

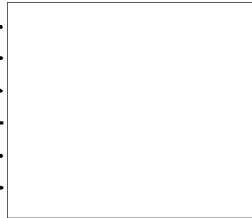
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Comparative Evaluation Descriptor Review
Working Group Meeting
Third Meeting

25 May 1983

Attending:

DCI Representative -
DDA " -
DDI " -
DDO " -
DDS&T " -
OP Representative
and Review Coordinator



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1. The meeting began with an attempt to identify those words and phrases in the Descriptors that are most troublesome. The aim was to gain a consensus prior to eliminating or finding a substitute for the problem situation. Rather than words or phrases Category III was reidentified as a major obstacle. One member stated that the word category was a problem in itself, i.e., there are numerous other areas in which the word is used: occupational category, functional category in DDO, Categories A, B and C for overseas pay eligibility, etc. While admittedly confusing no one had a substitute word; one could later be recommended if offered and agreed upon. The belief that Category III was too vague was expressed and that while this may cause a problem for most managers and panel members it was stated that some actually prefer the ambiguity as it provides for greater flexibility. The issue of performance/potential and the weight given each was again mentioned particularly with regard to the fact that the first three categories emphasize potential and the fourth places emphasis on performance problems. The opinion was expressed about panel members and management knowing pretty much who and what they are dealing with in a Category I or II assignee but that not being so with a Category III employee. It appears that presently three types of employees may be placed in Category III: a) employees who barely survived placement in Category IV, b) those doing a good job and possibly having growth potential and c) those about whom some uncertainty has been expressed. The last point caused the undersigned to mention question I J., i.e., (Do we need a formal "limbo" category which would have panels defer categorical judgment until recently promoted/hired employees have established a track record at the current grade or officially advise panels of availability of that option?). Various members explained how their Career Services respond to situations for which a legitimate reason exists for such deferrals and each appeared to be satisfactorily meeting their needs. It was therefore decided to not recommend the establishment of a formal mechanism but to continue to allow Career Services to decide this issue individually.

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2. In returning to the issue of the problems of Category III the membership discussed the need to have wording for this category appear more positive so that the benefits normally provided by counseling are not negated. While it was agreed that Category III needed to be changed no agreement was reached on the methodology, i.e., expansion to five categories, the simple rewording or other alternatives.

3. At this point the question of the use and meaning of the categories was raised along with the question of whether or not there was need for the categorical descriptor system presently employed. For most of the remainder of the meeting there was debate on the utility and various applications of the current system. Much of the discussion centered around categorizing for potential and the need for doing so (instead of numerical ranking). While there was a feeling that the employee benefitted through having a uniform base for counseling, disagreement was expressed on the issue of the system's benefit to management. One member stated that a summary statement prepared by a panel covering such factors as potential, performance, career development, etc. would be more useful than the current system. After considerable discussion the undersigned stated that the Working Group's charter was to simplify and improve the current descriptors as the survey conducted in 1981 on the Precepts for Boards and Panels affirmed the value of the current system while noting some dissatisfaction with the wording of the descriptors. While this is the primary goal the members were also free to make other suggestions on related issues for consideration by the Director of Personnel, PMAB, and EXCOMM. (There also had been an earlier understanding within the Group that termination of the current system could come about only through replacement by another uniform mechanism or system since there is presently no requirement to numerically rank employees and some components choose not to do so. The 1981 survey results [reviewed by PMAB], which include arguments for system stability, also point toward change without replacement.)

4. Some members indicated that they were unfamiliar with the 1981 survey, i.e., who were interviewed, opinions expressed, etc; the undersigned stated that he would provide additional details and would be back to each member individually regarding the survey and the next course of action. The meeting concluded with one member remarking that if retention of the current system was a must the reduction of the four categories to three might be a good option.



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