

Assessment Center Integrity: Does the Word Get Around?

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Security

- Of course we have concerns about AC security.
- Most research on test security has to do with multiple choice tests or unproctored internet tests.
 - Data increasingly showing that unproctored tests have the same means and standard deviations of proctored tests.
- AC Data very proprietary and often hard to obtain.

Does Pre-AC Knowledge Help?

- Unlike most tests, ACs don't necessarily have "right" answers that can be easily memorized.
- Anecdotal data suggests having previous knowledge doesn't help.
- Heavy situational (acting?) factors.
 - "This is how I coach."

Does Pre-AC Knowledge Help?

- Managers may tend to want to sink or swim based on their own abilities and reject any pre-information.
- However, enough knowledge could allow someone to prepare for certain exercises or avoid situations.

The Situation

- Small US liberal arts college.
- Selecting undergrads into an advance business program.
- AC has been used for 4 consecutive years.

The AC

- Full day, day in the life format.
 - Coaching
 - In-Basket
 - Team
- Two groups of students run on consecutive days (2 consecutive for the first 3 years, 3 consecutive last year).

Research Questions

- Do students on day 2 (or 3) have an advantage over those on day 1 (or 2)?
- Do students in subsequent years have higher scores than previous years?

Day to Day Results

- Coaching
 - $F = 0.10$ $df(131,2)$, *ns*
- In-Basket
 - $F = 2.23$ $df(131,2)$, *ns*
- Team
 - $F = 0.81$ $df(131,2)$, *ns*
- Overall
 - $F = 1.95$ $df(131,2)$, *ns*

Day to Day Summary

- If participants are communicating about the AC from day to day, it doesn't seem to be helping.

Results Year-to-Year

- Coaching Meeting
 - $F = 1.19$ $df(130,3)$, *ns*
- In-Basket
 - $F = 8.00$ $df(130,3)$, $p < .001$
 - Years 1 and 4 lowest scores.
- Team
 - $F = 10.12$, $df(90,2)$, $p < .001$
 - Years 1 and 4 highest scores
- Overall
 - $F = 2.53$ $df(130,3)$, *ns*

Summary of Year-to-Year

- If there's information being transmitted from year to year it's not helping on a consistent basis.

Overall Caveats and Summary

- We don't explicitly ask if people are talking about the AC.
 - Some anecdotal evidence that they do.
 - Don't want to encourage them to share information.
- The means scores (and the standard deviations) have stayed the same over four years.
- There's not an advantage to going second (or third).

Implications

- As long as your AC is valid, there's no compelling reason to revise it.
- Note that having the same people go through the same AC twice could be a totally different story.
- There's something about ACs that make them almost cheat proof.
 - Acting?
 - Situational fidelity?

Questions?