This is the first offering of a new TIP column. The column is contextualized within the current SIOP landscape. Then, the results of a brief survey conducted to lay the groundwork for the new column are shared, followed by a description of the vision for the column going forward.

Given that the scientist–practitioner model underpins I-O psychology, the practice of I-O psychology should be based on evidence-based science and practical issues should inform scientific pursuits. However, over the past several years, there has been discussion, research, debate, and activity centered on identifying and/or addressing perceptions of “gaps” between practice and research with the I-O field (e.g., Madigan & Giberson, 2010; Silzer & Cober, 2010; Silzer & Parson, 2012).

In 2008 and 2015, SIOP’s Professional Practice Committee (PPC) conducted the Practitioner Needs Survey seeking to better identify perceptions regarding science-practice gaps (Porr, Axton, Ferro, & Dumani, 2016, and Silzer, Cober, Erickson, & Robinson, 2008). The results of these surveys influenced the development of several initiatives currently in place or in development that are focused on providing greater opportunities for science–practice collaboration. Examples include SHRM-SIOP Science of HR Series, EBSCO Research Access, Practitioner Reviewer Database, and the Careers Study.

“The Bridge”

What was evident within the findings is the need for more “bridges” to connect science and practice. Indeed, examples of SIOP looking to create bridges between different groups abound. For example, SIOP has sought to develop ways to connect the larger community of I-O psychology academics and practitioners with those outside of the community. The “Building Bridges” initiative is one example. Within that effort, resources were developed that connect individuals online, suggest practices for making I-O connections, and provide materials to educate others about I-O.

Taking further steps to bridge the science and practice gap is also on the top of the agenda for the SIOP leadership. For exam-
ple, in his address at the 2015 Annual Conference, incoming President Steve Kozlowski outlined as one of his goals to promote translational science and evidence-based practice, noting opportunities to “better fuse science findings and evidence-based practice” (Below, 2015; Kozlowski, 2015).

In response to the aforementioned initiatives and results, TIP is pleased to announce a new column focused on providing an additional forum for connecting scientific knowledge and research with the effective practice of I-O psychology. This column, entitled “The Bridge: Connecting Science and Practice,” was formed with input from multiple committee members and TIP editorial staff over the past several months. Within this new column, we intend to (a) extend the “connections” work already being advanced by SIOP, (b) enhance the integration of I-O science and practice, and (c) directly address the call from SIOP President Kozlowski.

### Background Survey Data and the Development of the New Column

To help develop this column, members of the PPC surveyed a small convenience sample of colleagues, both academic and practitioner, to gather their views on several aspects of the science–practice model. Respondents were asked to define and provide an example of effective science–practice collaboration, to identify SIOP efforts that were focused on bridging science and practice and how those could be improved, and to define what makes one a scientist–practitioner in I-O psychology.

We provide a summary of responses to these questions below in the hopes that it will spur some ideas and thought around future contributions to this column as well as larger efforts one may take to bridge science and practice. Respondents defined effective science–practice collaboration in multiple ways, including:

- Using research to guide consulting practices
- Academics and practitioners learning from one another
- Academics and practitioners working together to identify, plan, and conduct research projects relevant and transferable to organizational settings and practitioners ensuring that their work is line with research findings
- Academics and practitioners working together on research projects to address applied problems and inform managers about research-based best practices
- A reciprocal relationship where practitioners and scientists share information and inform one another about research needs and/or findings; for example,
  - Sharing of best practices, research, trends, and data
  - Journals with combined research rigor and applied focus
  - Having outlets for sharing research and practice-based findings across with different practitioners and academics
  - A feedback loop whereby practitioners provide input to academics on workplace issues or research needs that they are able to address
in a more thorough and robust manner, and academics communicate research findings via top journals and popular press
• Joint research in applied settings and articles written in easy to consume language
• Having up-to-date knowledge of research findings and their implications and how those can be applied to less-than-ideal settings to achieve valued outcomes
• Balance of scientific rigor and data-informed approaches with practical application to real world business issues when working with clients

Consistent across the definitions of effective collaboration were the themes of two-way communication between academics and practitioners, sharing of information (e.g., research findings; research needs), working together to conduct research and resolve applied issues, and opportunities in using research to guide practice and practice to help guide research.

Although a complete list of effective science–practice collaboration examples go beyond the scope of this article, it was noted that the provided examples mirrored these definitions well. We describe briefly a few examples below in order that they may help stir readers’ ideas and thoughts about contributions to future articles:

• Developing and implementing an organization intervention while also collecting data to address an important research question
• Working with university faculty and students to help design and conduct I-O processes and tools
• Working directly with an organization to conduct research and share findings on current organizational problems
• Developing research ideas from gathering leaders’ work experiences
• Academic and practitioner working together to conduct research and share data
• Academic using a different subject population to study hypotheses and research findings that had been observed in research conducted within an organization
• Using best-practice, evidence-based approaches to developing I-O tools and systems within a university setting
• Organizations using I-O tools that were based on research conducted or facilitated by consulting firms
• Academics and practitioners working together on SIOP committees
• Organizations providing data that can be used for research and publications as well as developing interventions
• Leveraging existing research to guide development of I-O tools and products
• Having dedicated resources to provide thought leadership and best practice guidance for product or project development
• Using internships that provide both formal education and practical experience and help practitioners find new talent
• Seeking assistance from an academic with expertise in a specific, relevant area
SIOP-related programs or efforts that were identified as focused on further bridging science and practice included conference workshops and presentations, annual grants that encourage partnership, new registries, having academics and practitioners work on the same committees (e.g., review committee), helping to facilitate more practitioner journal reviewers, branding initiatives, publications such as TIP and the IOP Perspectives on Science and Practice, webinars and white papers, and local I-O groups. A few respondents indicated they were not aware of existing programs or efforts, which potentially points to an opportunity to communicate more about the efforts being made, possibly by highlighting some of these efforts within this column.

Indeed, when asked for ways in which to improve efforts to enhance science–practice collaboration, suggestions focused on elements of visibility, resources, education, and communication, such as:

- Providing resources such as conference session and workshops, dedicated journals, outlets for practitioner-focused findings, and research funding that encourage effective practice–science collaboration
- Increasing the visibility and advertising of the work being done within the popular press and SIOP (e.g., more visibility on white papers; brochures or short papers on I-O topics to be shared with businesses)
- Educating business professionals/practitioners on the value of research, educating researchers on ways in which to “sell” research ideas to businesses, and providing more practical training to future I-Os
- Enhancing opportunities to share information and encourage communications between practitioners and academics (e.g., registries that provide information about researching being done and available datasets; practitioners sharing key research topics with academics; forums that connect individuals with common interests)

In terms of defining the roles of “scientist,” “practitioner,” and, most salient, “scientist–practitioner,” results were in general not surprising. Respondents were consistent in identifying that a scientist is closely tied to rigorous research activities and utilizes the scientific method to understand human behavior in the workplace. Also notable is a common understanding that a scientist’s work is published in journals as a method to share with the larger audience. With regard to practitioners, even though there was recognition that the roles practitioners take on are quite varied, the underlying understanding is that a practitioner applies I-O psychology to the workplace in some way. There was also recognition among some respondents that practitioners require a more expansive knowledge of the other functions within an organization and likely interact in a world where they may not be fully appreciated or understood.

Interestingly, there was a bit of disparity in respondents’ definitions of a scientist—
practitioner. Some described this role from the perspective of practitioners who study and use the scientific method, psychological principles of human behavior in the workplace, research and scientific findings, and evidence-based practices to provide services or products that help resolve business challenges or achieve business goals. Others defined the role more in terms of performing both research and practice roles, such as balancing both sides to deliver sound I-O work, contributing to research while practicing delivery and execution, helping to meet workplace challenges while using empirical research to study the effectiveness of applications, and conducting scientifically driven research to create products and services. Some noted the practical challenges in staying involved in both science and practice arenas, such as limited time and different reward systems. A few respondents articulated the role from the perspective of a scientist who understands the practical significance of research, studies important applied issues and workplace practices, and examines whether research findings work in organizational settings.

Overall, it is encouraging that there are slightly different views on what makes for a scientist–practitioner, as this provides more degrees of freedom for I-O psychologists to live the science–practice model and more room for what is considered good science–practice collaboration. Although no one definition emerged, the common theme that appears to determine a “scientist–practitioner” can be loosely construed as someone who is “doing something with research” and also “doing something in practice.” It is in the “something” that we are interested. It is the “something” that we want to encourage. It is the “something” that we hope will shape the content of future contributions to this column.

About “The Bridge” Column

The column will feature a variety of different types of articles, depending on the specific authors’ preferences and the focal topics. For example, we envision as possible types of articles:

- A question-and-answer written dialogue between an academic and a practitioner highlighting, for example, what is happening in academia that could be put into practice and what is happening in practice that could be further investigated with more research
- A case study highlighting the effective practice of science, for example, a recent practice-based issue provided by a practitioner, highlighting evidence-based solutions that were utilized, the impact or implications of those solutions, and potential recommendations or requests for more research
- A review of a key topic/area of interest to I-O psychology (e.g., employee engagement), presented from both the practitioner and academic perspectives, highlighting areas where science and practice converge and diverge and pointing to possible areas for further research or practice
• A description of a difficult challenge faced by a practitioner with a request for assistance, followed by a summary of scientific, evidence-based solutions that could be used for the challenge, provided by an academic or researcher.

• A summary of the latest, cutting-edge research findings, followed by a description of how those findings can be implemented in practice generated by both academics and practitioners.

• A list of emerging trends, issues, and challenges being experienced by practitioners (e.g., top five requests of clients), accompanied with specific research questions or agendas that could be pursued to address such trends and issues.

There are several potential benefits to the new column. In general, it can help facilitate additional learning and knowledge transfer to encourage sound, evidence-based practice. It can provide academics with an opportunity to discuss the potential and/or realized practical implications of their research, as well as learn about cutting-edge practice issues or questions that could inform new research programs or studies. For practitioners, it provides opportunities to learn about the latest research findings that could prompt new techniques, solutions, or services that would benefit the external client community. It also provides practitioners with an opportunity to highlight key practice issues, challenges, trends, and so on that may benefit from additional research. Overall, this column can be one more step toward ensuring a high level of science–practice collaboration!

How the Column Will Work

The TIP Editorial Board will have oversight and review responsibility for the new column. Members of the PPC will work with the Scientific Affairs Committee (SAC) to identify content areas and format, secure authors and column participants, and assist with and review members’ contributions to the column. The column will run for one annual publication cycle (e.g., four issues) after which it will be evaluated and improvements/changes made should it be continued.

How You Can Contribute

This new column will not be written solely by PPC, SAC, or TIP members – rather, the role of these committees is focused on support and guidance for external authors. The academic and practitioner members of SIOP will be providers of input for the column, reflecting a true grassroots, collaborative effort to further connect science with practice. PPC and SAC members will actively recruit column contributors, but we invite interested potential contributors to contact us directly with ideas for columns following the article types listed above. If you are interested in contributing, please contact either Lynda (lynda.zugec@theworkforce-consultants.com) or Craig (craig.wallace@okstate.edu).
References


There’s still time!

Register today online or register on site for SIOP 2016. Don’t miss the biggest I-O event of the year!