

**ASPA Fall 2007 Professional Development Program
September 10-11, 2007 – The Brown Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky**

The Science and Art of Decision Making

Every accrediting agency strives to make sound accreditation decisions. Accredited programs and other external groups constantly scrutinize our accreditation actions to ensure they are consistent and evidence based. The Fall 2007 Professional Development program will explore both the science and the art of decision making. Participants will engage in interactive group activities to help us understand the various aspects of decision making. We will receive customized feedback that will benefit our decision making in both our professional and personal lives. Steven McCabe from the University of Louisville and Donna Surges Tatum founder and CEO of Meaningful Measurement, Inc. will lead our discussions.

Monday afternoon, September 10, 2007: Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!

Steven McCabe is a hand surgeon in Louisville, Kentucky. He teaches Medical Decision Making and other research methods courses at the School of Public Health and Information Sciences at the University of Louisville. Dr. McCabe will discuss theories and methods to study decision making under uncertainty using interesting examples from everyday life and the discipline of hand surgery. This includes theories of how people “should” make decisions, how people actually make decisions, and attempts at understanding the discrepancies. One interesting example in which he has participated as a decision maker and a surgeon is hand transplantation.

Following the lecture component participants will engage in one of two concurrent workshops on probability and utility, two important aspects of any decision. The workshops will be repeated, so everyone will learn about both topics.

This program promises to be an interesting review and application for those with a background in decision science and a useful and engaging introduction for all others. Dr. McCabe promises to deliver skills that can be used to improve our professional lives and can be applied to important decisions in our day to day life as well.

Tuesday morning, September 11, 2007: Creating Objective Measures from Subjective Observations

Donna Surges Tatum, PhD, CAE founded Meaningful Measurement in 1990. An experienced practicing psychometrician, she also is a Lecturer at the University of Chicago and is appointed to the graduate faculty at Purdue University.

Testing produces quantifiable, yes/no results. Evaluation is dependent upon the reaction of raters to a set of criteria in specific situations such as on-site visits, standards reports, portfolios, or essay responses. In spite of best efforts to standardize the process, there will be variations when assessing. No matter how well-trained, raters see the world with their own particular perceptions; some tasks are harder to accomplish than others; the physical environment is different from one time to the next. The goal is to minimize deviations in the process, and to account for the remaining differences. This produces a defensible accreditation program.

To demonstrate the concept of producing objective measures from subjective observations, participants are asked to engage in an evaluation exercise prior to the conference. A link to assess student online portfolios was distributed on August 13, 2007 with a submission deadline of August 29, 2007. Aggregate results will be reported during the workshop. Individuals who complete the evaluation exercise will also receive their own analysis. Contact the ASPA office as quickly as possible if you did not receive the information on how to complete the pre-meeting exercise.

The second part of the workshop is small group discussions to share ideas for solving challenges related to clear, assessable, fair, and standardized assessment. Then the small groups will report to the whole. This allows dissemination of the “Collective Wisdom” which is the great benefit of a group of like-minded professionals who come together to share their experience.