms at a reasonable room rate, SPA has made a financial commitment to The Westin Michigan Avenue. If the block is not filled, there are **financial implications for SPA**, and it will affect our ability to negotiate room rates for future meetings. Also, to keep our financial liability minimal, we do not reserve an unusually large block of rooms. Consequently, the rooms in the block may be taken early. If so, the hotel has no obligation to honor the low room rate for additional rooms, although they will try to accommodate your needs.

SPA Annual Meeting Future Dates:

March 20–24, 2013, San Diego, CA

March 19–23, 2014, Arlington, VA

2012 Annual Meeting Continuing Education Opportunities

Ronald J. Ganellen, PhD, ABPP
Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine



I am beginning to get excited about the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) annual meeting, which will be held next March in Chicago. It's always exciting to have the opportunity to attend the many excellent paper sessions, workshops, symposia, poster sessions, and case discussions offered at the Midwinter meeting, to see old friends and colleagues, and to be exposed to the latest advances and controversies in the field of personality assessment.

I am sure you will get as excited as I am when you learn about the top-notch presentations that will be offered in Chicago. To give you a taste of the lineup put together by the Continuing Education Committee, chaired by Steve Smith last year and now by Steve Huprich, the hard-working members of which are Ginger Calloway, Greg Meyer, and Steve Strack, the Master Lectures will be presented by two speakers new to SPA: Nancy McWilliams, well-known for her work on psychoanalytic case formulations; and Lee Anna Clark, who has made important

contributions to assessment of adaptive and nonadaptive personality traits, the diagnosis of personality disorders, and identifying the core deficits in personality disorders.

We have a very strong lineup of workshops focusing on a wide range of topics to enhance the knowledge and skills of assessment psychologists. The workshops will provide updates and cutting-edge advances in the field of personality assessment. In addition to workshops focusing on widely used assessment instruments—such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2, Rorschach, Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory, and Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI)—other workshops will address controversies concerning assessment of personality disorders, help participants develop and improve proficiency in personality assessment and report writing, and enhance skills in building a strong alliance with clients during the initial phases of an assessment. If that were not enough, other workshops will discuss the uses and limitations of traditional psychological

measures in forensic settings and in the assessment of specific conditions, such as psychotic disorders.

We are indeed fortunate that, in addition to presenting a Master Lecture, Lee Anna Clark will lead two half-day workshops. In one, Dr. Clark will review major limitations in the *DSM-IV* approach to diagnosing personality disorders and present other approaches to overcome these limitations. These include an introduction to an assessment instrument she developed, the Schedule for Nonadaptive and Adaptive Personality. In the second workshop, Dr. Clark will describe the changes being proposed for the *DSM-5*, changes that have significant implications for all practicing clinicians and researchers.

Among the full-day workshops, Steve Finn, Marita Frackowiak, Pamela Schrabner, Justin Smith, Deborah Tharinger, and Hale Martin will discuss how clinicians can be guided by findings from attachment theory to approach clients to foster a positive therapeutic alliance. After they present the theoretical basis for this approach, this talented and energetic group will use videotapes and role playing to help workshop participants develop the skills needed to help clients feel safe and to elicit their investment and involvement early during the assessment process. Another full-day workshop will provide an introduction to the Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS). Don Viglione, Greg Meyer, Joni Mihura, and Bob Erard will introduce the distinctive features of the R-PAS in terms of administration, coding, and reference groups. They will then illustrate clinical applications of the R-PAS by interpreting a clinical case.

Many members of SPA are interested in assessment of clients' cognitive functioning as well as their personality functioning. Mark Blais will present research and recent theoretical advances that support the use of traditional neuropsychological instruments in personality assessment and which suggest that findings from these measures can inform and enhance measures of personality functioning. His goal is to provide the conceptual background, knowledge base, and practical guidelines clinicians need to integrate neuropsychological measures into personality assessment.

...continued on page 14

The Personality Assessment Proficiency Project

Mark A. Blais, PsyD

*Massachusetts General Hospital
Harvard Medical School*

Chair, Personality Assessment Proficiency Committee



As I hope everyone knows by now, Personality Assessment had been recognized by the American Psychological Association as a Proficiency in Professional Psychology, and the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) has been charged with defining and implementing the proficiency. The proficiency committee, working collaboratively with the Society's leadership, central office, and the American Psychological Association, has made tangible progress toward implementation. Specifically, we have developed an application and review process for practitioners qualifying for grandparent status, established a renewal policy, and have also organized our first proficiency educational effort, a workshop to be offered at the next annual meeting.

In order to facilitate communication and centralize information we are creating a proficiency link on the SPA web page. Once developed, this link will serve as an easy-access, one-stop portal for information, educational resources, applications, and other proficiency related material. While many complex and challenging tasks remain ahead, we are confident that implementation of the Personality Assessment Proficiency will be well underway by the time we gather in Chicago for the 2012 annual meeting.

As always, if you have any questions about the proficiency or want to contribute to the effort, please feel free to contact me at Mblais@partners.org

2012 SPA Annual Meeting Tentative Schedule

Wednesday, March 14, 2012

8:00 am–5:30 pm
8:30 am–4:30 pm
8:30 am–12:00 noon
12:00 pm–1:30 pm
12:00 pm–1:30 pm
1:30 pm–5:00 pm
4:30 pm–7:00 pm
5:30 pm–9:00 pm

Registration
Full-Day Workshops (4)
Half-Day Workshops, Morning (2)
Lunch Break
SPAGS Board Meeting Lunch
Half-Day Workshops, Afternoon (3)
Board of Trustees Meeting
Half-Day Workshop, Evening

Thursday, March 15, 2012

8:00 am–5:30 pm
8:00 am–12:00 noon
8:30 am–12:00 noon
12:00 pm–1:30 pm
12:30 pm–1:30 pm
12:30 pm–1:30 pm
1:45 pm–2:45 pm
3:00 pm–4:00 pm
4:15 pm–6:15 pm
6:30 pm–7:45 pm
6:30 pm–7:45 pm
6:30 pm–7:45 pm
7:45 pm

Registration
Board of Trustees Meeting
Half-Day Workshops, Morning (7)
Lunch Break
Consultation Sessions (4)
ABAP Diplomate Preparation
Opening Plenary Session
Hertz Memorial Presentation
Scientific Sessions
President's Welcome Reception
Book Signing
Poster Session I
SPAGS Social

Friday, March 16, 2012

7:30 am–8:30 am
8:00 am–5:30 pm
8:30 am–10:30 am
10:45 am–11:45 am
11:45 am–1:15 pm
12:00 noon–1:00 pm
12:00 noon–1:00 pm
12:00 noon–1:00 pm
1:15 pm–2:15 pm
2:30 pm–4:30 pm
4:45 pm–5:45 pm
5:45 pm–6:15 pm
6:15 pm–7:30 pm
6:15 pm–7:30 pm

Journal Editorial Board Meeting Breakfast
Registration
Scientific Sessions
Master Lecture I
Lunch Break
Lunchtime Presentations (2)
International Members Meeting
Interest Groups (2)
Master Lecture II
Scientific Sessions
Bruno Klopfer Award Address
Award Presentations
Reception
Poster Session II

Saturday, March 17, 2012

7:30 am–8:30 am
8:00 am–5:30 pm
8:30 am–10:30 am
10:45 am–12:45 pm
12:45 pm–2:00 pm
12:45 pm–1:45 pm
12:45 pm–1:45 pm
12:45 pm–1:45 pm
2:00 pm–4:00 pm
4:15 pm–6:15 pm
6:30 pm–7:45 pm
6:30 pm–7:45 pm

Exchange Editorial Board Meeting
Registration
Scientific Sessions
Scientific Sessions
Lunch Break
Student Lunch
Lunchtime Presentation
Interest Groups (2)
Scientific Sessions
Scientific Sessions
Farewell Reception for Journal Reviewers
Poster Session III

Sunday, March 18, 2012

8:30 am–4:30 pm
8:30 am–12:00 pm
12:00 pm–1:30 pm

Full-Day Workshops (3)
Half-Day Workshops, Morning (2)
Lunch Break

President's Message

...continued from page 1

affiliates and (b) allocating funds to support early career assessment psychologists' attendance of our annual meeting. In other updates, among the new board members who joined us this year, Steve Huprich has taken charge of continuing education responsibilities and Nancy Kaser-Boyd is handling student matters. Furthermore, Joni Mihura has graciously stepped into the role of website editor and is full of plans to increase the resources made available through our website. President-elect Ron Ganellen is, of course, program chair for the upcoming annual meeting and has put together an excellent program. Our graduate student organization, Society for Personality Assessment Graduate Student Association (SPAGS), is now well established and the current SPAGS board, headed up by J. D. Smith, is taking on several new tasks to engage and serve our student affiliates. *JPA* continues to publish articles of the highest caliber under the direction of Greg Meyer, and Jed Yalof keeps us looking forward to the next issue of the *Exchange*.

Things look good for 2012 as we get ready for another excellent annual meeting and other plans. I wish you all a good year in 2012 and hope to see you in Chicago.

Reference

Society for Personality Assessment Board of Trustees. (2006). Standards for education and training in psychological assessment: Position of the Society for Personality Assessment. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 87, 355–357.

Special Topics in Assessment

...continued from page 2

Interpretation proceeds along principles in both nomothetic and idiographic realms. Hypotheses are generated from general to specific with primary weight on the Page One variables and focusing on atypical scores as indicative of distinct personality features. The R-PAS includes a review of experiential and behavioral facets of the assessment, sequencing, and consideration of idiosyncratic imagery nested in nomothetic data.

The R-PAS provokes some important questions, opportunities, and dilemmas for the assessment community at large,

for professors, supervisors, and practicing clinicians to consider when deciding if they should adopt the R-PAS. At a practical level, with any new assessment measure or system, clinicians are faced with new learning. For users of the CS, there will be much that is familiar in the R-PAS. Many of the codes (e.g., M, MOR, COP, H) remain the same. Some of the changes relieve the assessor of frequently nettlesome tasks—decisions between form levels of Shading (FY/YF/Y), Vista (FV/VF/V), and Texture (FT/TF/T) are gone; they have been replaced by Y, V, and T. Some improvements that Rorschachers may have anticipated—such as clarifying decisions around Level 1/Level 2 Special Scores or Active versus Passive movement—remain as they were. However, it is likely that there will be a significant learning curve. Some changes are relatively small—separating Space responses into Space Reversals (SR: figure-ground reversals) and Space Integration (SI: those that are integrated with parts of the blot)—while others involve more serious study. For example, variables with strong empirical support which danced around the edges of the CS for many years are now part of the R-PAS. These include elements of the Mutuality of Autonomy Scale (Urist, 1977), Oral Dependency Language (drawn from the Rorschach Oral Dependency Scale; Masling, Rabie, & Blondheim, 1967; Bornstein, 1996), Aggressive Content (Gacono & Meloy, 1994), and the Ego Impairment Index (Perry & Viglione, 1991), as well as others. In addition, some of the CS scores have been retained yet renamed in order to more aptly capture their interpretive meaning. For example, the variables which make up *es* (Experience stimulation) are called Potentially Problematic Determinants (PPD) in the R-PAS. Relearning and relabeling of these variables will likely not be difficult, though will involve some time to get used to.

Aside from the overall loss of familiarity, clinicians may react strongly to the loss of some of their favorite variables, those stalwart indicators which have served us loyally for a long time. R-PAS removed variables for various reasons: lack of validity, limited research, redundancy. For those of you who count Food, Landscape (Ls), or Perseveration (PSV) among your favorites, my condolences. Cost is another factor to be considered. R-PAS protocols require some computations that are currently only available via an online scoring account which can be obtained through www.r-pas.org, though hand-scoring options are in the works. Depending on one's usage (clinician, teacher/supervisor, researcher), protocols

range from no cost to US\$5 with discounts for quantities.

At this point in time, the transition to the R-PAS, despite its goals of being an empirically grounded, user-friendly, easier-to-teach-and-use Rorschach system, has some challenges to face in the assessment community and with the individual assessment professionals. Will community clinicians see the benefits of a new system or feel more comfortable staying with the CS? Will graduate programs, which have strained to continue teaching the Rorschach, invest in and embrace a new system? Will field supervisors and community clinicians find the comparative changes sufficiently compelling to invest the time to learn and practice the R-PAS?

For many clinicians using the CS, there will be a strong, natural pull toward continuing to use the CS. Others will be drawn to the promise of the R-PAS. Unlike a revision of a Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory or Wechsler Scale, the stimuli of the Rorschach test remain the same. It is up to us, the users of the Rorschach, to resolve how we will go about using those ten compelling blots.

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Ethical Considerations in Assessment Report Writing

...continued from page 4

the federal guidelines under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) give clients the right to inspect and obtain copies of their records. According to HIPAA, psychological reports and test data are part of Protected Health Information, not psychotherapy notes which can be withheld from clients.

Because clients have access to their records, and an increasing number of people are becoming active participants in their treatment process, it is recommended to write psychological reports for the client or at the very least with the expectation that they will be read by the client. Some suggestions to make psychological assessment reports more useful to clients and referral sources follow. The study by Pelco et al. (2009) suggests that reports be written at an 8th-grade reading level without professional jargon. They compared reports written at different levels and found that no important information was lost from the report that was written at a lower reading level without jargon. Psychologists should also be sure that their reports answer the referral question. Too many reports use the administration of a standard test battery and a stereotyped report that does not provide answers to the questions being asked. This also makes psychologists responsible for only endeavoring to answer questions for which assessment is relevant. Some referral questions cannot be answered through the use of psychological assessment.

...continued on page 14

Ethical Considerations in Assessment Report Writing

...continued from page 13

The most important section of the assessment is the recommendation section. Recommendations need to be specific to the person being assessed, pragmatic, and relevant both to the referral question and to the context in which they will be delivered. Recommendations also need to have some flexibility, for example when making recommendations for issues to pursue in individual therapy. Wolber and Carne (2002) suggest that before a final psychological report is sent to the referral source or given to the client, that it be read by a colleague or supervisor. When the report writer is not a student, psychologists tend not to take the time or avoid the additional scrutiny of additional review. However, the objectivity of a third party can be very beneficial in providing a different perspective. A final suggestion for making psychological assessment reports more useful has to do with timeliness. Turnaround time is a significant issue when decisions about an individual's future have to be made in a timely fashion. In a survey conducted by Berk (2005) respondents were unhappy with the amount of time that elapsed before they received the report.

Currently, there is an emerging trend toward collaborative assessment (Finn, 2007; Fischer, 1985/1994). In traditional assessment, psychologists are the "experts," administering batteries of tests, analyzing the results, drawing conclusions, and writing reports. The clients are seldom given the opportunity to confirm, question, or contradict the assessment outcomes. Because assessment often has the potential to significantly influence clients' lives, in the traditional approach clients are relatively powerless with respect to the assessment process (Schleifer & McElfresh, 2005). However, collaborative assessment involves a comprehensive effort to engage the client in multiple phases of the assessment process with feedback and direction from the individual being tested as an integral part of the process. The purpose of collaborative assessment is to make the assessment process more humane, respectful, and understandable to clients (Finn, 2007).

In conclusion, "the effectiveness, reliability, and validity of psychological assessment have been extremely well documented. Assessment continues to be the bedrock defining feature of our discipline" (Berk, 2005, p. 2). However, psychological reports are currently written in much the same way as they were written for the past half-century (Pelco et al., 2009). The current trend toward client access to records, clients' participation in the assessment process, and ethical sensitivity suggests writing assessment reports for our clients or with the expectation that they will be read by our clients. This suggests that professors who teach assessment courses should provide students with models of reports that incorporate best practices such as sensitivity to confidentiality of information in the background section of the report; basing conclusions on data; indicating any deviations from standardized procedures; keeping reading levels at or below the 8th grade; eliminating professional jargon; and making recommendations that are pragmatic and address the referral question. For all psychologists, keeping these issues in mind will improve the quality and usefulness of psychological assessment and reports.

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SPAGS: Current and Future Activities and Initiatives

...continued from page 9

work with the SPA board on student matters. Also consider encouraging your colleagues to run for a position. We are in need of new members and fresh perspectives from various graduate programs, so share this opportunity with friends at other institutions as well. If you aren't sure you want to commit to being on the board, but would like to be involved with SPAGS governance, we encourage participating on one or more of our committees (Social, Education, Membership, Technology, Diversity). If this is appealing to you, or you have ideas for ways to improve how SPAGS can better serve the student membership, please feel free to send me an email at jsmith6@uoregon.edu. I'm looking forward to seeing you all in Chicago at what is assuredly going to be a terrific annual meeting!

2012 Annual Meeting Continuing Education Opportunities

...continued from page 11

Personality assessment is used extensively in forensic settings. Those of you involved in forensic applications of psychological assessment will be interested in workshops addressing the psychological effects of trauma, assessment of individuals accused of internet child pornography, and pre-employment and fitness for duty evaluations. Nancy Kaser-Boyd and F. Barton Evans will offer a workshop titled "Clinical and Forensic Assessment of Psychological Trauma." This workshop will cover the effects trauma has on psychological functioning and personality development. Kaser-Boyd and Evans will also review the strengths and weaknesses of traditional assessment instruments in evaluating psychological

trauma and discuss the implications of these evaluations for criminal and civil legal cases. Understanding, evaluating, and treating internet child pornography offenders is the goal of Eric Imhoff, Ted Shaw, and Gilbert Shaffnit's workshop. They will review relevant literature, case law, and approaches to assessment to prepare participants to conduct sound evaluations of this population and to provide effective testimony in court. Another application of psychological assessment will be the focus of a workshop, led by Chris Front, which has as its aim development of the skills needed by assessment psychologists to perform pre-employment and fitness-for-duty evaluations for the Federal Aviation Administration. This is the first time a workshop focusing on this specialized topic will be offered at SPA.

Wait. As if the workshops already described were not enough, there is more! Les Morey, the developer of the PAI, will present two half-day workshops: one for beginners and a more advanced workshop for those familiar with the PAI. Two workshops will focus not only on the skills needed to conduct a thorough assessment, but to write effective, useful reports that integrate findings from the clinical interview and test data. These workshops will be led by Roger Greene, who will focus on the steps the psychologist needs to take to address the referral questions generated for a specific client; and by Gary Groth-Marnat, who will focus on the strategies and tools needed to write an optimal psychological report. As many of you know by experience, both Greene and Groth-Marnat are master teachers, and both offer sage, practical advice based on a wealth of experience.

For those of you involved in teaching personality assessment, Ed Rossini and Jim Choca are presenting a workshop titled, "The Teaching and Learning of Projective Tests." They will present examples of effective and ineffective teaching methods and explore different approaches to teach the Rorschach

and Thematic Apperception Test. Tammy Hughes will also address issues in teaching personality assessment and will focus on translating test results to report writing. Issues in administration and coding of Rorschach Comprehensive System variables will be covered by Barry Ritzler and Tony Sciara; their workshops have consistently helped Rorschach psychologists improve their skills.

To round things out, Steve Strack will provide an overview of the impact Theodore Millon's work has had on the field of personality theory and personality assessment. Strack will present research based on Millon's theory, which examines normal and abnormal personality styles; discuss instruments to measure adaptive and maladaptive personality traits; and illustrate how these theoretical issues and approaches to assessment can inform the work of clinicians and researchers. Carol George will lead a workshop presenting recent advances in attachment theory and assessment of states of mind associated with the experiences of loss, abuse, and other forms of attachment trauma. Her work with the Adult Attachment Projective Picture System (AAP) will be described to show how the AAP can be used to identify attachment trauma and unresolved mourning. An introduction to a sophisticated data analytic approach, Latent Class and Latent Profile Analysis, will be presented by Aidan Wright. Other workshops will focus on assessment of psychotic conditions, presented by James Kleiger and Ali Khadivi; assessment of social cognition and object relations using the Social Cognition and Objects Relation Scale-Global Rating Method, taught by Michelle Stein; an introduction to the Wartegg Drawing Completion test, led by Alessandro Crisi; and the approach to organizing psychological test data based on ego functions developed by Thomas Shaffer.

As many of you are aware, the American Psychological Association recently recognized

personality assessment as a proficiency in professional psychology. For those interested in developing the skills needed to become proficient in psychological assessment and for those interested in enhancing their assessment skills, the SPA Annual Meeting provides an abundance of rich learning opportunities. We encourage you to carve out the dates on your calendar and make your plane and hotel reservations today so you can join us in Chicago next March to take advantage of everything SPA has to offer.

SPA Personals

Barton Evans, PhD, recently accepted a position as a psychologist at the Charles George Veteran's Administration Medical Center in Asheville, NC.

Charles A. Peterson, PhD, has been awarded the 2011 Dieperink Prize for psychoanalytic writing/scholarship by the Minnesota Psychoanalytic Society for his essay (soon to appear in the *American Journal of Psychotherapy*) "Short-Term Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy: A Construction Zone."

John Porcerelli, PhD, has been promoted to the rank of Professor of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences by the Wayne State University School of Medicine, Detroit, MI. In addition, he has been awarded his second board certification by the American Board of Professional Psychology in Clinical Health Psychology.

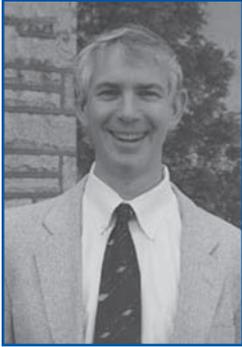
SPA Website

Please visit the SPA website at www.personality.org for information about all of SPA's happenings. Among its many items, the website includes PDF links to back issues of the *SPA Exchange*.

spa exchange

From the Editor...

Jed A. Yalof, PsyD, ABPP, ABSNP



This issue of the *Exchange* highlights the upcoming Annual Meeting in Chicago. Radhika Krishnamurthy, the new SPA President, gets us ready for the meeting by offering her perspective on various happenings within SPA. Alan Schwartz provides an overview of the R-PAS. Chris Hopwood writes about the assessment of personality processes. Linda Knauss discusses ethical issues in report writing. Bruce Smith provides updates on the SPA Foundation and

Advocacy initiatives. Jed Yalof offers creative and interactive personality assessment classroom activities. Nancy Kaser-Boyd shares her perspective on the value of “giving back” to SPA. Kari Carstairs writes about how she integrates the Rorschach into her psychology practice in the United Kingdom. J. D. Smith updates membership on SPAGS initiatives. Ron Ganellen describes the outstanding workshop and program offerings. Mark Blais provides an update on the work on the Personality Assessment Proficiency Project. Until next time...

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Volume 24, Number 1
Winter 2012