

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT (ISPI)

***2007-2008
EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE INITIATIVE
CALL FOR PROPOSALS***

Contents of this Package

This Call for Proposals (CFP) contains three sections:

- Section I Evidence-Based Practice Initiative
- Section II Guidelines for Submitting Proposals
- Section III Summary Requirements for Proposals.

SECTION I: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE INITIATIVE

Background

With the growth of the performance technology field, the practice of performance technology is outstripping its theory and research base (Stolovitch, 2000). The misbalance is cause for concern. Brethower (2000) states that the connections between theory, research, and practice, which require data collection specific to relevant questions, adds value to HPT. Clark and Estes (2000) state that the evidence strongly suggests that too many of our popular performance technology solutions do not work, and hence we do not have an effective technology. The authors suggest that ISPI must support the development of new science-based, authentic performance technology, by using solutions that are firmly based on scientific evidence.

Of course, there is also a flip side. Not only is it important to identify practices supported by evidence and those that have been shown to be ineffective, but also those practices that have not yet been tested. The absence of evidence proves nothing, other than, perhaps, "we don't know." Just because there is little or no evidence, does not mean the practice is ineffective. Reciprocally, just because a technique has received considerable "research press" does not necessarily make it better than techniques that have not been tested.

It is important that both HPT researchers and practitioners be fully informed about best available evidence, the strengths and limitations of different sources of evidence, and the strengths and limitations of our expertise, as applied to each situational-specific context. Recently, the American Psychological Association (APA) convened a Presidential Task Force (PTF) to examine sources of evidence and the integration of evidence and practice. The APA-PTF (2005) found that best practices reflect the integration of multiple sources of evidence, everything from research, to practitioner's experiences, to situational context. Hence, we must not only draw from the entire range of research approaches, but even more widely, from the range of evidence sources.

Furthermore, decisions or practices based upon what we know today will become outdated. Because our evidence-base is dynamic, our practices and decisions change as we bring new evidence to light. Because what we designate as evidence will determine (DeAngelis, 2005): (1) our practices and thereby the outcomes we effect; (2) what is researched; (3) what is funded; and (4) what we teach in academic curricula.

It is critical that we acknowledge the reciprocal linkages between evidence and practice. We need common processes for evidence-based practices; guidelines for making evidence-based decisions, and the infrastructure to accumulate, mine, analyze, and synthesize evidence across all sources. Edwards, Dattilio, and Bromley (2004) not only provide a compelling case for case-based reports as an integral source of evidence, but also offer recommendations for closing the rigor gap, such as collaboration between practitioners and researchers, systematically documenting and summarizing case information, and relating cases to theory to build case law or grounded theory. Furthermore, standards of reporting that maximize the utility of case-based reports as reliable and valid sources of evidence are needed. Currently, cases tend to be reported without regard to rigor of format, organization, or content. Such haphazard reporting prohibits the accumulation, analysis, and synthesis of this potential goldmine of evidence.

While the goals of practitioners may seem different than those of researchers, there is considerable overlap in purpose and methodology. Both practitioners and researchers are (or should be) concerned with answering important questions in the context of solving important problems (Guerra-López, 2007). To do this, both practitioners and researchers must depend on the best available evidence (Thomas, 2006). Although practitioners may not realize that research is feasible in their practices, Foshay (2000) affirms that it is possible. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are useful to the practice of performance technology. Reciprocally, there is room available for researchers' efforts to incorporate real-world applications.

Purpose of Proposed Research

The ISPI Research Committee, in collaboration with the ISPI Science and Research Professional Community, is calling for proposals that efficiently and effectively target the issues discussed above. Proposed research should study both research and practices so as to better explicate researcher and practitioner behaviors and protocols with regard to the use of evidence as integral to performance improvement efforts.

The research project is required to produce the following three overarching deliverables:

1. Specific practical recommendations and tools that address generalizability, transportability and accessibility issues (Thomas, 2006) for both researchers and practitioners in the field of performance technology.
2. Research-based protocols that provide practitioners with a guide, job aids, or other tools for using evidence in their practices.
3. Recommendations for how and where researchers and practitioners can access, accumulate, mine, and synthesize a wider range of evidence applicable to the field of performance technology.

Grant Details

- Total funding available is \$18,000.
- Only one proposal will be selected.
- An initial payment of 50% of the funded amount will be made at the start of the project, and the remainder will be paid upon delivery of the final report.
- Final report must be in the form of a manuscript ready for publication in *Performance Improvement Quarterly*. An abbreviated version is also be required for *Performance Improvement Journal* readers.
- The term of the grant is 12 months.
- Preference will be given to a research team, rather than individuals
- The research team may be comprised of researchers from multiple institutions.
- Principal investigators should provide evidence of established credibility in research and performance improvement

Responsibilities of Researchers who are Awarded Funding

ISPI Research Grant Award recipient(s) must complete the following activities:

1. Deliver quarterly status reports until project is complete. These reports must include:
 - a. current status - progress made to date, milestones achieved
 - b. planned activity during next quarter
 - c. changes to research plan
 - d. expense report showing how grant money has been spent to date, total spent to date, and total remaining.
2. Provide a final report to ISPI's Research Committee. The final report must be in the form of a manuscript ready for publication in *Performance Improvement Quarterly*. An abbreviated version is

also be required for *Performance Improvement Journal* readers. ISPI will have the right to use the materials included in the final report for a variety of purposes, and will acknowledge the researchers if and when it uses those materials.

3. Potentially disseminate the results of the funded research project at the ISPI annual conference. Again, all presentations based on the research must acknowledge that the work was funded, in part or in whole, by ISPI's Research Committee. *This presentation would be optional, as it represents an additional expense for the author(s).*

Deadlines for Proposal Submission and Grant Announcements

- Proposals Due: June 8, 2007
- Awards Announced: August 1, 2007
- Announcement of awards will be made to proposal first authors and will be reported in official ISPI publications.

SECTION II: GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

To evaluate proposals that have the most potential for success and the potential to return valuable information to the field of performance technology, we require that you submit a proposal that includes:

- Description of the products of your proposed research, as you envision them now
- Literature Review Summary. Summarize the relevant research and practices. Describe in more detail the specific studies upon which you will base your work
- Methods and Timeline. Clearly state the tools, methods, resources, and time you will use to conduct this project
- Proposed Budget. Provide a spreadsheet detailing anticipated expenditures for the project.
- References. List all references cited throughout your proposal, in APA format.

Proposal Content

Below is a more detailed description of each section of the research proposal. Include only the items that are that are relevant for your type of proposal (either Application or Original Research). Use APA style throughout.

1. Title Page (all proposals)

Include the following: proposal title, running head, author name, affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, fax number, and email address.

2. Abstract, maximum 120 words

Provide a brief, comprehensive summary of the content of the proposal. This is the most important paragraph in your proposal.

3. Description of the Performance Problem or Opportunity, maximum one page

Clearly describe (a) what is the performance situation that will be the context for the application of previously conducted research; (b) the rationale for why this situation is important to the field, and appropriate for funding through the ISPI Research Grant Program, and (c) the value this project will have on future practice and research in the Performance Improvement field.

4. Literature Review Summary, maximum five pages

Conduct a diligent review and critical inquiry of professional, peer-reviewed research and development literature related to the evidence-based practice and related topics. In this section, clearly and concisely summarize the results of the literature review, describing what is already known, and what remains unknown or inadequately defined. Use APA style for all references cited.

5. Application Method/Plan and Timeline, maximum four pages

Begin this section by stating and defining the general approach and specific methods you plan to use in your research. Then briefly justify and describe the proposed approach, clarifying the reasons for your selection. Include the following brief sub-steps:

- a. Participants/Stakeholders to be involved
- b. Factors you (a) plan to impact, and (b) will use to impact something else. How will you measure whether these have been (or have not been) impacted as expected?
- c. Instruments, if any, that you will use to collect data and the sources for your data
- d. Methods for data collection (e.g. document reviews, observations, interviews, etc.)
- e. Tools for analyzing the data observed/collected
- a. Timeline (such as a Gantt chart) showing the estimated duration of each activity of the project. This timeline can be updated in quarterly reports that will be filed by award recipients.

6. Draft Budget (no page limit)

Prepare a spreadsheet detailing anticipated expenditures for the project.

These types of expenses will be considered:

- Labor (Professional, Clerical, and/or Consultants)
- Materials and Supplies
- Other (equipment rental, printing, search services, etc.)

These types of expenses will not be funded:

- Travel
- Conference Attendance
- Equipment
- Institutional Overhead.

7. References of Literature Cited in the Proposal (no page limit)

Include a reference section that lists all of the references cited in your proposal. Use APA style for the reference section as well as for in-text citations.

8. Vitae or Resumes

Attach a current vitae or resume for each member of the proposed research team.

SECTION III: SUMMARY REQUIREMENTS FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Ensure that your proposal contains the following eight sections:

1. Title Page
2. Abstract (maximum 120 words)
3. Detailed Research Question or Purpose
4. Literature Review Summary (maximum five pages)
5. Methods/Plan and Timeline (maximum four pages)
6. Anticipated Research Products and Implications (maximum one page)
7. Proposed Budget (maximum one page)
8. References (no page limit).

Additional Formatting Notes

- Use APA style for all page formatting, reference citations, and for further information on the content of each section in the proposal.
- Include running head and page number in heading of all pages.
- Double-space text on all pages.
- Use one-inch margins (or similar dimensions if submitted on A4 sized paper).
- Use Times New Roman font, no smaller than 11pt
- Adhere to the stated maximum lengths for each section in your proposal. The ISPI Research Committee will not review proposals longer than a total of 14 pages, not including the Reference section.

Submission Deadline

Submissions must be received via email no later than **June 8, 2007**.

Send Submissions To

Please save your proposal in Rich Text Format, attach it to an email message and send to the Research Committee Chair, Ingrid Guerra-López iguerra@wayne.edu, with "ISPI Call for Proposal" in the subject line.

Questions

Please send all inquiries directly to the Research Committee Chair, Ingrid Guerra-López, PhD, iguerra@wayne.edu

REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice (APA-PTF EBP). (February 25, 2005). *Draft policy statement on evidence-based practice in psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
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- Clark, R., & Estes, F. (2000). A proposal for the collaborative development of authentic performance technology. *Performance Improvement, 39*(4), 48-53.
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