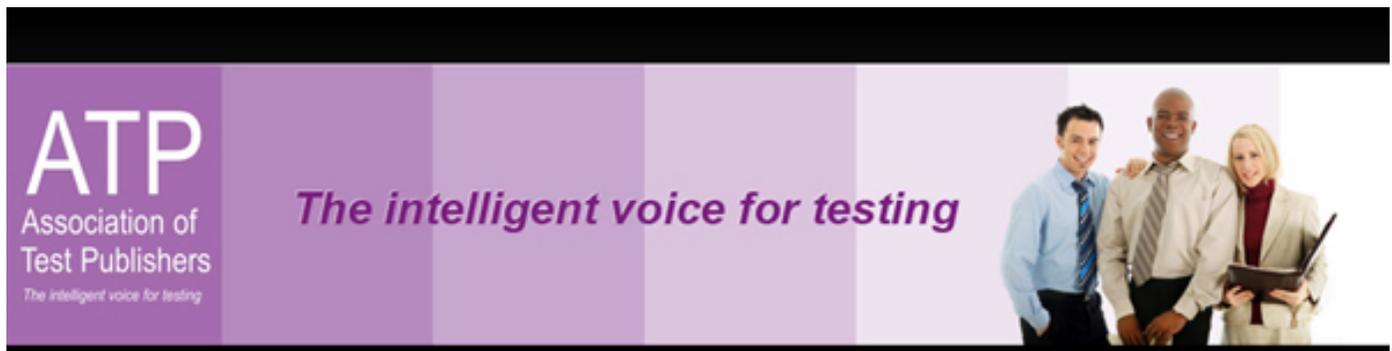


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## TEST PUBLISHER NEWS/ Fall 2012

### E-ATP Keynote: "Employers need not fear certification"

An increase in certification can help solve a skills crisis in Europe that reflects a shortage of training for both young people and "squeezed middle" workers, education leaders from across Europe were told at the the fourth annual conference of the European Association of Test Publishers (E-ATP) Sept. 12-14.

"Unemployed and discouraged workers are estimated at 40 million in Europe, whilst at least 4 million vacancies are unfilled as the decline in low-skill jobs is replaced by a growing demand for high-skilled workers. Up to 50% of employers in Europe are struggling to find the right talent," Rona Fairhead, CEO of the Financial Times Group told conference attendees.

Increasing the role and profile of certification, developing more apprenticeship pathways, utilising blended learning and assessment technologies and improving the verification of credentials were just some of the solutions encapsulated in Fairhead's closing keynote address.

William G Harris, CEO of the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) said: "There has been extensive research over the last year identifying the extent of the skills problem, but we still lack a cohesive



Erwin van Schaffelaar of Cito, provides conference attendees with a presentation on the exhibit floor at E-ATP's 4th annual *Growing Talent in Europe: Gaining Advantage Through Assessment* Conference in Berlin.

### NEW JATT ARTICLE:

#### *Applying Multidimensional Item Response Theory Models in Validating Test Dimensionality: An Example of K-12 Large-scale Science Assessment*

Authored by Ying Li, American Institutes for Research in Washington D.C. and Hong Jiao & Robert W. Lissitz, University of Maryland, College Park, the study, *Applying Multidimensional Item Response Theory Models in Validating Test Dimensionality: An Example of K-12 Large-scale Science Assessment*, has been published online at [www.testpublishers.org](http://www.testpublishers.org) in the *Journal of Applied Testing Technology (JATT)*.

The study investigated the application of multidimensional item response theory (IRT) models

to validate test structure and dimensionality. Multiple content areas or domains within a single subject often exist in large-scale achievement tests

strategy across Europe to tackle it. ATP members represent some of the most influential thinkers in assessment and we need to do more to raise the profile of both the benefits of staff training and the importance of certification.”

Keynote speaker Rona Fairhead added:

“Certification is the ‘Higgs Boson’ of talent; it’s the ingredient which holds the world of skills development together. Whilst employers increasingly struggle to find the skills they need, many also fear that if their staff get certified, they will lose them to another company. The data we have shows that organisations actually get more productive and committed staff. Educators and assessment companies need to work together to help improve the quality and effectiveness of learning and certification through technology and particularly mobile solutions, and provide more evidence of the value of certification to employers.”

Fairhead challenged ATP to engage its global members in ‘value of certification’ research which would help provide the evidence employers need to better equip the workforce of today for tomorrow.

[Join E-ATP next year in Malta! [Click here](#) for more information.]

## Asia-ATP to hold first Conference in Beijing

Asia Division, (A-ATP) will launch their first ever conference in Asia - “Rediscovering Asia”. The conference will be held in Beijing on the 15th of December 2012, 8:30 - 14:00, and is A-ATP’s first major regional event. The conference seeks to attract regional participants from testing markets in Asia to share best practices and challenges. The conference will use an interactive forum format, where industry leaders will discuss a range of key issues relevant to the Asian markets. The audience will have the opportunity to pose questions to the panel of experts and to participate directly in the discussions.

For more information click here: [Asia ATP](#)

QUICK LINKS

subject often exist in large scale achievement tests. Such areas or domains may cause multidimensionality or local item dependence, which both violate the assumptions of the unidimensional IRT models currently used in many statewide large-scale assessments. An empirical K–12 science assessment was used as an example of dimensionality validation using multidimensional IRT models. The unidimensional IRT model was also included as the most commonly used model in current practice. The procedures illustrated in this real example can be utilized to validate the test dimensionality for any testing program once item response data are collected.

## ATP Defends Assessments Texas Tribune, New York Times and Wall Street Journal Articles Prompt Letters

Flawed articles that ran this summer and fall in several U.S. newspapers and online prompted responses from ATP in the form of Letters to the Editor.

The first article which ran in the *Texas Tribune* and was picked up by the *New York Times* (“*Desing Flaw suspected in Texas Standardized Tests*”, July 28, 2012) claimed that “a glitch embedded in the DNA of the state exams that, as a result of a statistical method used to assemble them, suggests they are virtually useless at measuring the effects of classroom instruction.”

“The article evidenced serious misunderstandings of the science of test development in general, and even more specifically fails to grasp item response theory (IRT) as a scoring model, not part of the fundamental process of designing and developing tests,” wrote ATP CEO Dr. William G. Harris in a letter to the editor.

Dr. Harris added, “Ironically, the articles attack on IRT methodology is quite surprising when compared to the reliance many test critics generally attribute to student results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) - both of which use IRT scoring methodologies.”

In September an article which appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* entitled “*Do New Jobs Tests Foster Bias? As More Companies Adopt Personality Screening, Questions of Legality Emerge*” was characterized by ATP’s General Counsel, Dr. David Arnold of Wonderlic Inc., as “one-sided, misguided and convoluted.”

Dr. Arnold noted that as a starting point the reference to job-related personality testing as “new” ignored over two decades of job applicant screening by employers, “both online and in person.” He went on to point out the article title is misleading in its suggestion that there have been an expanding number of lawsuits when, in fact, the number of testing suits in 2011 was very small -- only 164 out of 100,000 EEOC suits -- with “personality” testing being only a fraction of the overall number.

In conclusion, Arnold suggested that the article should have included commentary from an employment attorney who could have given a broader and more accurate perspective of the issue.

The full text of both Letters to the Editor can be read online at [www.testpublishers.org](http://www.testpublishers.org): [Wall Street Journal Letter](#) [Texas Tribune Letter](#).

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