



# Developmental Assessment Centers: Fact or Fiction?

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# Purpose

- Review what we know about DACs
- Explore some cases and some research evidence
- Present a critical analysis of the DAC method and discuss the future of DACs

# Overview

- **Rupp:** overview of a DAC model and research evidence to date
- **Oliver & Bogush:** Client case—highly developmental and coaching centers
- **Byham:** Healthy skepticism and discussion leader

# Where our research group started

- Colorado State University AC Research Group
  - George C. Thornton and graduate students
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
  - Managerial Development Program
  - Alyssa Gibbons and staff
- Korean Psychological Testing Institute/Valtera Asia Pacific
  - Myungjoon (Marco) Kim and staff

# Our Goals...

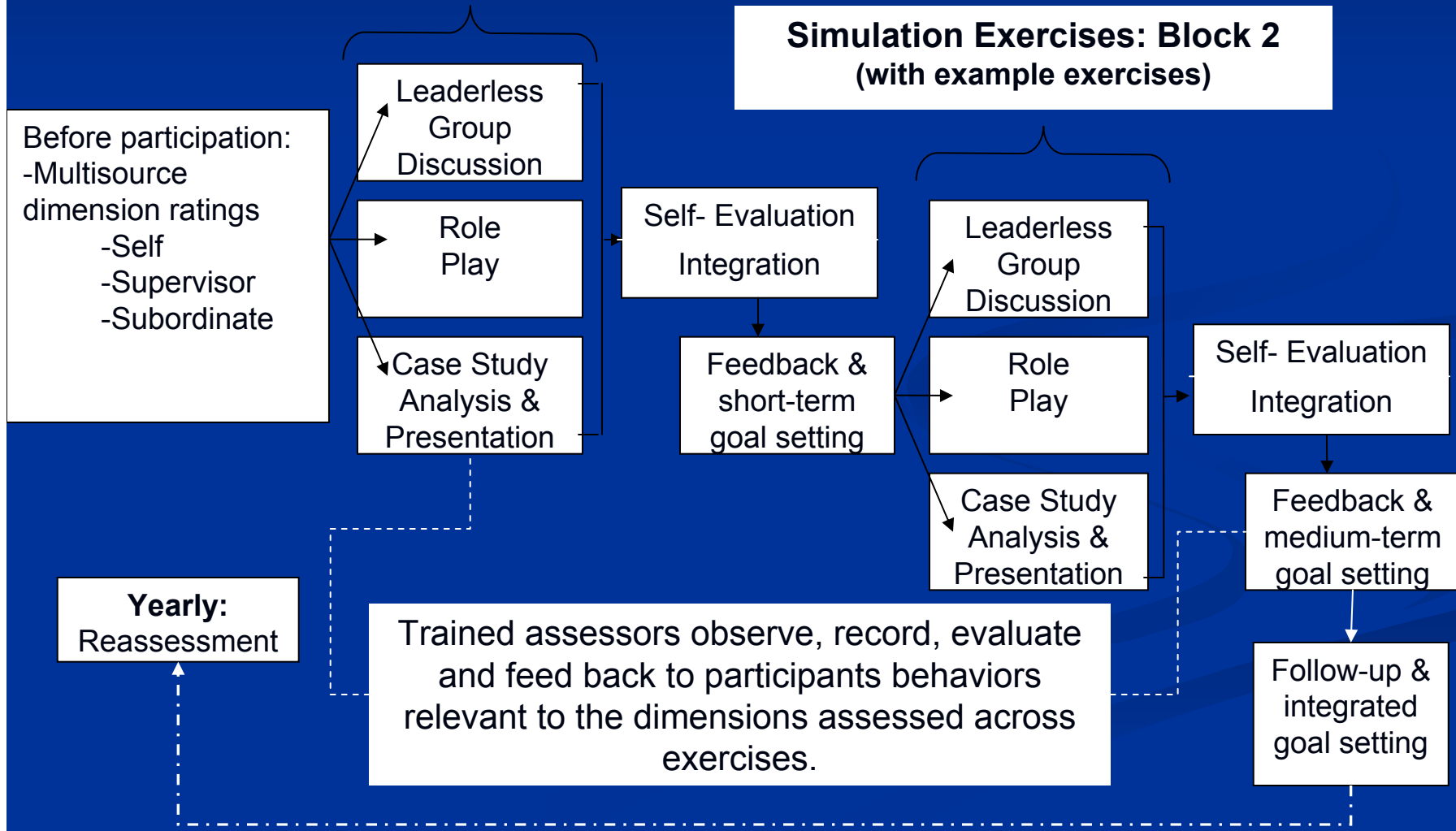
- ...given the increased use of DACs in practice and the paucity of research on the effectiveness of ACs for development
  - I. Develop a model of DACs
  - II. Investigate dimensions appropriate for DACs
  - III. Collect validity evidence for the DAC method
  - IV. Explore technological innovations for conducting DACs across cultures

# I. The Rupp & Thornton DAC Model

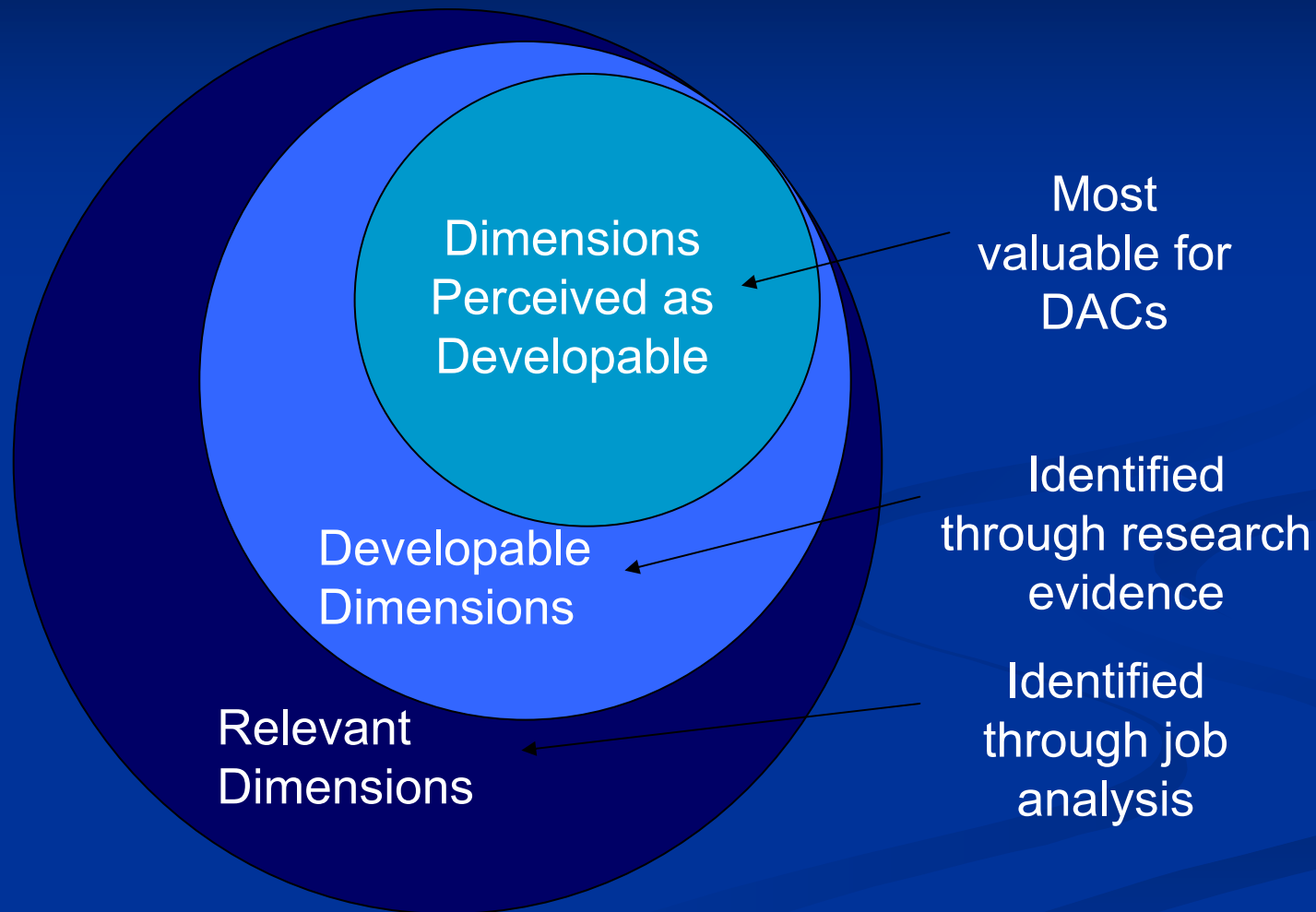
*(inspired by Boehm, 1985; Carrick & Williams, 1999; Engelbrecht & Fischer, 1995; Goodge, 1997; Griffiths & Goodge, 1994; Jones & Whitmore, 1995; Lee, 2000, 2003; Lee & Beard, 1994; Povah, 1986)*

## Simulation Exercises: Block 1 (with example exercises)

## Simulation Exercises: Block 2 (with example exercises)



## II. Appropriate Dimensions



- See Rupp et al., 2006; Gibbons, et al., 2006

# Our DAC Dimensions

- Information Seeking
- Planning & Organizing
- Problem Solving
- Oral Communication
- Leadership
- Conflict Management

# III. Validity Evidence

- DAC programs need to be validated in two ways:
  - As assessments (to ensure the information collected that is fed back is accurate)
  - As training interventions (to ensure that learning and change are catalyzed)
- To do this, we look to:
  - The holistic view of validity
  - Kirkpatrick's taxonomy of training outcomes

# Validity of DACs as Assessments

Appropriate Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Job analysis or similar</li><li>- Verify with participants</li></ul>
Internal Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Meaning of assessor ratings</li></ul>
Convergent/ Discriminant Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Among dimensions</li><li>- With external variables</li></ul>
Social Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Fairness / absence of bias</li></ul>
Criterion Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Change in performance</li></ul>

e.g., AERA/APA, 1999; Messick, 1995; SIOP, 2003; Thornton & Rupp, in press

# Validity of DACs as Training/Development Interventions

- Classic framework – Kirkpatrick (1976):

Reactions	- Program evaluations - <i>Within-program exploration</i>
Learning	- <i>Within-program change</i>
Behavior	- Multisource performance ratings before and after - <i>Reassessment</i>
Results	- Organization-level change - Quality of new promotees?

- Many additional types/levels of learning outcomes could be considered (cf. Alliger & Janak, 1989; Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993).

# Where We've Come

- 207 Managers from 22 Midwestern organizations
  - 89% Caucasian
  - 53% women
  - Mean age 41
  - Mean years in workforce 19.9
- 95 South Korean Managers from 9 organizations
  - 100% Korean
  - 5% women
  - Mean age 44.7
  - Mean years in workforce 17.1

# What We Know

(results from U.S. data; See Rupp et al., 2006 for full results)

- **Validity of DACs as assessments:**
  - **Content:** the dimensions chosen were perceived as relevant by most participants.
  - **Social consequences:** assessor ratings were not influenced by the demographic characteristics of the participants; participants reported benefits from engaging in the program.
  - **Convergent/discriminant relationships:** less clear. Performance and interpersonal style clusters (Shore et al.) did not appear.
  - **Internal structure:** although higher correlations within than between exercises, within exercises dimension factors emerged.

# What We Know

(results from U.S. data; See Rupp et al., 2006 for full results)

- Validity of DACs as training interventions:
  - Participant reactions positive (feedback valid, engaged in development-related behavior, identified developmental needs, became aware of development needs, tried new behaviors, set new goals).
  - Significant multivariate effect for change from block 1 to block 2, univariate effects for oral communication, planning & organizing, leadership, and problem solving.
  - Also mean level change for self-ratings in the months following the DAC: Significant change for conflict management, oral communication, and leadership.
  - Effect sizes (average .39 for self ratings, .21 for subordinate ratings) similar to those reported in the Smither et al. meta-analysis on multisource feedback.

# Conclusion: DACs can work, but we must be smart about it....

Nearly impossible to develop

Very difficult to develop

Difficult to develop

Reasonable possibility to develop

Somewhat easy to develop



**Dimension**

Motivation

Adaptability, Conscientiousness

Interpersonal Skills

Listening, Problem solving techniques

Nonverbal communication

**Development Strategies**

Long-term practice with coaching, Extensive counseling

Counseling, Long training programs, Courses, Mentoring

Feedback, Lectures/seminars, Readings, On the job experience

Simulation Participation, Self insight

*Rupp et al. (2006)*

# For Further Information

- Thornton, G. C. III., & Rupp, D. E. (2005). *Assessment Centers in Human Resource Management: Strategies for Prediction, Diagnosis, and Development*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rupp, D.E., Snyder, L. A., Gibbons, A.M., & Thornton, G. C. III (2006). What should developmental assessment centers be developing? *Psychologist Manager Journal*, 9, 75-98.
- Gibbons, A.M., Rupp, D.E., Snyder, L.A., & Holub, A.S., & Woo, S. E. (2006). A preliminary investigation of developable dimensions. *Psychologist Manager Journal*, 9, 99-123.
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