

# Fifty Years and Counting: The Ongoing Reciprocal Impact of Science and Practice Of the Assessment Center Method

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Why has the AC method endured and thrived?

- Face valid and Flexible
- AC practice has been stimulated by good theories and empirical research
- Science has investigated practical AC issues

Purpose of today's talk:

- Describe the influence of science on practice
- Describe the influence of practice on science ....

in four time periods from 1965 to the present.

## Early Period: 1965 - 1980

Practice

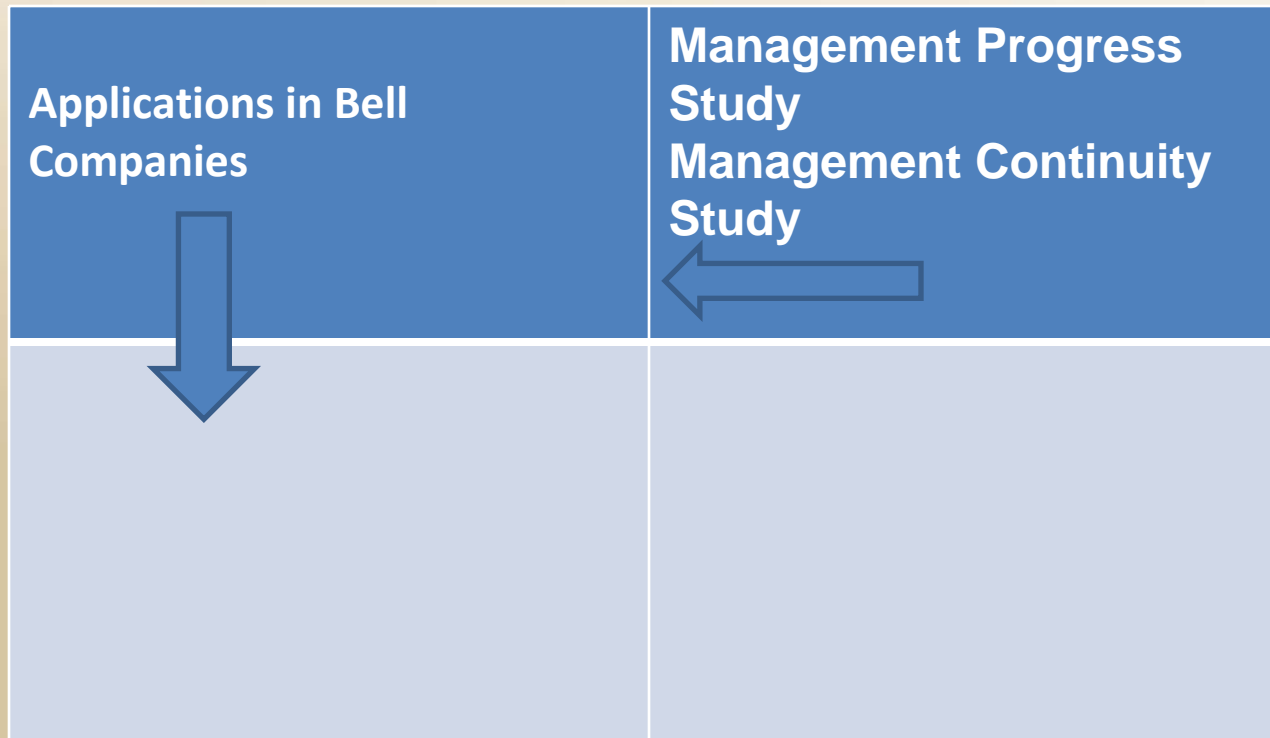
Science

	<b>Management Progress Study</b> <b>Management Continuity Study</b> ←

## Early Period: 1965 - 1980

Practice

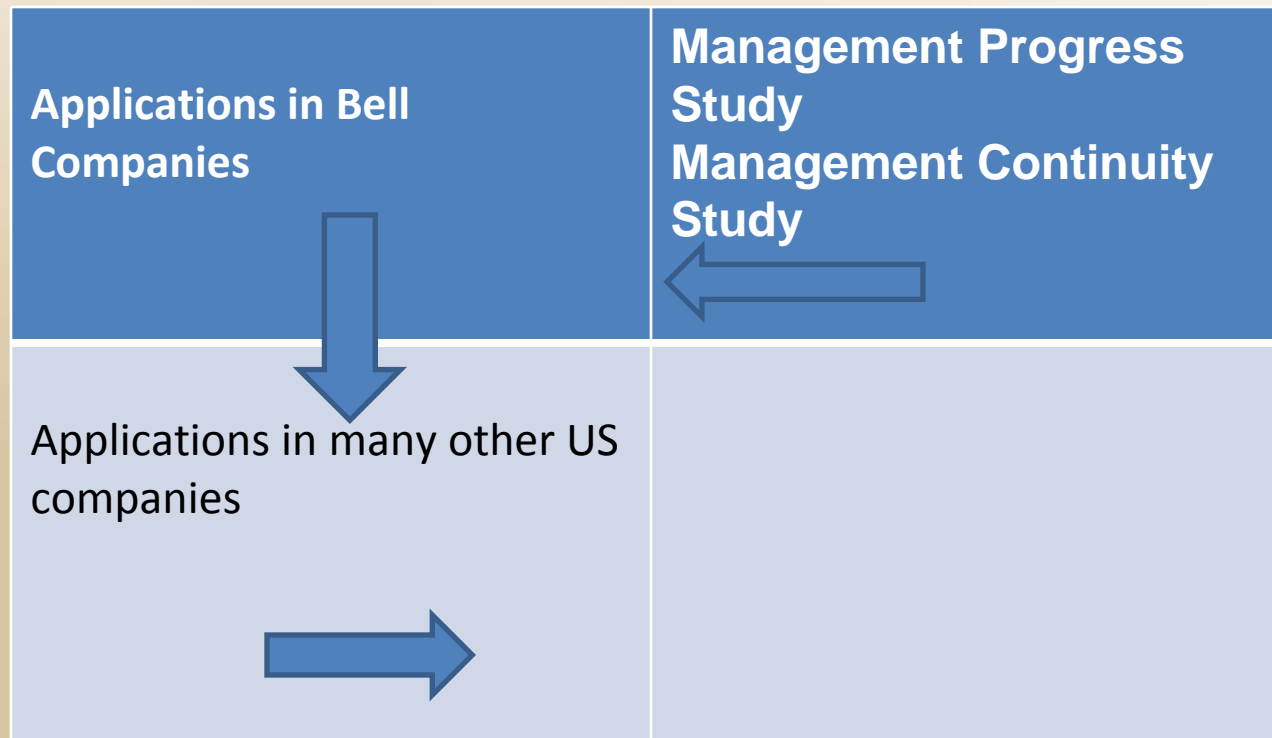
Science



## Early Period: 1965 - 1980

Practice



Science



## Early Period: 1965 - 1980

Practice

Science

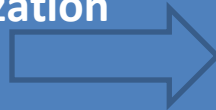
<p>Applications in Bell Companies</p>	<p>Management Progress Study Management Continuity Study</p> 
<p>Applications in many other US companies</p> 	<p>Extensive predictive validity studies, <math>r = .38</math></p>

## Early Period continued

Practice

Science

Hierarchical organizations  
need accurate promotional  
system  
Prosperity supported I/O  
research in organization





## Early Period continued

Practice

Science

Hierarchical organizations  
need accurate promotional  
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Prosperity supported I/O  
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Extensive research on the  
OAR

## Early Period continued

### Practice

### Science

Hierarchical organizations  
need accurate promotional  
system  
Prosperity supported I/O  
research in organization



Extensive research on the  
OAR

Methods for studying  
“fairness,” adverse impact,  
& bias in testing & selection

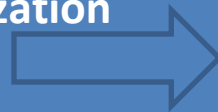


## Early Period continued

### Practice

### Science

Hierarchical organizations need accurate promotional system  
Prosperity supported I/O research in organization



Extensive research on the OAR

ACs meet the challenges of equal employment opportunity

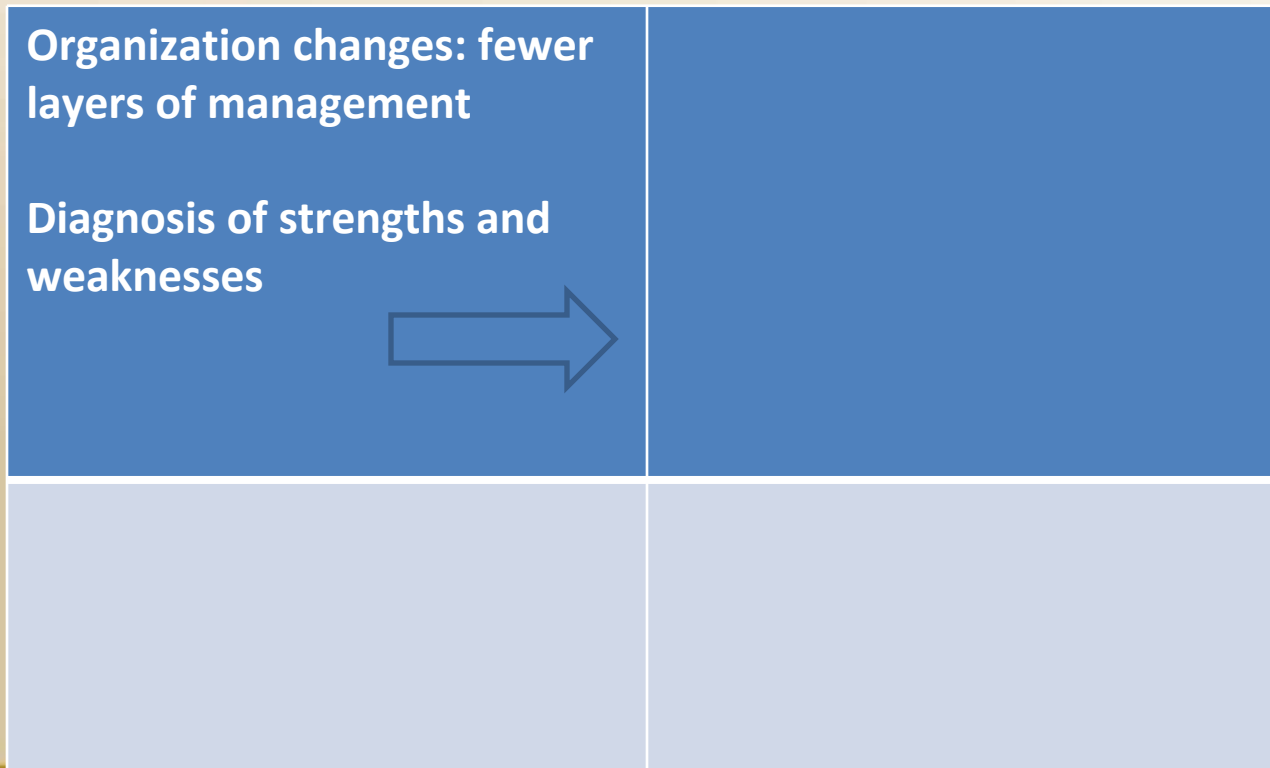
Methods for studying "fairness," adverse impact, & bias in testing & selection



## Middle Period: 1980 to 1990

Practice



Science



## Middle Period: 1980 to 1990

### Practice

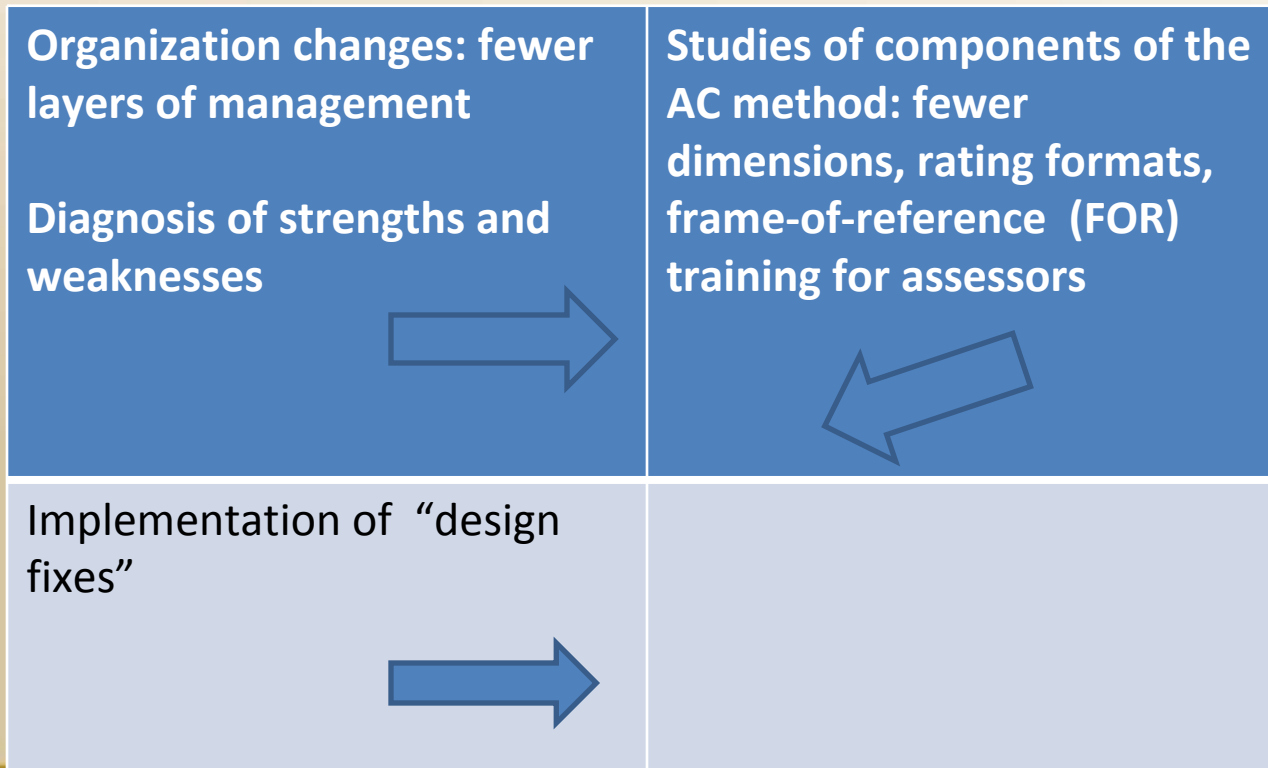
### Science

<p>Organization changes: fewer layers of management</p> <p>Diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses</p> 	<p>Studies of components of the AC method: fewer dimensions, rating formats, frame-of-reference (FOR) training for assessors</p> 

## Middle Period: 1980 to 1990

### Practice




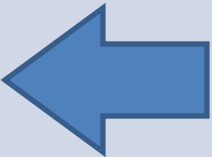
### Science



## Middle Period: 1980 to 1990

### Practice

### Science

<p>Organization changes: fewer layers of management</p> <p>Diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses</p> 	<p>Studies of components of the AC method: fewer dimensions, rating formats, frame-of-reference training for assessors</p> 
<p>Implementation of “design fixes”</p> 	<p>Early research questioned the “construct validity” of ACs</p> 

## Middle Period: continued

Practice

Science

	<b>Human judgment, group decision making. Alleged superiority of statistical integration</b>

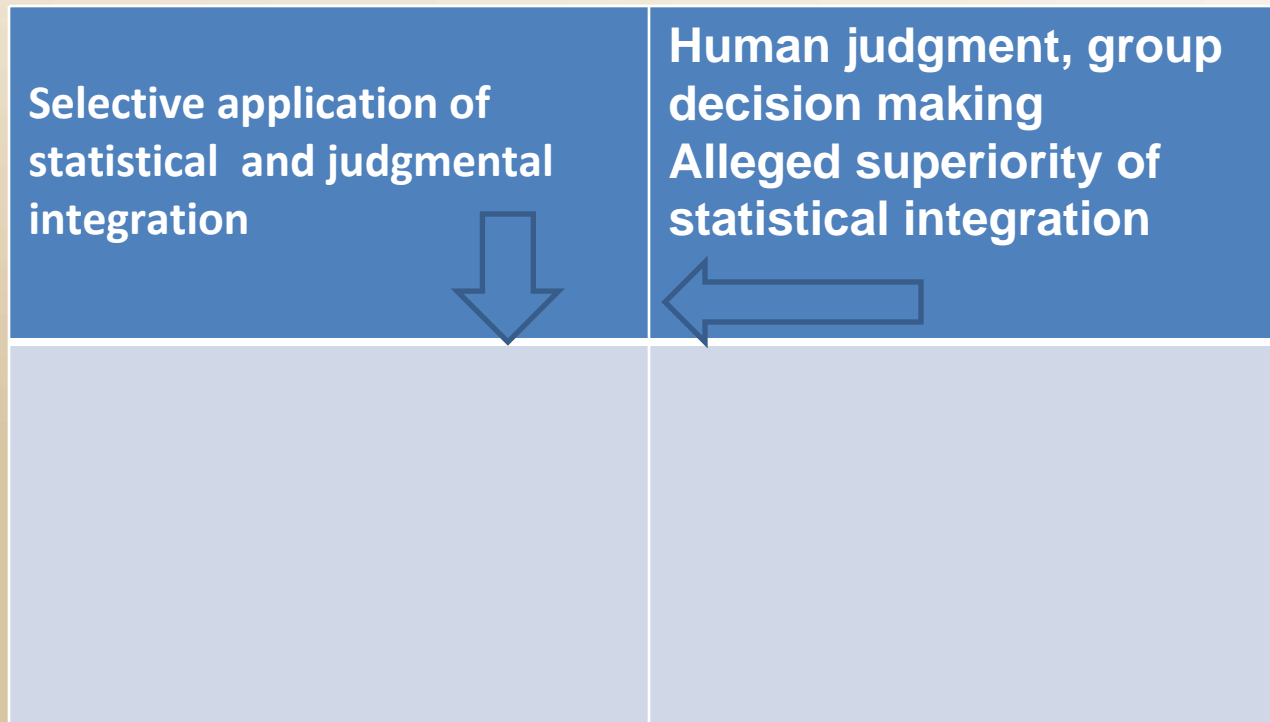




## Middle Period: continued

Practice

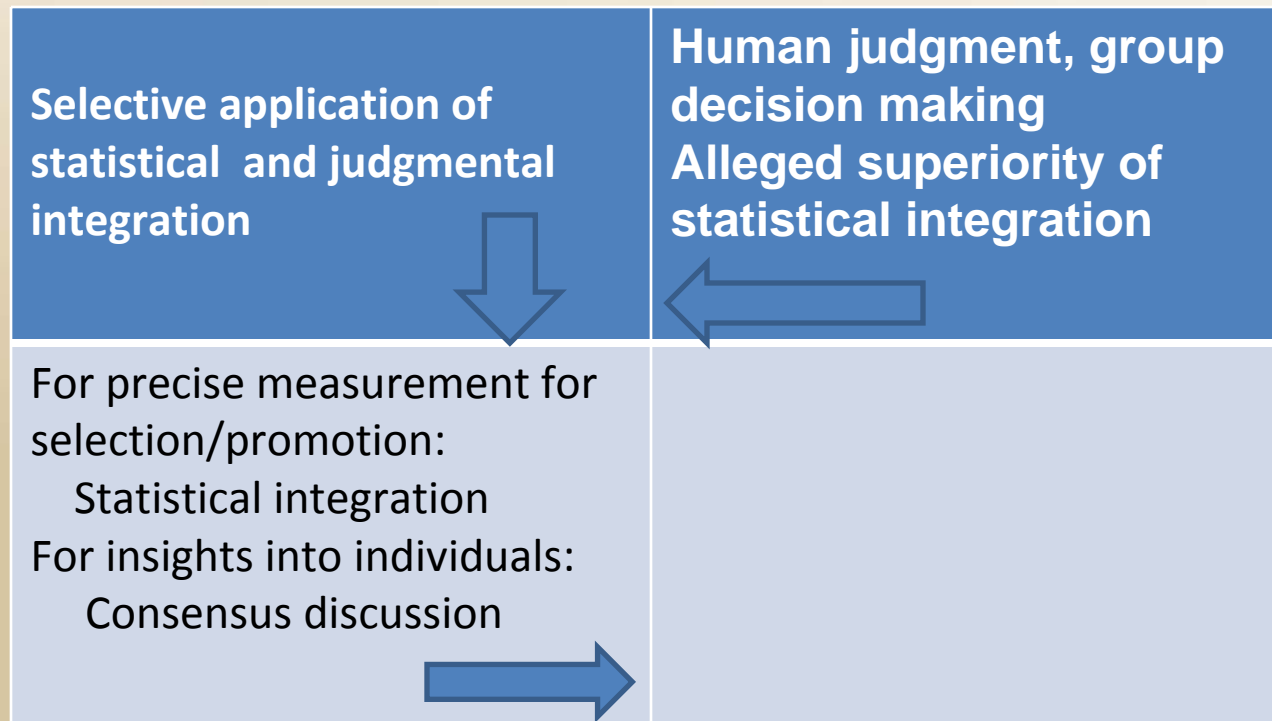
Science



## Middle Period: continued

Practice

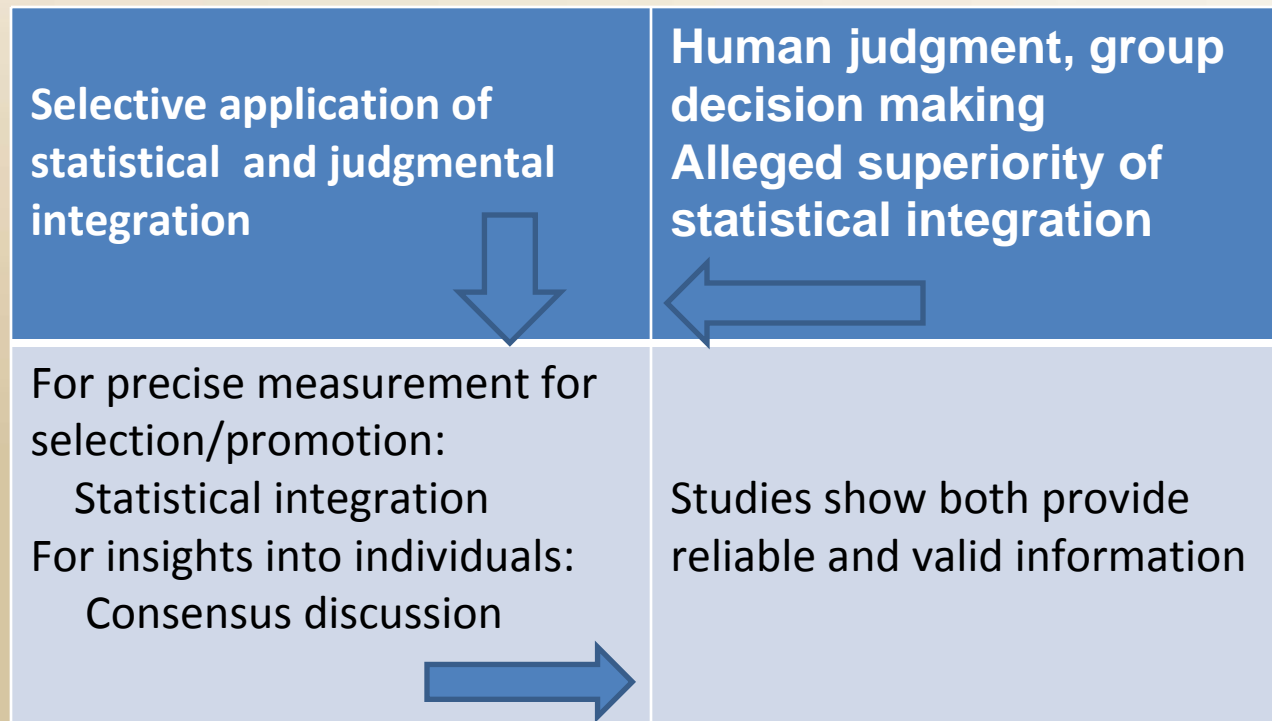
Science



## Middle Period: continued

### Practice


### Science



## Recent Period: 1990 to 2005

Practice

Science


	<b>Additional “construct validity” studies of PEDRs</b> 



## Recent Period: 1990 to 2005

Practice


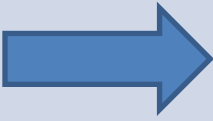
Science

<p>Initiation of “task-based” ACs Revision of “dimension-based” ACs with implementation of design fixes</p>	<p>Additional “construct validity” studies of PEDRs</p> 

## Recent Period: 1990 to 2005

Practice


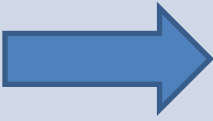
Science

<p><b>Initiation of “task-based” ACs</b>                  Revision of “dimension-based” ACs with implementation of design fixes</p>	<p><b>Additional “construct validity” studies of PEDRs</b></p> 
<p>Development of developmental AC to foster changes</p> 	

## Recent Period: 1990 to 2005

Practice

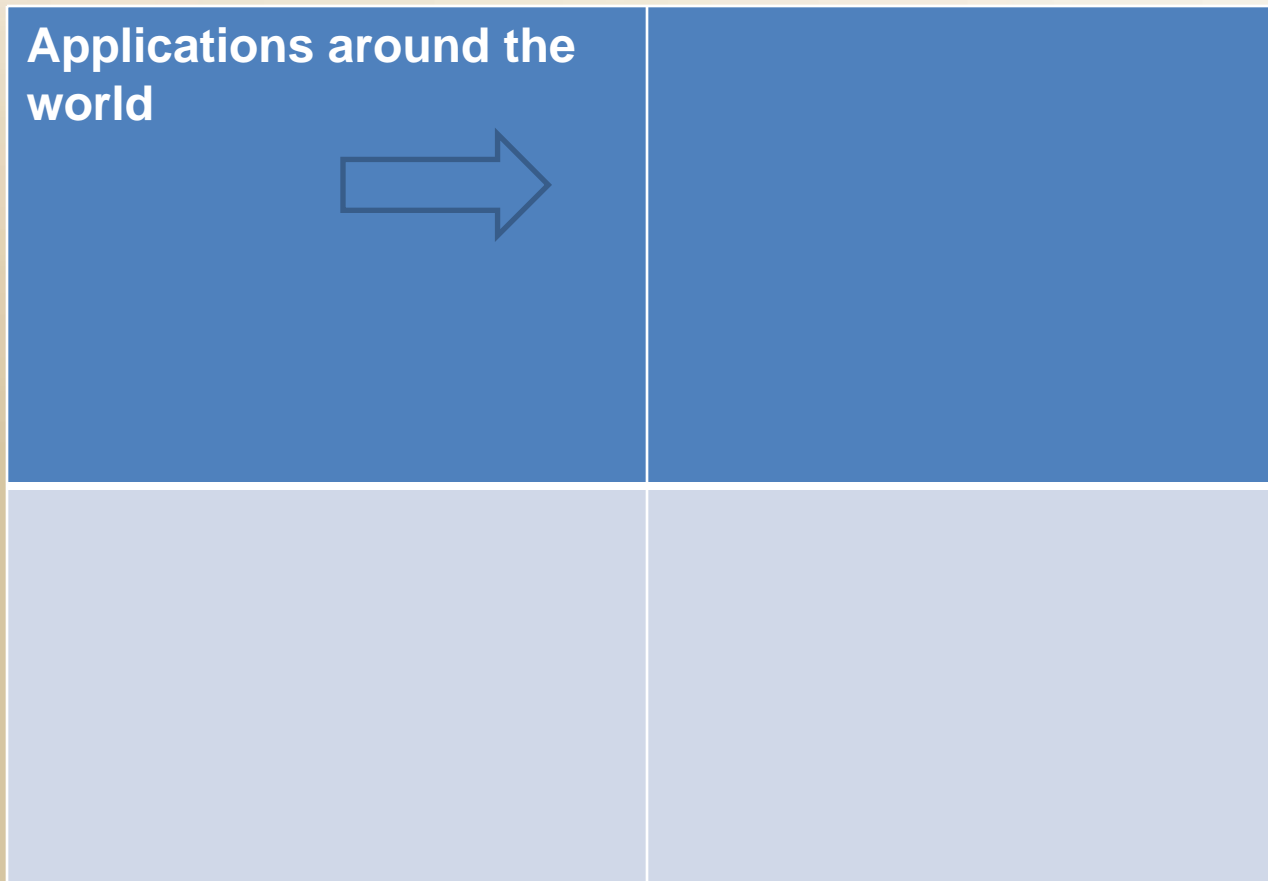
Science

<p><b>Initiation of “task-based” ACs</b> Revision of “dimension-based” ACs with implementation of design fixes</p>	<p><b>Additional “construct validity” studies of PEDRs</b></p> 
<p>Development of developmental AC to foster changes</p> 	<p>Studies of appropriate dimensions, feedback, and change, e.g., change in understanding meaning of dimensions</p>

## Recent Period: continued

Practice

Science






## Recent Period: continued

Practice


Science

<p><b>Applications around the world</b></p> 	<p><b>Research in other countries, e.g., Israel</b></p> <p><b>Cross cultural comparisons and explanations, e.g., individualistic vs collective culture</b></p>

## Current Period: 2005 to present

Practice

Science

	New statistical methods to study “construct validity” of PEDRs 

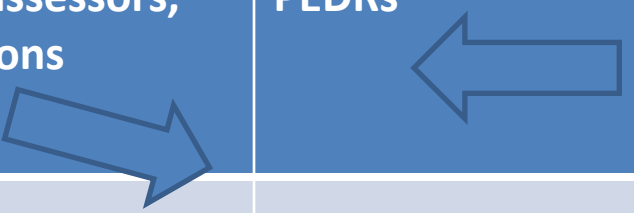


## Current Period: 2005 to present

Practice

Science



<p>Re-affirmation of the basic premise of AC method: Aggregate across assessors, exercises, dimensions</p>	<p>New statistical methods to study “construct validity” of PEDRs</p>



## Current Period: 2005 to present

### Practice


### Science

<p>Re-affirmation of the basic premise of AC method: Aggregate across assessors, exercises, dimensions</p> 	<p>New statistical methods to study “construct validity” of PEDRs</p> 
	<p>Studies of cross-exercise dimension ratings show considerable “construct validity” evidence</p>

## Current Period: continued

Practice

Science


	Trait Activation Theory and research 



## Current Period: continued

### Practice

### Science



Enhancement of instructions, material in cases, role player behavior	Trait Activation Theory and research 



## Current Period: continued

### Practice

### Science



<p>Enhancement of instructions, material in cases, role player behavior</p>	<p>Trait Activation Theory and research</p> 
<p>Organizational competency modeling</p> <p>Human capital management</p> 	



## Current Period: continued

### Practice

### Science

<p>Enhancement of instructions, material in cases, role player behavior</p>	<p>Trait Activation Theory and research</p> 
<p>Organizational competency modeling</p> <p>Human capital management</p> 	<p>How can we assess complex organizational competencies?</p> <p>How can we measure contribution of human capital for HCM</p> <p>?????????</p>



## Summary and Conclusions

- Long rich history of ACs due to the interface of science and practice
- AC field is an exemplar of “evidenced-based management”
- Continued cooperation between science and practice is needed to meet current challenges

Thornton, G.C. III. (2011). Fifty years and counting: The ongoing reciprocal impact of science and practice of the assessment center method. In N. Povah & G.C. Thornton III (Eds.), *Assessment and Development Centres: Strategies for Global Talent Management*. London: Gower.