

Ministry Effectiveness & Group Interviews

Notes on Work in Progress

The Players

- DOM Advisory Committee on Candidacy Assessment
- Rick DeShon, Ph.D., Michigan State
 - “Job Analysis Generalizability Study for the Position of United Methodist Local Pastor.”
- “Effective Pastors” nominated from six Annual Conferences (WMich, Detroit, Florida, Texas, and SW Texas)

The Ride from the Airport

- Research: the unstructured group interview is an ineffective personnel selection method.
 - Highly subjective, especially the more group members disagree about selection criteria (each has his/her own)
 - Group dynamics make the process volatile
 - Group member interactions overwhelm the process
- That hasn't mattered for us, because we take everyone who doesn't self-destruct in some obvious way.
- When you're not really doing much *selecting*, any method will do.

The Ride from the Airport

- Slightly better: a *structured* group interview
 - Each team asks the same list of questions
 - Each team rates the responses using the same criteria for their ratings
 - The criteria are based in “grounding examples”
- My response: I don’t think our Board is ready for anything this structured.
- We agree: perhaps use a segmented approach

How effective ministers define effective ministry

- Their first question: do you mean how the people *above* us define effectiveness, or do you mean how *we* define it?
 - They see the “above” definition as being along business productivity lines: attendance, giving, apportionments, building programs.
 - They’re angry about being evaluated by such standards, because that’s not how they evaluate themselves.

How effective ministers define their own effective ministry

- **Leadership:** the ability to cast a vision and mobilize and empower people to work toward it. Effective pastors influence people in ways that will help them achieve their goals.
- **Transforming lives:** the ability to transform lives, so that people experience spirituality as part of their identity; that is, they incorporate spirituality into their everyday lives – not just on Sundays. Transforming lives involves seeing people grow in their love of God and develop a deeper relationship with God. They also have a genuine desire for spiritual growth.

How effective ministers define effective ministry

- **Helping others:** Effective pastors help discover and utilize their gifts for the good of their communities. They help people grow personally as well as spiritually. They help people become better, more spiritual people who make better decisions and have stronger, healthier relationships with God and others.
- **Calling:** A profound inner sense of being “called by” and “called to”: called by God and called to a ministry that involves a deep trust in God. This calling and trust become evident in a willingness to act boldly – and take risks – as part of that called ministry.

Highly Rated KSAPs

- Knowledge:
 - administration
- Skills:
 - public speaking, multitasking, and conflict management
- Abilities:
 - adaptability
- Personal characteristics:
 - authenticity, balance, and integrity

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities	Personal Characteristics
Administration	Active Learning	Adaptability	Achievement orientation
Clerical	Active Listening	Attentional Focus	Attention to Detail
Community Demographics	Conflict Management	Creativity	Authenticity
Community History	Decision Making	Idea Fluency	Autonomy
Local Church History	Discernment	Inductive Reasoning	Balance
Management Principles	Exegesis	Intelligence	Cooperation
Psychology	Goal-setting and Feedback	Memorization	Dependability
Sociology	Motivating Others	Oral Comprehension	Empathy
Theology and Scripture	Multitasking	Reading Comprehension	Initiative
Training Principles	Negotiation		Integrity
UM Doctrine	Oral Communication		Leadership
	Problem Solving		Learning Orientation
	Public Speaking		Openness
	Social Perceptiveness		Passion
	Spiritual Disciplines		Patience
	Teaching		Persistence
	Teamwork		Self-awareness
	Time Management		Self-control
	Written Communication		Social Orientation
			Stress Tolerance
			Willingness to Seek Help

KSAPs

- Knowledge and Skills can be developed, so we assess them with an eye to what resources might be most helpful in training people where they're weak.
- Abilities and Personal Characteristics are more set. We assess them with an eye to where to place people, evaluating what kind of performance we can realistically expect.

A Modest Proposal

- Let us develop a set of structured interview questions based on the DeShon information.
- One for each level in the process:
 - Candidacy, with a focus on *fitness* (Abilities and Personal Characteristics)
 - Commissioning, with a focus on *competence* (Knowledge and Skills)
 - Ordination, with a focus on *readiness* (Definitions of Effective Ministry)
- The structured interview questions could comprise one segment of the overall interview.

Sample Candidacy Question

- Fitness (Abilities and Personal Characteristics)
 - “Tell us about an incident in your life where you struggled with integrity.”
 - High rating: the presence of *authenticity, self-awareness, and openness*
 - Medium: two of three
 - Low: one or less

Sample Commissioning Question

- Competence (Knowledge and Skills)
 - “Describe how you would go about creating an annual budget proposal for your congregation.”
 - High rating: The candidate presents a *comprehensive approach*, which is *well thought out*, and *clearly described*
 - Medium: two out of three
 - Low: one or less

Sample Ordination Question

- Readiness (Definitions of Effective Ministry)
 - “Imagine that we are members of your congregation. Describe a goal you want the church to adopt. Explain it to us so that we see the vision, are inspired by it, and accept the goal as our own.”
 - High rating: we feel *clarity* about the goal, are *inspired*, and want to take *ownership*
 - Medium: two of the three
 - Low: one or none of the three

Etc.

- The structured questions should be given to the candidates in advance (otherwise the ability to think on one's feet becomes decisive)
- The structured questions should come first in the interview, before group dynamics begin
- Each committee member rates the candidate's answers independently on a scale of 1 to 5
- Scores are combined and become one data source in the decision-making process

And Finally...

- The Advisory Committee is continuing its research, and now needs participation from a broad range of annual conferences.
- The next step is to get a large sample of clergy to complete an extensive questionnaire.
- We were asked if any of us know a Bishop who might get behind this effort in his or her area...