Assessing the Skills and Competencies of Internationally Trained Immigrants: A Manual for Regulatory Bodies, Employers and Other Stakeholders

March 2012

Prepared for the
Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA)
by
Susan Simosko
Susan Simosko Associates, Inc.

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Canada

CAPLA
Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment
Association canadienne pour la reconnaissance des acquis

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This manual represents a culmination of knowledge-exchange activities over several months in late 2011, including:

- A webinar, hosted by CAPLA on October 31.
- A pre-conference session at the annual CAPLA conference, held in Toronto on November 13.
- Material published in a CAPLA Outcomes Paper in December, and subsequent online discussion through the Recognition for Learning community of practice at www.recognitionforlearning.ca.

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Prologue

For almost twenty years, the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) has provided leadership across Canada in the field of prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR).

PLAR is a process that determines what a person knows and can do. It involves the recognition of informal learning acquired through various means: employment, volunteer work, military training, hobbies, personal reading, and other significant life experiences. Two other PLAR applications are credit review of workplace training, and articulation agreements between institutions. In Canada, some jurisdictions consider PLAR as a combination of formal, non-formal and informal learning, in which case they may refer to the process as "recognition of prior learning" (RPL).

The PLAR process is particularly important to immigrants who have gained knowledge and skills in their home country in a variety of ways: in the labour force, at home, through community work, or through independent study. They may have valuable experience in their home countries, but their credentials may not be exactly equivalent to those required in Canada. Many employers rely heavily on the evaluation of foreign credentials to determine an applicant's suitability for a particular job or professional designation. However, as valuable as credentials are, they do not in themselves attest to an individual's full breadth of knowledge, skills and experience.

In the early days of PLAR, much of the work focused on supporting colleges and universities in their efforts to introduce the concept, and to develop policies, train assessors, and create program opportunities for adult learners. Over the years, however, other types of organizations have also become interested in offering recognition of prior learning (RPL) services in a wide range of contexts—such as business, industry, and the non-profit sector. Licensing and certification bodies

have taken an interest too, and have turned to CAPLA for technical support, guidance, and examples of good practice.

In 2006, CAPLA undertook a research study for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) entitled *Recognizing the Prior Learning of Immigrants to Canada: Moving Toward Consistency.* In 2007 CAPLA produced another report, *The Feasibility of Developing a National Framework to Assess Immigrant Learning.* These two papers contributed to a national focus on the problems of assessing immigrant learning; and they enabled CAPLA to build new alliances with other organizations and individuals concerned about the issue of reducing the barriers that immigrants experience when they try to work in Canada.

As part of a comprehensive assessment strategy, CAPLA, along with many organizations, advocated for the increased use of both credential and competency recognition in a national effort to reduce the barriers that immigrants were experiencing in trying to work in Canada. Credentials they earned in their home countries often do not provide sufficient evidence of their work-related skills. Although academic credentials can serve as a useful starting point, both employers and regulators felt that they do not fully attest to the immigrants' knowledge, skills and competence, or match their ability to meet the expectations associated with employment or licensure in Canada. As a result, many immigrants are denied access to jobs in their fields, and professional wages. Many need to seek employment outside their education and experience.

Recognizing the limitations of credential evaluation is the first step toward finding useful solutions to the problem, as many organizations now work to do. CAPLA believes that PLAR methods (also known as competency-based assessment) provide helpful options. Properly used, these methods can go a long way toward helping employers and regulators to improve their decision-making

processes; to screen trained immigrants; and to support immigrants in their goal of entering the Canadian workforce.

This manual provides an overview of the five assessment methods commonly associated with PLAR and with competency-based assessment. These methods—self-assessments, written examinations, oral questioning, demonstrations and observations, and portfolios—are used by regulatory and licensing bodies, and by educational and training organizations, across Canada and around the world.

The manual is divided into four sections: Introduction, Getting Started, Assessment Tools, and Putting It All Together. At the end of each section is a series of questions to help you evaluate your organization's needs, and to help you consider possible future steps as you review your approach. At the end of the manual, the Appendices provide additional resources and references.

CAPLA hopes that this manual will prove to be a helpful tool for recognizing the skills and competencies of immigrants. We should not forget that internationally trained workers have invested a great deal, both personally and professionally, to secure a productive future for themselves and their families in Canada.

Section 1: Introduction

> "I had a good job in my country. I knew it would be challenging coming to Canada, and that I would have to be prepared to spend time looking and adapting. But actually, it has been much harder than I thought."
>
> – Yane Brogiollo is an immigrant from Brazil, where she managed a team of database professionals for a global company. She also designed and taught courses for an MBA program at her local university.

Every year, Canada admits thousands of highly skilled and talented immigrants from around the world. (In 2011, Canada admitted 280,636 permanent residents.)[1] They come with high expectations about living in Canada, and contributing to its prosperity. Yet many suffer because, despite their best efforts, they are unable to find work that pays well, and that draws on their skills, knowledge and experience. This is a tremendous loss, not just for the individuals—who often become discouraged and alienated—but also for the nation. A recent (December 2011) study by the Royal Bank of Canada cites the wide-ranging economic cost of under-utilizing the skilled workers who come to Canada: if immigrants' skills were rewarded at a level similar to Canadian-born workers, the increase in their incomes would amount to $30.7 billion—the equivalent of 2.1% of the country's gross domestic product.[2]

Because this is a complex problem with many dimensions, this manual attempts to help employers, regulators and other stakeholders to address an important issue: if employers, regulators and others cannot rely solely on foreign credentials to verify immigrants' skills, knowledge and experience, what other

[1] Citizenship and Immigration Canada, February 13, 2011. *Canada Welcomes Highest Number of Legal Immigrants in 50 Years While Taking Action to Maintain the Integrity of Canada's Immigration System.* Retrieved January2012 from www.cic.gc/ca/English/media

[2] Grant, T., and Trichur, R. (December 17, 2011). "*Shortchanging Immigrants Costs Canada*," Globe and Mail.

options are available? To answer the question, this manual describes several assessment tools, all designed to gather specific, current and authentic information about applicants. These enhanced assessment strategies will enable employers to better screen immigrants, with the goal of giving them better access to opportunities for training, professional registration, or employment.

Defining the Problem

Concern about the inability of qualified immigrants to meet the basic requirements of work or professional licensing in Canada affects both regulators and employers. The following fictitious scenarios illustrate some of the most common current dilemmas.

Employer Perspective

You are the owner/operator of a large high-end construction firm. Until recently, you never had any difficulty hiring carpenters, roofers, electricians, plumbers, or any other trades. Lately, however, there seem to be fewer and fewer qualified workers. You are frustrated because you feel unable to bid on certain jobs because of the lack of skilled workers.

When you advertise for skilled tradespeople, the applicants you get are mostly from other countries. You are uncertain how to determine if they have the skills and knowledge you need. You also worry that an internationally trained worker may not fit in with your current staff. Some of the applicants may well meet your hiring needs, but you are not sure how to find out. The normal interview process often seems awkward and unhelpful, for both you and the applicant. You are not sure how to proceed.

Regulator Perspective

You are the chairperson of the Quality Assurance Committee of a regulatory college in nursing. Over the years, you have seen many applicants come and go.

Increasingly, you notice that the college of nurses is experiencing an influx of young graduates and experienced nurses from overseas**.** Because of your province's demographics, you see more and more applicants from Asia, the Philippines, and the U.K.

Although these graduates have completed their education and training programs in their own countries, you are concerned that many are not successful on any of the examinations administered by the college—either the practical or the written exams. Although the college provides information about educational programs and bridging courses, few of the internationally trained applicants have the time or money to start over.

With such a high rate of failure, you feel that something may be wrong with the way the college assesses the immigrant nurses. You wonder if there is some course of action you can take or recommend. However, you also recognize that Canada has one of the best nurse-training programs in the world—so perhaps the problem is simply that nurses trained in other countries really don't have the skills needed to practice in a Canadian context. You express your concerns to the Registrar, and to the other members of the Quality Assurance Committee. They agree that there seems to be a problem, but no one is quite sure what to do.

A closer examination reveals that some of the problems presented in these two scenarios could be related either to the assessment method used, or to lack of knowledge of how another culture operates. For example, an applicant might avert their eyes, not looking at the interviewer directly. This leads the employer to infer that the applicant lacks self-confidence, or is uncomfortable, unsure, or not a "people person"—not realizing that in the applicant's own culture, it is considered disrespectful to look directly at the interviewer.

In the second scenario, one reason why international applicants often fail multiple-choice tests is that they may not be familiar with that type of examination. Immigrants from many countries have never seen a multiple-choice

exam before, and have not had the opportunity to develop the test-taking strategies familiar to most Canadians.

These two examples highlight why it is so important for organizations and employers to consider using different strategies to assess the qualifications of international applicants, and to confirm that they fully meet expectations. This does not necessarily mean lowering standards or expectations; it just means gathering information in different ways.

Guide to Assessment Strategies

The tools and strategies outlined here are designed to help you to enhance your current assessment methods, in order to improve the opportunities for applicants trained in other countries. All the strategies described here are already being used successfully in Canada and around the world, in many diverse organizations, and with many different types of applicants and students. The strategies are equally effective for entry-level and "continuing competence" purposes, and in both formative and summative contexts. (Formative assessment often takes place **before or during** a learning, training or work program. It gives learners/applicants feedback to enhance their ability to make decisions about education and/or employment opportunities; one example is an "interest inventory." In contrast, a summative assessment usually takes place **at the end** of an education and/or training experience. It often serves to confirm that the learner/applicant has met a particular standard or requirement, such as a licensing examination. For definitions of these and other technical terms, see Appendix A.)

The information in this report reflects the research and practical experience of professionals and managers from a number of fields: assessment, human resources (in both public and private organizations), education and training, and professional regulation. As well, it reflects the needs, advice and experience of

immigrants across Canada. Last but not least, it also reflects a commitment (on the part of both CAPLA and the author) to six key assumptions:

- Learning occurs throughout an individual's life.
- Learning comes from both formal and informal experiences—it is gained through work, home, community, and personal activities.
- Learning from one context is often comparable to learning from other contexts.
- Academic and professional credentials do not always reflect individuals' complete skills and knowledge, or their ability to apply those skills and knowledge in a variety of contexts.
- Fair and valid assessments are the foundation of good decision-making in employment, licensure and educational contexts.
- The effective recognition of individuals' learning contributes to their continued motivation to learn and succeed.

You may find it helpful to determine how relevant these assumptions are to your own organization. In many cases, an explicit endorsement of these implicit assumptions can result in a more cohesive assessment strategy, and a greater likelihood of implementing positive change. However, this material is not intended as a formula for reinventing your current processes. Rather, it is intended to enable you to build on your current successes, and to work toward changing or enhancing your existing strategies. This will reduce barriers, and help your organization to:

- assess internationally trained immigrants more fairly and equitably
- identify their skills, knowledge and experience more clearly
- highlight their real strengths and limitations
- make better decisions—better both for your organization, and for the individuals you assess—based on the outcomes of your processes.

Below are some questions to guide you in evaluating your current practices, and to help you to consider future options.

Key Questions

- What problems or issues does your organization face?
- Have you discussed these issues with colleagues and/or managers?
- Is your organization ready to consider changing the way it works with immigrant applicants?
- How do the six assumptions listed above relate to your organization's values and practices?

Next Steps

What steps might you take next in response to one or more of these questions?

Section 2: Getting Started

> "We should pick the best and the brightest, and seek to attract them in what is increasingly a global marketplace for human capital."
>
> – Jason Kenney
> Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism
> Government of Canada[3]

Communicating with Immigrants

Organizations that wish to refine or enhance the ways in which they attract, assess and recognize the skills of applicants must look closely at their communications systems, both internal and external. This section suggests a few strategies for starting that process.

Immigrants across Canada have indicated that one of their biggest impediments to success is the lack of readily available information about a particular job, or about a specific provincial or territorial requirement for professional registration or licensing. Paradoxically, in this information age, it is sometimes still a challenge for them to gain access to the information they need—either before coming to Canada, or after they arrive here.

They also point out that even when information is available, the actual steps required are often not transparent. One regulatory body, for example, described on its website the steps required of overseas applicants. But it did not explain the nature of the "three-hour practical examination" or the subsequent "panel interview." Even when one applicant wrote to the regulatory college for more details, the information provided was very general; it did not give enough detail to help the individual understand the rigorous examination process, or prepare for it. This failure suggests a lack of understanding of the problems many immigrants routinely face.

[3] Chase, S. (November 3, 2011) "Wanted: Immigrants with experience." *Globe and Mail*.

Suggested strategy: Before changing your intake or assessment strategies, it is a good idea to review the information your organization currently provides about a particular job, PLAR process, or professional regulation requirement. Your evaluation needs to consider completeness of information, relevance, transparency, and use of language. Because this can be difficult to do without help, you may find it useful to seek the expertise of an immigrant-serving organization. They often have language experts who can help you to assess the appropriateness and clarity of your language. (Appendix B contains a partial list of immigrant-serving organizations across Canada.)

Essentially, applicants want to know what to expect of your assessments. By providing sample questions, for example, or a study guide, or a list of test-taking strategies, you can help applicants to prepare for your process. Other things they may want to know include when and how to ask questions; how long the process will take; and what, if any, special requirements there may be. Providing this basic information will help many individuals to get a clear picture of what the assessment will entail. This includes contact information for a person who can answer further questions, including a name, phone number, and email.

Occupational Standards or Competencies

Immigrants want to know what standards they must meet to work in Canada. They may be experienced practitioners in their home countries, but they want to make sure that they have what it takes to practice—or to work toward practicing—in this country. This can be particularly important, because a professional title may mean something very different here than in other countries. For example, "paramedic" may mean someone who drives an ambulance, rather than someone who is responsible for triaging patients at an accident scene, using sophisticated equipment to support patients, working with a community health and safety team, or making independent life-sustaining decisions. Yet these are the expectations for many Canadian paramedics.

Without such detailed information, paramedics from other nations would be unlikely to succeed in Canada without significantly upgrading their training and experience.

Suggested strategy: Ensure that your organization's current intake and assessment strategies accurately reflect the occupational descriptions or competencies that are expected of workers. The descriptions should provide information not only about **what** needs to done, but also **how**, and in what **context**. For example, a paramedic who had previously practiced only in a quiet rural environment might have difficulty coping with the volume and complexity of providing services in Toronto or Vancouver.

As well, the standards or competency descriptions should provide **indicators of acceptable performance** for practitioners. For example, a competency statement for a paramedic might say that practitioners should be able to "assess patients." But additional indicators might include items such as "evaluating patients' signs and symptoms," "gathering a complete medical history" and "ensuring that information is complete, accurate and current." Without these details, an internationally trained applicant would have little or no way of determining the practice standards of a Canadian paramedic.

The development of revised occupational standards is beyond the scope of this work. Still, this type of information is critical for immigrants. Only this level of detail can help applicants to make sound decisions about the relevance of their current skills, training and experience to the Canadian context; and allow them to plan for future education and training programs.

Language Proficiency

Your organization's requirements for language proficiency is another key factor that you need to address. You need to be able to verify an applicant's ability to

speak, read and write English or French, as required by his/her work or occupation; and you need to make your requirements clear to applicants.

Suggested strategy: There are many different language assessment tools available, with distinct purposes and processes. If you are not familiar with these, you will want to investigate them (see Appendix C for a list of some language proficiency examinations). Some organizations have found it helpful to allow applicants to use results from more than one assessment, since not all are available around the world, or in Canada. If you are new to language assessment, you may want to consult the website of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (www.cic.gc.ca) to help you determine specific requirements for listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Below are some questions to guide you in evaluating your current practices, and to help you to consider future options.

Key Questions

- Does your organization have clear standards, learning outcomes, or required competencies? If not, how can you develop or acquire these?
- Do the required competencies provide explicit information or performance standards for a given job or profession?
- Do you have standards in place for language proficiency?
- Do you provide information to applicants about how to access one or more language proficiency examinations?

Next Steps

What steps might you take next in response to one or more of these questions?

Section 3: Assessment Tools

> "To be fully effective in the labour force, immigrants will need the same hard and soft skills, and demonstrated competencies, that other participants in the Canadian labour market have."
>
> – Glen Hodgson, journalist[4]

This section takes a closer look at five important assessment tools:

- self-assessments
- written examinations
- oral questioning
- demonstrations and observations
- portfolios

Each tool has a particular strength, purpose and value, but also certain limitations. Organizations must weigh these against their particular assessment needs. One important point to remember is that assessments generally cause applicants a high degree of anxiety. People involved in the assessment process must take care to provide appropriate support to candidates, particularly if they are unfamiliar with a particular assessment tool or process.

Self-Assessment

An intrinsic component of most assessment systems, this reflects the six key assumptions listed earlier. Ultimately, self-assessment enables applicants to make personal and professional decisions that are better informed. It can be considered a fact-finding strategy, to help applicants to determine their level of preparedness to enter a labour market, regulatory college or profession.

Purpose: Because these tools enable applicants to assess themselves, the results should give them a clear picture of their own strengths and limitations.

[4] *Toronto Sun*. (2010). "We need immigrants as boomers retire." Retrieved January 2011 from http://www.diamondglobal.ca

The tools should help them to determine how closely their skills, knowledge and experiences match the specifications described in standards, professional competencies, or job descriptions.

Types: There are many different types of self-assessment tools available. In fields as diverse as tourism,[5] plastics, or midwifery, among others, useful models have been produced. Of the many different kinds of self-assessments, there are two main types: self-directed—that is, used by individuals on their own—and interpretive—that is, shared with others. Most often, applicants discuss the results of the latter with an advisor, peer or mentor. Generally, self-assessment tools are structured checklists that ask applicants to indicate such things as whether they have performed a particular activity or function; in what context they have performed it; and how frequently. Some tools ask applicants to rate the "criticality" of each activity they have performed; others ask individuals directly to provide details of their experience. And some ask a combination of different types of questions—such as "reflective questions" that require applicants to provide more detail about their practices, and to showcase their professional judgment. Tools may also allow applicants to describe their personal characteristics, such as values, interests, or management style. In all cases, however, a good self-assessment tool provides reference points to the standards, competencies or responsibilities in which the applicant is interested.

Administration: Self-assessment tools can be completed either online, or in hard-copy format. Applicants most often complete self-assessments **before** taking (or applying to take) any other assessments, and before progressing through a licensure, registration or job-application process.

Results: Ideally, a tool should give applicants meaningful results that enable them to compare their own skills, knowledge and expectations to the relevant

[5] Canadian Tourism Human Resources Sector Council (http://cthrc.ca/en/about_cthrc/visioon_mission_goals); Canadian Plastics Sector Council (http://www.cpsc-ccsp.ca/pages/certification/FAQ.php) ; Canadian Midwifery Regulators, Midwifery Bridging Project (http://cmrc.ccosf.ca/node/256)

Canadian professional or occupational standards. For immigrants who are still considering a move to Canada, the results need to give information that is specific enough to help individuals to make sound decisions, and not to create false hopes.

Challenges: Because self-assessments provide valuable information about individuals, they are most often an integral part of a formative assessment process rather than a summative one. However, they are not used as stand-alone measures because they are not sufficiently reliable. The results are often most useful to the applicants themselves; they are generally less useful to employers and/or regulators, unless used in conjunction with other tools—for example, in-person questioning, or advising or mentoring.

Another challenge for organizations is the task of developing a self-assessment tool that actually provides meaningful information to the applicant. Many organizations, concerned to make the process user-friendly, develop tools that are not detailed enough to challenge applicants to think deeply about their knowledge, skills and experience. Others develop tools with overly simple rating systems, which also do not give immigrants a clear and accurate picture of their own strengths and limitations. A good self-assessment should give applicants sufficient insight to either find an occupation that suits their abilities, and allows them to be confident about future assessments; or else to seek additional education, training and/or experience.

Appendix D provides a list of additional resources about self-assessment.

Written Examinations

Purpose: Written examinations are useful tools for assessing what applicants know, and also how they make decisions, solve problems, deal with ethical conflicts, etc. In the context of professional standards, such exams can help to determine whether a candidate has sufficient knowledge and problem-solving

abilities to meet a given set of expectations. Written examinations are generally used for summative purposes, particularly in academic contexts; and they most often give applicants feedback via a numeric score. If the score is based on a comparison of the performance of all candidates—that is, on a bell curve—the assessment is termed "norm-referenced." If the score is based on the specific criteria related to the standards, it is termed "criterion-referenced."

It is important to remember, however, that a strong performance on written examinations often reflects applicants' familiarity with the assessment method, and their ability to understand subtle nuances of written language. Designing questions that elicit the required response, and that do not mislead the test-taker, is a skill that requires technical training, and often professional psychometric support as well.

Types and Characteristics: Different types of written examinations include **multiple-choice, short-answer,** and **essay questions**. Most **multiple-choice** exams ask the test-taker to select the best response from the four or five options. (The incorrect responses are often called "distractors.") The exam types developed and used for summative purposes, such as a licensing examination, are constructed following strict guidelines to ensure that each item is clear, concise, grammatically correct, and logical; and that it measures exactly what it is intended to measure.[6] Developing a sound and defensible multiple-choice exam takes time and money, and the task should always be undertaken with the assistance of a testing expert or psychometrician. Whole books are devoted to this topic, so the actual construction of multiple-choice examinations is beyond the scope of this manual.

Short-answer exams ask the test-taker to complete a statement or respond to a question. These types are used in many different learning contexts. However,

[6] Brayton, E.M. (2004) *Multiple-Choice Item-Writing Guidelines, Level 1*. Reproduced with permission of the American Institute of Constructors (AIC).

exams used for hiring or licensing purposes require technical guidance, if they are to be psychometrically and legally defensible.

An **essay-question** exam asks the test-taker to write an organized response to questions. As with other types of written exams, these are not straightforward for most regulatory bodies and employers to either develop or assess. These too are best created with the support of a professional test-developer who specializes in essay development and scoring.

Administration: Written examinations can be administered online and/or in hard-copy format. Consistent standardized test procedures ensure the fairness and reliability of the results. The development and scoring of online examinations requires additional expertise and consideration[7] to ensure not just fairness and reliability, but also security and other technical requirements.

Results: These should be based on meaningful and defensible cut scores—that is, scores that distinguish successful test-takers from those who are not yet successful—and/or psychometric data, and should provide test-takers with useful feedback about their performance. The results should clearly distinguish between successful test-takers and those who are not yet successful. Ideally, support and guidance should be provided to the latter.

Advantages: Multiple-choice examinations are relatively easy to administer and score. Properly designed and administered, they are also highly reliable. Short-answer examinations are useful to assess an applicant's ability to recall, and in some cases their critical-thinking and/or problem-solving abilities. Essay examinations assess an applicant's ability to think logically, organize complex material, develop an argument or position, analyze a situation, or demonstrate other complex thinking skills.

[7] Mills, C.N., Potenza, M.T., Fremer, J.J., Ward, W.C., (Editors). (2002). *Computer-Based Testing: Building the Foundation for Future Assessments*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Challenges: Multiple-choice examinations are not valid stand-alone measures of competency because they cannot assess key aspects of performance. However valuable they may be to assess knowledge, it is important to remember that they are often costly to develop—largely because they require test expertise not found in most organizations. They are, however, useful complements to other assessment measures.

Similarly, good short-answer and essay examinations are also costly to develop, administer and score, usually because a specialist must assess each exam. These assessors, who are subject-matter experts, require extensive training to ensure a high level of "inter-rater reliability," or consistency of judgment. They must also avoid many assessment pitfalls, such as the "halo" effect," "stereotyping" or "discriminatory practices."[8]

When written tests are required, care must be taken to ensure that immigrants have the reading and writing skills needed to prepare for and take the examination. They must also have access to information about the exam's format, process, and criteria for success.

Appendix D provides a list of additional resources about written examinations.

Oral Questioning

Purpose: Most of us use oral questioning to help us learn about each other, in both informal and formal settings. As an assessment tool, oral interviewing allows assessors to gather specific responses to questions, and also to determine applicants' ability to "think on their feet." The occupational competencies that shape an oral assessment provide a focus for assessors and applicants alike; and they help to determine scoring criteria.

[8] Simosko S. and Cook C. (1996). *Applying APL Principles in Flexible Assessment: A Practical Guide*. London: Kogan Page.

Types and characteristics: There are many different types of oral assessments. Some occur naturally or informally, while others are more structured, and are scored against a set of rubrics. Advisors or mentors may interview applicants orally to learn more about them, to make decisions, or to prepare for further assessments. A human resources specialist may use oral interviewing to screen applicants for a job. And a formal licensing process may require a panel of subject specialists to conduct a structured oral interview, in which the applicant is asked to respond to a series of questions. For example, he or she could be asked to diagnose a problem, describe a solution, analyze a contingency, etc. There are few limits to the potential applications of oral interviewing. According to some researchers,[9] oral assessments are particularly useful for assessing factors such as:

- concepts, theories and procedures
- applied problem-solving
- interpersonal skills or competencies
- intrapersonal qualities, such as self-confidence and self-awareness
- integrated practice.

Oral questioning may take place in a structured or unstructured format. Advisors, counsellors or mentors often use the latter to get an applicant talking, frequently using open-ended questions. The language should be clear, concise, free of jargon, and at a level appropriate for the applicant. Meanwhile, assessors most often use structured interviews; and their questions should reflect the competencies being assessed. Their goal is to assess particular aspects of an applicant's past behaviour or experience, or their anticipated behaviour in a hypothetical situation, or a combination of the two. In a structured interview, the assessor outlines the standards of practice, competencies, or job expectations. Both the assessor and the applicant should have access to this information.

[9] Joughin G. (2012) *A Short Guide to Oral Assessment*. Retrieved January 2012 from http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/publications

Ideally, all questions should be pilot-tested to ensure their relevance and appropriateness.

Another form of oral assessment is the "professional conversation."[10] In this process, assessors and applicants work together to identify potential topics of discussion, and set specific parameters and learning outcomes. In some cases, applicants bring written reports or other documents to refer to. The professional conversation is usually videotaped, to provide a visual record and to form part of the quality-assurance process. Because of the complexity of the process, all assessors should undergo rigorous training before they can use this type of evaluation.

According to an institutional practice developed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, all structured interviews and oral assessments should include the following steps[11]:

- Develop occupational standards or competencies.
- Determine which competencies are to be assessed.
- Determine the interview format, and develop questions in collaboration with the assessor(s).
- Develop rubrics or a rating scale to evaluate the applicant's responses.
- Test the interview questions and scoring scale.
- Create a guide or manual for the interviewer to follow.
- Create a recording document for the interview.

[10] Lakin, M.B. *Professional Conversations: Pathways to Teacher Credentialing.* Retrieved February 2012 from http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=15333&TEM

[11] U.S. Office of Personnel Management (2008). Adapted from *Structured Interviews: A Practical Guide,* p. 5.

- Create a document to inform the applicant of the occupational standards that will be assessed during the interview
- Document the development process. and seek ways to improve it.

Benefits of oral assessment: One of the major advantages of this strategy is that it enables assessors to directly explore the applicants' knowledge and experience, and to verify their ability to express their thoughts clearly. It also gives applicants a chance to provide more in-depth information about themselves, to support their resumé or other sources of information. As well, an oral assessment can help to confirm or verify the authenticity of the candidate's other documentation, such as a portfolio.

Challenges: The benefits of oral assessment can be offset by a number of problems with the process. As the list above indicates, creating a valid oral assessment tool can be time-consuming. It is labour-intensive to develop it, administer or facilitate it, record it, and assess its results. A good tool requires both the development of clear scoring rubrics, and the careful training of assessors. Without this, the process can fall victim to subjective scoring. Because of this, some research has questioned the validity of oral assessments, particularly in the area of assessing competencies.[12]

The format, the order of the questions, and the manner in which they are posed can significantly affect an applicant's ability to do well. Some applicants become highly anxious during oral interviews, and this often limits their ability to respond appropriately.

Personal bias can also undermine the effectiveness of an oral assessment. Without being aware of it, the assessor may make judgments about an applicant that have little or nothing to do with the applicant's actual responses.

[12] Leigh, W., Smith, I.L., Bebeau, M.J.et al. (2007) *Competency Assessment Models*. Professional Psychology, Research and Practice, 38 (5), 463–473.

Conversely, assessors may mistake an applicant's excellent verbal skills for knowledge or problem-solving ability—which the candidate may not actually possess.

Many books and articles are available about interviewing and oral questioning. See Appendix D for examples.

Demonstrations and Observations

Purpose: Demonstrations give assessors the opportunity to observe applicants actually performing one or more aspects of a job role. As an assessment tool, this provides valuable information about applicants' actual performance and problem-solving skills. Their performance may be observed either in a structured manner, or unobtrusively though direct or indirect methods.[13]

Types and Characteristics: Generally speaking, there are two types of demonstrations: simulations and workplace assessments. These are explained in detail below.

Simulations are role-playing scenarios that reflect the challenges of a real-life workplace situation. For example, an airplane simulator gives pilots (or trainees) the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to fly a plane. An "In basket" exercise allows a potential manager to demonstrate his/her ability to set priorities. And in a first-aid situation, an applicant might be required to demonstrate his/her ability to treat an accident victim in shock by participating in a simulated exercise set up by the instructor. These types of simulations are useful for formative and summative purposes. As with other assessments, however, they need to be properly linked to standards of performance, competencies and/or job roles, in order for both assessors and applicants to

[13] NSW Department of Education and Training (DET). (2001). *Workplace Assessment Guide.* Sydney: Australia.

understand the expectations. Designing and assessing simulations is a task that requires careful consideration of several steps, outlined below.

- Defining the needs and areas to be assessed.
- Determining the assessment criteria and performance expectations.
- Determining the situation that would best allow applicants to demonstrate their ability to meet the assessment criteria.
- Identifying the character(s), goals, problems, issues, and other characteristics of the simulation.
- Identifying the setting and the length of the simulation, and any needed equipment or props.
- Clarifying the appropriate conclusion or ending of the simulation.
- Developing clear strategies for applicant feedback.
- Determining what advance information applicants should receive.

Another type of simulation common to a health profession or clinical setting is an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). Many organizations rely on OSCEs to assess and measure their applicants' clinical competency in a standardized setting, as part of a licensing or registration process. During the process, trained assessors observe and evaluate applicants as they go through a series of simulated situations. These usually involve interviewing, examining, interacting with and treating a "standardized" patient—who is often a professional actor assuming the role of a patient with a particular problem or health issue.

An OSCE is useful for evaluating basic clinical skills, matched to health-care standards or competencies. It also provides an excellent opportunity to provide detailed feedback to applicants. OSCEs are expensive to design and maintain;

but if they are carefully developed, and carried out with well-trained standardized patients, they can help organizations to glean valuable information about applicants. However, OSCEs are nearly always used as part of a suite of tests in competency-based assessment systems; they are seldom used as stand-alone tools.

Benefits: Simulations give assessors the opportunity to observe applicants interacting with others—patients, clients, colleagues or customers—in a controlled situation. They have been shown to be a valid and reliable tool in many fields, including medicine and management.[14] Simulations also allow assessors to assess the currency of applicants' skills and knowledge.

Challenges: Simulations (like OSCEs) can be costly to develop, and to maintain. They require extensive training of assessors, and the creation of clear and easy-to-use tools for recording outcomes.

Workplace assessments take place in an actual work environment, usually over a prescribed period of time. Applicants in these situations may already be employees of an organization, looking to upgrade their job or training. During these events, the assessor (often the applicant's supervisor or manager) observes the applicant carefully, to determine whether he/she meets job-related expectations. Other evaluation tools may also be used, such as a written test or an oral assessment. Workplace assessments allow applicants to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and competencies in a "real" environment—solving problems, interacting with clients, responding to contingencies, etc. Properly carried out, workplace assessments are highly valid. For them to be useful tools, however,[15] organizations must follow a number of necessary steps, outlined below.

[14] Centre for Innovation in Professional Health Education and Research. (2007). *Review of Work-Based Assessments*. The University of Sydney. Sydney: Australia.
[15] NSW Department of Education and Training (DET). (2001). *Workplace Assessment Guide*. Sydney: Australia.

- Plan the assessment by identifying the relevant standards and/or criteria, and determining the best method: observation, interview questions, etc.
- Prepare the applicant for the assessment by explaining its purpose, the measures of performance, the evaluation method, and the overall process.
- Conduct the assessment, and record its outcomes.
- Provide feedback to the applicant.

Depending on the context and duration of the workplace assessment period, organizations may wish to give applicants some opportunities for orientation and practice. For example, an employee who works as the manager of a hotel may require very little briefing or practice, since he/she does the job routinely. The workplace assessment may take place over several weeks or months. On the other hand, an internationally trained applicant who wants to demonstrate his/her hotel management skills may require detailed orientation in terms of the hotel's layout, technology, systems, staff, and so forth, well in advance of the assessment.

Most workplace assessments use an integrated approach, utilizing a combination of tools to assess employees' skills, knowledge and personal attributes. As far as possible, assessments in the workplace should cover several competencies, in order to reflect the real nature of the work.[16]

These same techniques apply to the assessment of individuals during internships, preceptorships or mentorships.

Benefits: Workplace assessments enable evaluators to judge an applicant's actual performance at work, and the application of his/her skills and knowledge. The strategy also allows applicants to demonstrate their interpersonal skills, thinking skills and problem-solving skills. They provide an excellent opportunity

[16] NSW Department of Education and Training (DET). (2001) *Workplace Assessment Guide*. Sydney: Australia.

for the assessor to rate applicants against practice standards, and they give meaningful and contextual feedback to the applicants. Properly planned and implemented, workplace assessments are valid and reliable tools.

Challenges: Like the other tools described here, workplace assessments require the establishment of clear practice standards. Without these, it is not possible to conduct a valid and reliable assessment. The assessors—whether they are supervisors, managers, preceptors or mentors—must be well trained, and knowledgeable about the standards. As well, these assessments usually require a high level of organizational commitment and resources, plus a systematic and well-planned strategy for giving feedback. The financial implications of establishing a workplace assessment system should not be underestimated.[17]

Portfolios

Purpose and characteristics: A traditional portfolio[18] is an organized paper-based or electronic presentation of evidence and/or artifacts that demonstrate or verify an applicant's knowledge, skills and experience. It is often a deeply personal reflection of a person's life or work, and is usually useful for both formative and summative purposes. During a formative assessment process, a portfolio helps applicants to highlight what they have learned from their work, their education, and their community and personal activities. It also identifies their strengths and limitations. When applicants work with an advisor, they can use the results of a portfolio assessment to determine what is most appropriate for them in terms of opportunities for learning, training or employment. Portfolios can also allow applicants to demonstrate their skills for in-depth reflection and problem-solving; and for how they manage their own learning accomplishments.

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[17] Brown, N. and Doshi. M.I (2006). *Assessing Professional and Clinical Competence*: *The Way Forward.* Advances in Psychiatric Treatment, vol. 12. Retrieved January 2012 from http://apt.rcpsych.org

[18] The use of portfolios is often associated with PLAR programs in colleges, universities and training facilities. However, they are increasingly used in other professional and employment contexts as well. See Appendix D for more information.

When applicants develop a portfolio for summative assessment, they use evidence to prove that they meet the job expectations. An assessor then determines whether the applicant meets the standards. In many cases, other methods are used to enhance a portfolio evaluation. For example, oral questioning might help to verify the authenticity of the evidence; or a demonstration might help to verify the currency of a particular set of skills. Like most other tools, a portfolio is not generally used as a stand-alone method.

In cases involving "high-stakes assessments"—that is, one where the outcome has significant implications for public health and safety—additional tools are needed. The consequences of such assessments are profound for both the applicant and the assessing organization. As such, they require greater diligence in tool construction, administration and validation—since poor performance could result in considerable cost to the employer or the public.

Formative or summative portfolios can include items such as:

- Documentation of a completed educational or training program.
- Letters of validation from employers, colleagues, or other persons familiar with the applicant's contributions to a particular activity.
- Examples of the applicant's learning or work: for example, a handbook they produced, a recording of a presentation they gave, case studies of their client interactions, etc.

Some portfolio systems also call for the inclusion of information such an applicant's resumé, self-assessment, statement of goals, or a chronology of life events. Whatever the requirements, applicants should always receive or have access to clear directions, illustrations and easy-to-follow templates, to enable them to produce a strong portfolio of evidence. When applicants develop and submit a portfolio, they always value clarity, relevance and reduction of red tape.

All portfolio assessments must allow applicants to receive helpful feedback on their results. This is an important element in the successful use of almost any assessment tool, but it is particularly important for portfolios because of their personal nature.

In employment contexts, many things can serve as portfolio-like processes: logbooks, pocket-sized recording documents, or online journals. In these cases, employees make notes of occasions when they have met or exceeded job expectations; and their supervisors review the logs with them on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly). Such meetings are useful for providing feedback to employees, and for opening up opportunities for dialogue about development.

Benefits: Over the years, portfolios have evolved in structure, purpose and simplicity—becoming less complex and more user-friendly, both for applicants and assessors. Portfolios of evidence give applicants an excellent opportunity to provide diverse evidence of their knowledge, skills and experiences. A self-directed portfolio allows applicants to match their strengths to a specific set of occupational standards, competencies or job expectations. Many portfolios, especially those used for summative purposes, focus on outcomes and meeting expected criteria. This provides an extremely useful focus for applicants.

Challenges: Although developing and maintaining a portfolio can be very useful for career management purposes, the task often requires a high level of organizational skill on the part of the applicant—plus a commitment to exploring different options to meet the expectations of a particular program. Many applicants may benefit from a portfolio development course or workshop, in which they learn how to develop a portfolio that suitably showcases their skills, knowledge and experience.

In terms of evaluating the portfolios, assessors must not only be specialists in the specific subject matter, but also highly trained to meet the challenge of assessing a portfolio's authenticity and currency. These factors are best

confirmed through oral questioning or a demonstration. Finally, research indicates that portfolios have some reliability and validity issues.[19]

Below are some questions to guide you in reviewing your current uses of assessment tools—beginning with the technical requirements applicable to all, and continuing through the tools described in this section.

Key Questions

Technical Requirements

- Are all your current assessment tools valid and reliable?
- Have you set criteria for currency and sufficiency of the tools?
- Do you have, or plan to gather, technical data for all the tools you use?
- Have you provided assessor training for all the tools?
- Do you have "inter-rater reliability" for all the tools?
- Have you developed a useful feedback mechanism for all the tools?
- Do you describe each tool in a way that makes it easy for international applicants to understand?

Self-Assessments

- Are your self-assessment tools readily available to applicants—for example, on your organization's website?
- Are the tools linked to your occupational standards, competencies or job descriptions?
- Can applicants easily understand your rating system?
- Will applicants have a greater understanding of your assessment tools and professional requirements in future?

[19]Endacott, M.A., Gray, M., Jasper, M., Miller, C.M.L., Scholes, J., et al. (2003). *Using portfolios in the assessment of learning and competence: the impact of four models*. Nursing Education in Practice. 4, 250-257.

Written Examinations

- What sort of written examinations does your organization currently provide?
- Were the exams developed systematically, and are they supported with sound technical data?
- Do you know the success/failure rate of any particular exam?
- Have you analyzed the reasons for this performance pattern?
- Does your organization give applicants advance information about the examinations, such as illustrations or sample questions?

Oral Questioning

- Under what circumstances does your organization use oral questioning as an assessment tool?
- If the questioning is for summative purposes, have you pilot-tested the questions, and provided suitable assessor training?
- Have you followed the suggested steps for developing a strong and defensible interview?

Demonstrations

- What sort of demonstrations or observations does your organization use?
- Are your assessment criteria closely linked to your occupational standards, competencies, or other job requirements?
- Have you trained assessors to use this assessment tool appropriately?
- Have you gathered technical data on the performance of your applicants, to support the validity of your tests?

Portfolios

- What sort of portfolio assessment system does your organization have?
- Are there any ways for you to streamline or simplify the portfolio development process?
- Have you trained assessors on how to evaluate portfolios with respect to your occupational standards, competencies or job expectations?
- What kind of supporting technical data has your organization developed?

- If your organization does not yet have a portfolio assessment model in place, would you consider developing one?

Next Steps

What steps might you take next in response to one or more of these questions?

Section 4: Putting It All Together

> "I'm hoping that I will stay in Canada for good—and bring my family here and give them a better future."
>
> – Ulysses E. Agcaoiti, SYSCO Food Services of Calgary[20]

Understanding how assessment tools work is only one aspect of attracting, retaining and licensing international immigrants into the Canadian workforce. Assessment tools are never stand-alone entities—they are always components of an organizational, sectoral or professional system.

Regardless of what tools your organization or profession uses, it should always have clear occupational standards, learning outcomes or competency statements in place. These standards are critical because without them, an immigrant applicant would have little opportunity to understand the actual expectations associated with a job, profession or educational program. An occupational standard, learning outcome or competency statement provides a clear, detailed and current picture of the work functions and activities required. This allows applicants to gain a realistic understanding of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values required of the job or employment prospect.

Similarly, all applicants should have the opportunity to assess their own skills and attributes against your stated expectations. Whether they complete a self-assessment on their own, or in collaboration with an advisor or mentor, the desired outcome is to give them a true picture of their strengths and limitations in their occupation or area of competency.

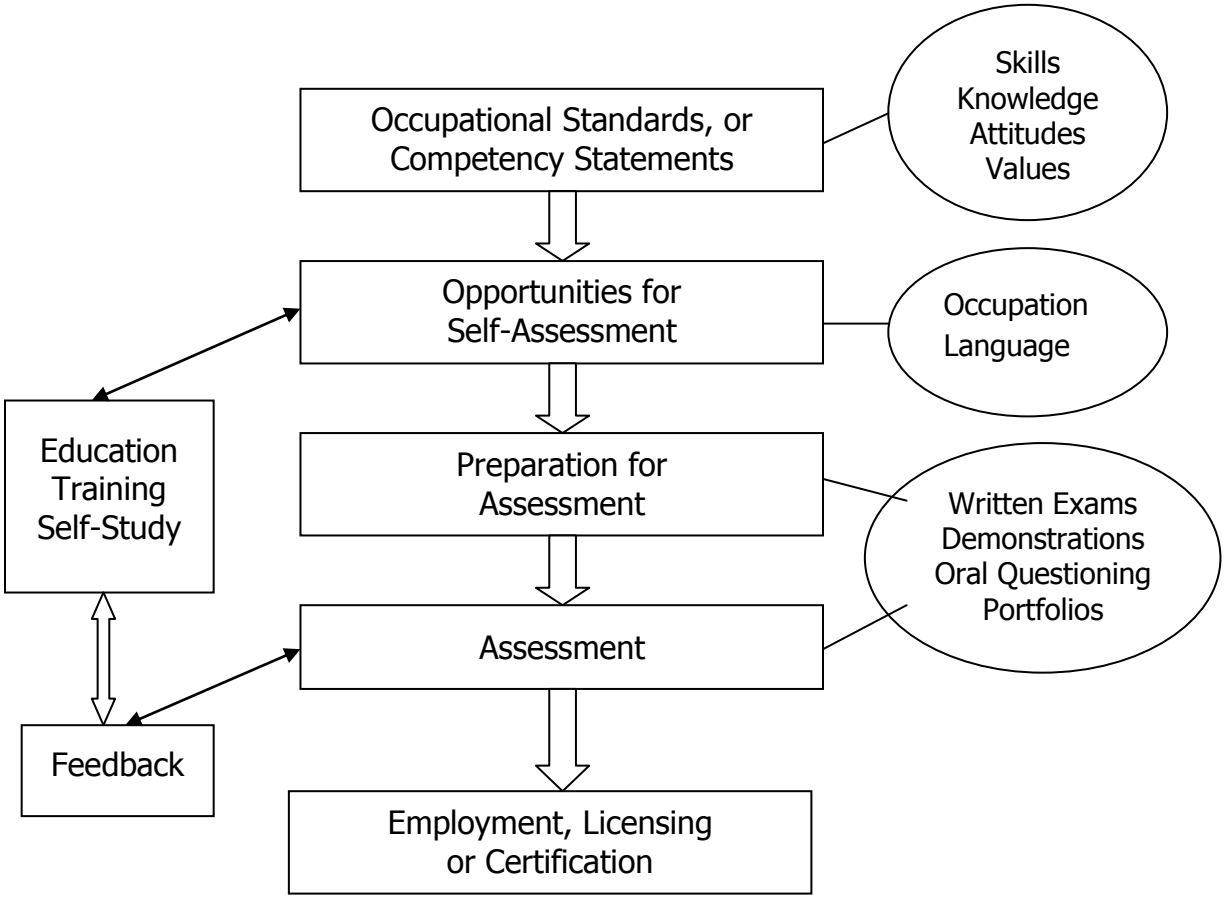
It is also important for applicants to determine whether their language skills are sufficient to allow them to work in Canada. Language-proficiency tests enable applicants to develop a clear picture of their language skills, and to evaluate their

[20] Retrieved January 2011 from http://www.diamondglobal.ca/Testimonials.html

readiness to work in English or French. Many immigrants find that they are fluent in conversation, but far less so with the technical language of their profession.

The following diagram of a Competency-Based Assessment Strategy for Organizations provides a useful visualization to help your organization review its current processes and tools, and determine whether they are working well. The following pages explain the concepts outlined in the diagram.

Competency-Based Assessment Strategy for Organizations



Aspects of the Assessment Strategy

The purpose of the self-assessment process (as outlined in the diagram) is to enable individuals to make better decisions regarding their level of preparedness—for skills, knowledge or language proficiency. Assessments that do not perform this function may set up applicants for failure in subsequent assessments or job-related activities. For many people, particularly those who are new to Canada, such negative experiences may discourage them from seeking suitable work—possibly confining them to years of under-employment and poor wages.[21]

Once individuals have a clear picture of their strengths and limitations, they can act on their knowledge. For some, that may mean preparing to take more assessments; for others, it may mean a commitment to further learning, whether in an educational, training or employment context.

Applicants who want to engage in further assessments need information about the different kinds of assessment tools—including, whenever possible, concrete examples. These may include sample questions for written tests, videos of workplace demonstrations, or examples of portfolio evidence. They may also benefit from information about how to take certain kinds of tests, or how to prepare for an oral interview. Such resources are readily available in Canada, both online and in hard copies—and applicants from other countries, more than most, benefit from knowing what to look for, and where to look.

Every time an applicant is assessed, he or she should be given specific information in advance about all aspects of the process. In addition to the date, time and place of the assessment, examples may include:

[21] In 2005, the average income of recent immigrants was $28,700, compared with $45,700 for Canadian-born workers with similar credentials. Grant, T. and Trichur, R. (December 17, 2011). "Shortchanging immigrants costs Canada." *Globe and Mail*.

- the criteria for success
- the registration procedures
- the duration of the assessment process
- the types of questions asked, or the nature of the assessment tool
- the specific expertise of the assessors
- the length of time until results are issued
- the nature of the feedback that applicants can expect.

If an applicant is not successful the first time he/she attempts an assessment, further information should include:

- options for repeating the assessment
- the procedure for an appeal, if the applicant wishes to contest the results of the assessment, or its administration.

The more information applicants receive before the assessment starts, the less anxiety they are likely to experience. Unstressed applicants generally perform better than those who are highly anxious.

Positive assessment results enable applicants trained in other countries to gain employment, licensure or certification. Individuals who are not successful should be able to use the feedback they receive to make decisions about their further learning activities. These might include seeking additional education or training, and/or embarking on a self-study program. When they feel adequately prepared, they may begin the assessment process again.

The Importance of Quality Assurance

In addition to routinely verifying the accuracy, currency and relevancy of the information provided to applicants, and making sure that applicants are fully informed about all aspects of the assessment process, organizations should also develop systems that perform these important functions:

- provide quality assurance
- monitor all their processes
- evaluate the appropriateness, reliability and validity of all assessment tools
- track the performance of the applicants.

As noted earlier, these activities take time, and an ongoing commitment to excellence. Quality assessment programs can be time-consuming for an organization's supervisors and staff, though they can also yield great benefits. As one experienced practitioner from the field of laboratory science put it: "We must not only meet the letter of the law, but also find a way to make these assessments meaningful and instructive… When done properly, competency assessment will reward our organizations, and assist us in providing the best possible care to our patients."[22]

(Further resources for quality assurance in PLAR and other training opportunities can be found at the online Recognition for Learning community of practice, www.recognitionforlearning.ca.)

Below are some questions to guide you in evaluating your current practices, and to help you to consider future options.

Key Questions

- What are the main features of your organization's system for working with immigrants?
- How transparent is your process?
- How effective is the communication that supports it?
- How does your organization monitor its intake processes, the quality of its assessment tools, and the feedback it provides to applicants?

[22] Sharp, E., and Elder, B.L. (2004). *Competency Assessment in the Clinical Microbiology Laboratory*. Clinical Microbiology Reviews, (17)3.

Next Steps

What steps might you take next in response to one or more of these questions?

Looking Ahead

The Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment hopes that the information contained in this manual (including the resources listed in the Appendices) will help your organization to determine its next steps—as you seek to recruit, hire, license and work with internationally trained applicants. We hope, too, that as a result of concerted efforts, we can increase the widespread recognition of the diverse talents, competencies and experiences that immigrants can bring to this country. They not only help to sustain Canada's workforce; they also enhance its economic, social and cultural richness.

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Appendix A: Definitions of Technical Terms

Authentic/Authenticity. This term refers to the nature of the evidence produced by an applicant during assessments. Authentic evidence can be directly attributed to the applicant's performance.

Closed-ended questions. These require only a limited range of responses, such as "yes" or "no." They are generally less useful tools than open-ended questions (see below).

Continuing competence. The term used by regulators to describe the ongoing professional development and assessment that is expected of licensed practitioners.

Criterion-referenced. Assessments that are scored, rated or judged against specific standards. (See norm-referenced.)

Currency. The state of being current, in terms of the age of an applicant's documentation. Many occupations accept evidence that is two to three years old. In fast-changing fields such as the high-tech sector, however, some experts may suggest that anything over six months is too old.

Cut scores. Test results that distinguish successful test-takers from those who are not yet successful.

Formative assessment. This type of assessment often takes place before or during a learning, training or work program. It gives learners/applicants feedback to enhance their ability to make decisions about education and/or employment opportunities; one example is an "interest inventory." (See summative assessment.)

High-stakes assessment. This refers to an assessment where the outcome has significant implications for public health and safety, since the consequences are profound for both the applicant and the assessing organization. As such, these assessments require greater diligence in tool construction, administration and validation—since poor performance could result in considerable cost, both to the employer and the public.

Inter-rater reliability. See Reliability.

Letters of validation. These confirm specific details about an applicant's performance. They differ from letters of reference in that they provide explicit information about aspects such as an applicant's accomplishments, ways of

work, and application of knowledge—often judged against occupational standards or competency statements.

Norm-referenced. This term refers to assessments scored on the performance of a group of test-takers. In a norm-referenced assessment, a "bell curve" compares the performance of all test-takers to one another.

Open-ended questions. Unlike closed-ended questions, these encourage applicants to provide full and cogent responses.

Psychometric data. Psychometrics is the field of studying the theory and techniques of psychological and educational measurement. As such, psychometric data describes applicants' behaviour and responses numerically. Examples useful to the assessment process include validity and reliability scores.

Reliable/Reliability. This term has a dual meaning. On the one hand, it can refer to the consistency of an assessment tool to separate "successful" from "unsuccessful" applicants. It can also refer to the performance of assessors. When two assessors make comparable judgments in assessing the same evidence, for example, there is said to be "high inter-rater reliability." The concept also refers to a single assessor making comparable judgments when looking at the same evidence on different occasions.

Rubrics. A set of numbers used as a "scoring guide" to describe how an assessment tool will be graded, rated or judged.

Sufficiency. The degree to which an applicant's evidence is sufficient to allow the assessor to make a sound decision. As discussed in this manual, sometimes a credential is insufficient evidence to confirm an applicant's competence.

Summative assessment. This type of assessment usually takes place at the end of an education and/or training experience. It often serves to confirm that the learner/applicant has met a particular standard or requirement, such as a licensing examination.

Validity. The degree to which a concept, conclusion or measurement is well founded, and corresponds to the real world. In assessment, validity refers to how well an assessment tool actually measures what it claims to measure. For example, if applicants were asked to take only the written portion of a driving test to determine their competence, that would not be a valid measure of their ability to drive—merely of their *knowledge* of driving.

Appendix B: Immigrant-Serving Organizations

Alberta Association of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies http://aaisa.ca

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies http://www.amssa.org

Association for New Canadians (Newfoundland) http://www.ancnl.ca

Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA) http://www.councils.org/gateway/who-does-what/immigrant-serving-agencies-and-other-non-profit-organizations/

Immigrate to Manitoba http://www.immigratemanitoba.com

Immigration Quebec http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

Immigration Settlement Services, North West Territories http://immigrationsettlementservices.com/english/northwest-territories

Immigration Settlement Services, Yukon http://www.immigration.gov.yk.ca/settlement.aspx

Immigration Services Prince Edward Island http://www.gov.pe.ca/immigration

Immigrant Services Society of B.C. (ISSofBC) http://www.issbc.org

Manitoba Start http://manitobastart.com

Nova Scotia Start, Immigrant Settlement and Integration Service (ISIS) http://www.isisns.ca

Ontario Immigration http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca

Ontario, Immigration and Citizenship http://www.settlement.org.sys/faqs_detail.asp?faq_id=4000108

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants OCASI http://www.ocasi.org

PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada http://www.peianc.com/content/lang/en/page/community_araisa

Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies http://saisia.ca

Saskatchewan Canada Immigration http://www.saskimmigrationcanada.ca

Settlement Services, New Brunswick http://www.welcomenb.ca/content/wel-bien/en/immigrating_and_settling/settling/settlement_services.html

Appendix C: Language Proficiency Examinations

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) http://www.etscanada.ca

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) http://www.ielts.org

Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL) http://www.cael.ca

Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) http://www.celban.org

Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) http://www.etscanada.ca

Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) http://www.language.ca

Test d'évaluation du français: TEF Paris Chamber of Commerce http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/cerf/nav02.cfm?nav02=54272&nav01=51238

Appendix D: Assessment Tools

The following resources are intended only to illustrate the range of assessment options available. For more references, consult the Internet.

Self-Assessment Tools

College of Dietitians of Ontario http://www.cdo.on.ca

College of Midwives of British Columbia http://www.cmbc.bc.ca/Self-Assessment-Form.pdf

College of Nurses of Ontario http://www.cno.org/maintain-your-membership/qualityassurance/quality-assurance/selfassessment

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat of Ontario http://www.edu.gov/on/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire

The Riley Guide http://www.rileyguide.com/assess.html

Social Enterprise in Canada (SEC) http://www.thinktalentthinkglobal.ca/sector-specific-tools

Society for Medical Laboratory Science http://www.csmls.org/Certification/Exam-Information-and-Resources.aspx#Personal

Written Examinations

Canada's Testing Company/Assessment Strategies, Inc. http://www.asinc.ca/services_itemwriting_e.asp

Canadian Test Centre http://www.canadiantestcentre.com

Educational Testing Service Canada http://www.etscanada.ca

Psychometrics Canada Ltd. http:// www.psychometrics.com

Testing in the Public Service of Canada http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/guides/assessment-evaluation/tips-tapf/index-eng.htm

Oral Questioning

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U.S. Office of Personnel Management. *Structured Interviews: A Practical Guide.* Retrieved January 2012 from http://apps.opm.gov/adt/contentfiles/siguide09.08.08.pdf

Demonstrations

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Portfolios

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