

Adam C. Bandelli, Gabriel E. Lopez Rivas,
& Raymond Charles Ottinot
University of South Florida



Left to Right: Raymond C. Ottinot, Adam Bandelli, & Gabriel E. Lopez Rivas

Ah fall, the leaves are on the ground, the holidays are just around the corner, and everyone north of Florida is wishing for more global warming; fortunately, you have another issue of **TIP-TOPics** as an excuse to stay inside. Speaking of things you do inside, have you ever been watching television and found yourself daydreaming about what it would be like to be famous? Maybe you've imagined yourself as a rock star traipsing about a stage or envisioned yourself as the president resolving the world's problems. Well let's be honest, the odds are not in your favor for either of these possibilities, but luckily for you, we are here to offer you an alternative for achieving notoriety: Become a **Tip-TOPics for Students** column editor!

That's right! Soon we will be riding off into the sunset and we need a few creative individuals to take up the torch; all we need from you is a vision of what you would like do with the column. This vision should ideally come in the form of an example article. This article should be written as if it were the first article of your 2-year tenure and should sketch what you want to do with the column. All we ask is that you keep it to 3,000 words (the actual word limit for **TIP-Topic** articles), format it according to APA guidelines (i.e., 12-point font and one inch margins), and that your cover page include the title **TIP-TOPics for Students**, author name(s) and affiliation(s) underneath the title, and contact information (e.g., e-mail addresses, phone number, fax number, and physical address).

Submissions may be from a single individual or a group, and groups may be made up of people from the same school or different schools. Remember that the content, style, and structure of the column are totally up to you, so be creative. **Please send all submissions electronically (i.e., Word document or text file) to tipsontopics@yahoo.com with the subject line: TIP-TOPics Contest.** Submissions are due by **5:00 p.m.** on **January 15, 2007**, but early submissions are encouraged. A blind review process will be used to select the next editor(s), so please affix a five-digit number in the top right corner on all pages of your submission (including the cover page), but do not include identifying information anywhere except the cover page.

Everyone whose name appears on the entry must have their faculty advisor send an electronic letter of recommendation (e-mail or Word document) directly to current *TIP* Editor **Laura Koppes** (LKoppes@siop.org) and must be current Student Affiliates of SIOP in good standing when the recommen-

dation letters are submitted, so make sure to pay your SIOP dues. We will review the submissions then forward them to *TIP* Editor, Laura Koppes, who, along with incoming *TIP* Editor **Wendy Becker**, will make the final selection. The new columnist(s) will have a 2-year tenure beginning with the July 2007 issue and ending with the April 2009 issue. You must be a graduate student throughout your tenure, thus all submitters should be at least 2 years from graduation. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Now back to our regularly scheduled column. For this issue, we will be discussing teams. Love teams or hate them they are here to stay, so we will give you the lowdown on research in this area, chat with **Eduardo Salas**, and present your responses to our open-ended exploration of team experiences in graduate school.

I-O 101

What issues (e.g., methodology) make the study of teams challenging and rewarding for researchers?

All of our experts agreed that the greatest challenge facing team researchers is the acquisition of an adequate sample size to do team-level analyses. As **John Hollenbeck** stated, it is a lot more difficult to find 80–90 teams relative to 80–90 individuals. In addition, **Michael Brannick** mentioned that the dependency of observations (nesting) is also an issue, although it may be handled by techniques such as hierarchical linear modeling. Lastly, the severity of these issues can be compounded by field/laboratory logistics, compensation of participants, and informed consent.

However, Michael Beyerlein made an excellent point that just because research in the area of teams is difficult doesn't mean that it should be avoided. He stated that some psychologists have done a fine job with lab studies, others have had captive organizations like ships in the Navy, and some have generated research out of consulting. Although there are some challenges to the study of teams, our experts stressed that the area of teams is growing rapidly and is a "hot" topic in the I-O field.

What should students look for in an internship when pursuing an applied position with an emphasis in the area of teams?

According to John Hollenbeck some organizations might be giving lip service to the idea of teams. He stated that one should attempt to identify how much within-team variation the organization displays with respect to appraisal and pay of the team. Specifically, if everyone's pay is based on their individual performance, then its lip service. Additionally, **Susan Mohammed** stated that because so much of team functioning is driven by task characteristics, gaining experience with a wide variety of team types (e.g., top management, task forces, production teams, and decision-making groups) is beneficial.

Lastly, our experts recommended that other ways of identifying applied positions with a focus on teams is to look for articles in journals by I-O psy-

chologists from industry that publish on team-related issues, consider internships from the military, or other contractors to the military.

Where do you see the area of team research going?

Richard Hackman stated that scholars and practitioners are increasingly realizing that a good team cannot be made solely by focusing on the individual members, the team itself, or the organizational context within which the team operates. Thus, he stressed the need to account for factors at all three levels of analysis (i.e., individual, team, and context) in order to understand what makes a good team and how to create one as well.

John Hollenbeck and Michael Beyerlein mentioned the need for more of a focus on inter-team (e.g., conflict and coordination) and team dynamics issues (e.g., cross cultural). In addition, Michael Brannick and Susan Mohammed discussed how future studies will increasingly become more sophisticated conceptually and methodologically by considering the role of moderators and mediators and new individual characteristics thought to be valuable in teams (e.g., emotional intelligence).

Where can students find information and research about teams and team-related topics?

Michael Beyerlein warned that although many popular press books on teams contain useful examples, tools, and ideas, they are not always based on research. A particularly informative book is entitled *Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances* (Hackman, 2002).

Aside from the top journals in our field, our experts gave additional resources to help students who are interested in team research. Susan Mohammed mentioned a specialty journal entitled *Small Group Research and Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, & Practice*. Michael Beyerlein advised that in addition to journals and online sites, it is important to look at dissertation abstracts. Good work is completed by doctoral students that, unfortunately, never gets published. Additionally, Richard Hackman has a Web site with a number of resources on teams, as well as an online diagnostic instrument for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of task-performing teams (www.leadingteams.org). Lastly, associations such as SIOP, AoM, ASTD, Center for Collaborative Organizations (www.workteams.unt.edu), and a new interdisciplinary network for group researchers called INGRoup (www.ingroup.info) can be used to find information on teams.

BI-O

When it comes to the study of teams, few scholars have contributed the amount of theoretical knowledge and empirical research as Eduardo Salas. Dr. Salas is trustee chair and professor of psychology at the University of Central Florida (UCF), where he also holds an appointment as program director for Human Systems Integration Research Department at the Institute for Simulation & Training. He has coauthored over 300 journal articles and book

chapters, has coedited 15 books, and is a Fellow of SIOP, Applied Experimental and Engineering Psychology, and Human Factors and Ergonomics Society. Prior to his appointments at UCF, Dr. Salas was a senior research psychologist and head of the Training Technology Development Branch of NAVAIR-Orlando for 15 years. During his time at NAVAIR, he served as a principal investigator for numerous R&D programs focusing on teamwork, team training, advanced training technology, decision making under stress, learning methodologies, and performance assessment.

What were your greatest doubts in graduate school and how did you overcome them?

I am unique in that as early as high school I knew I wanted to do I-O psychology. However, I am originally from Peru, so when I came to the states I had a little difficulty and fear of the English language. I have an accent and my English vocabulary/fluency was not great, so I sometimes thought I wasn't going to make it because I could not communicate well. To overcome this fear, I forced myself to do as many presentations as possible. Although I still have the accent, I think I can articulate ideas well enough that people can understand me. In terms of my courses, the field, or anything related to graduate school, I never had doubts because this is what I always wanted to do. My advice to young professionals is to constantly work on developing, writing, and presenting your ideas. I-O is about communicating ideas and if you cannot do so, you will not be successful.

Did your graduate school experiences prepare you for working within the field?

Yes and no. I went to Old Dominion University and there were a couple of great things there. For example, two of my mentors were into proposal writing and research grants. So, early on, I learned how to do those things and was exposed to the value of funding in research. By participating on their projects, I was able to acquire those skills. However, there were no classes on grant writing or how to be a consultant. This was probably one of the areas that could be improved because there were no formal seminars to prepare you for working on the applied side of the field.

How did you go about developing your current research interests?

During graduate school two of my mentors studied team-level issues. So, I was lucky to be exposed to materials, readings, and ideas early on. The work and research I did with them began to peak my interests. On the training side, I had many early opportunities to participate in projects with the Navy as a consultant doing training-related work. It was during this time that I began to formulate ideas around creating instructional materials and using psychological principles to drive the design of instructional methods.

What obstacles in graduate school and in your career did you experience that you were not anticipating, and what advice would you give to students and young professionals to help overcome these challenges?

I am not sure if this is an obstacle, but something I experienced early on was the value of research methods. For example, one book that I still consult often and recommend to students is Cooke and Campbell's *Quasi-Experimental Design*. The book is an excellent source if you're doing applied research because things change quickly in the field and you have to know what that does to your internal and external validity. Graduate school does not always prepare students for dealing with quasi-experimentation. At the Navy, I learned from the get-go that you seldom randomize or have control groups. Therefore, you have to know very quickly what that means and how you can still create robust designs and credible findings. My advice would simply be "know thy methods."

How did you go about getting your first job once you had attained your degree? How long were you at your first job?

My first job was NAVAIR in Orlando. I originally worked on my master's thesis at UCF and did a project for the Navy. After this, I moved to Norfolk, VA and completed my PhD. Once I had completed my program, I wanted to come back to Florida. So I made one call, sent one letter with my vita, and they hired me. The job with NAVAIR lasted 15 years and I loved every minute of it. I had the opportunity to learn new things and was given the autonomy to pursue my own interests as long as they fulfilled the Navy's objectives. It was a period of great personal and professional growth.

Is the work that you do now related to or the same as the work you did early in your career?

Yes, I deal with the same research that I started early in my career. Many students think that once they complete their dissertations they do not have to do that type of work again. Well, you can say that I have done many "dissertations" throughout my career. What I mean by this is that if you want to do funded research, you have to develop theory, measures, and go through all the steps that are involved in developing a dissertation. However, many of the things I do now do not involve the hands-on work. I have students examine and analyze the data, but I am still developing the conceptual frameworks around the projects. So, at the process level, I am doing the same work. It is the level of detail that has changed. For example, I haven't done a data analysis in several years. Somebody else deals with that.

What things would you have done differently if you knew then what you know now?

I probably wouldn't have pushed others so hard. I am a big goal setter and go-getter and not everyone is fit for that. Some people do not have that as a

value system and therefore it is not a primary motivation. Sometimes along the way (not knowingly) I hurt people because I was constantly pushing, demanding, and expecting people to do more than what they were capable of or interested in doing. It also took me some time to learn to relax. In the beginning, I was working 6, sometimes 7 days a week, putting in well over 60 hours. Now that I have more gray hair, I look back and wish I had taken the time to pursue other things.

What were the most appealing characteristics/qualities of the career you selected and why did you choose this over the other side?

I tend to look at myself as an applied psychologist. I believe in the scientist-practitioner model in its truest sense. That is, we should apply the best science that we can to solve organizational problems. It was also important for me to have an impact in changing the way executives, managers, and employees do their thinking. The most rewarding thing in the 20 plus years I have been doing this is influencing people in how they deal with organizational issues.

What are the most satisfying and dissatisfying aspects of our field to you? How has this related to your career?

The most satisfying thing is the scientist-practitioner model and the ability to do work in both arenas. In our field, you often have people strictly on the science side or the practice side, where for me, it has been exciting to do both and be in the middle. As I-O's we have the rare opportunity to look at problems from different points of view. For example, when I do teams projects or training research there are many communities, industries, and agencies that are interested in learning about what I do and how I can contribute.

One of the dissatisfying aspects is that we are divided as a society. We are too segmented. There are the scientists/academicians on one side, the practitioners on the other. Then we have the "I" types on one side, the "O" types on the other. It can be a little disturbing. However, one thing that we are working on as a unified field is letting organizations know that we have a science that can solve their problems. We still have a long way to go, but important steps are being taken in the right direction.

Assessment Center

This issue we changed up the usual routine and decided to do an open-ended exploration of team-related experiences in graduate school. We asked you to describe whatever team-related experience came to your mind when you thought about the concepts of teams. Here are a couple of notable experiences that were shared with us:

The most outstanding team experience I had was a class project for market research. We were a team of three students from different backgrounds doing market research for a real company (yes, the university

earned money for this). We collaborated very well in all stages of the project. When the deadline for our company presentation approached, we were very stressed and nervous; it was a time of little sleep and too much work. But since our team bonded so well, we were able to work through the presentation with little difficulty.

I was working on a group project in graduate school, and several members of my group did not get along. They were very competitive with each other in general, so working on a project together was not a good idea. Of course, they argued the whole time and made it uncomfortable for the rest of us. I hate working in teams because I hate conflict, and this was the worst. I didn't agree with much that was done, but I didn't speak up because one of the members was very confrontational. It ended up being a pretty bad project. We got a poor grade on it because we didn't do what the professor wanted.

I am working on a research project with two other individuals who I consider my friends. The teamwork part of it has gone fantastic, even with each person currently living in different areas of the country. We have been productive and to the point when it was called for, plus are meetings are enjoyable because we are friends. We have encountered many obstacles and the project is not currently going according to plan, but I still have found it to be a positive experience.

Conclusion

We would like to thank our panel of experts who provided valuable information for this column. These respondents include Michael Beyerlein (University of North Texas & Center for Collaborative Organizations), Michael Brannick (University of South Florida), John R. Hollenbeck (Michigan State University), Susan Mohammed (Pennsylvania State University), and Eduardo Salas (University of Central Florida). If you are interested in additional information or extended commentary from our experts, please feel free to contact us at tipsontopics@yahoo.com. Be sure to check out our next issue where we will be speaking with **Harry C. Triandis** and covering cross-cultural issues. Also don't forget to start gathering ideas and getting your proposals ready for the **TIP-TOPics for Students** Column Editor(s) contest.