Practice Analysis: What, Why, and How

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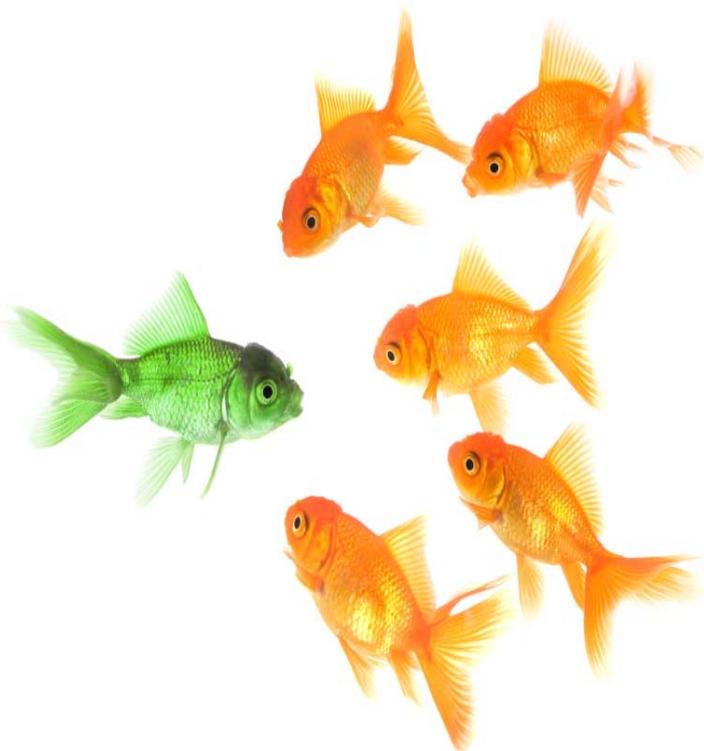
- Higher level of risk to the association
- The market and/or regulators may use certification for high-stakes decisions
- Technical guidelines dictate "right practice" (vs. best practice)
- And …

Certification is NOT like other association products/services
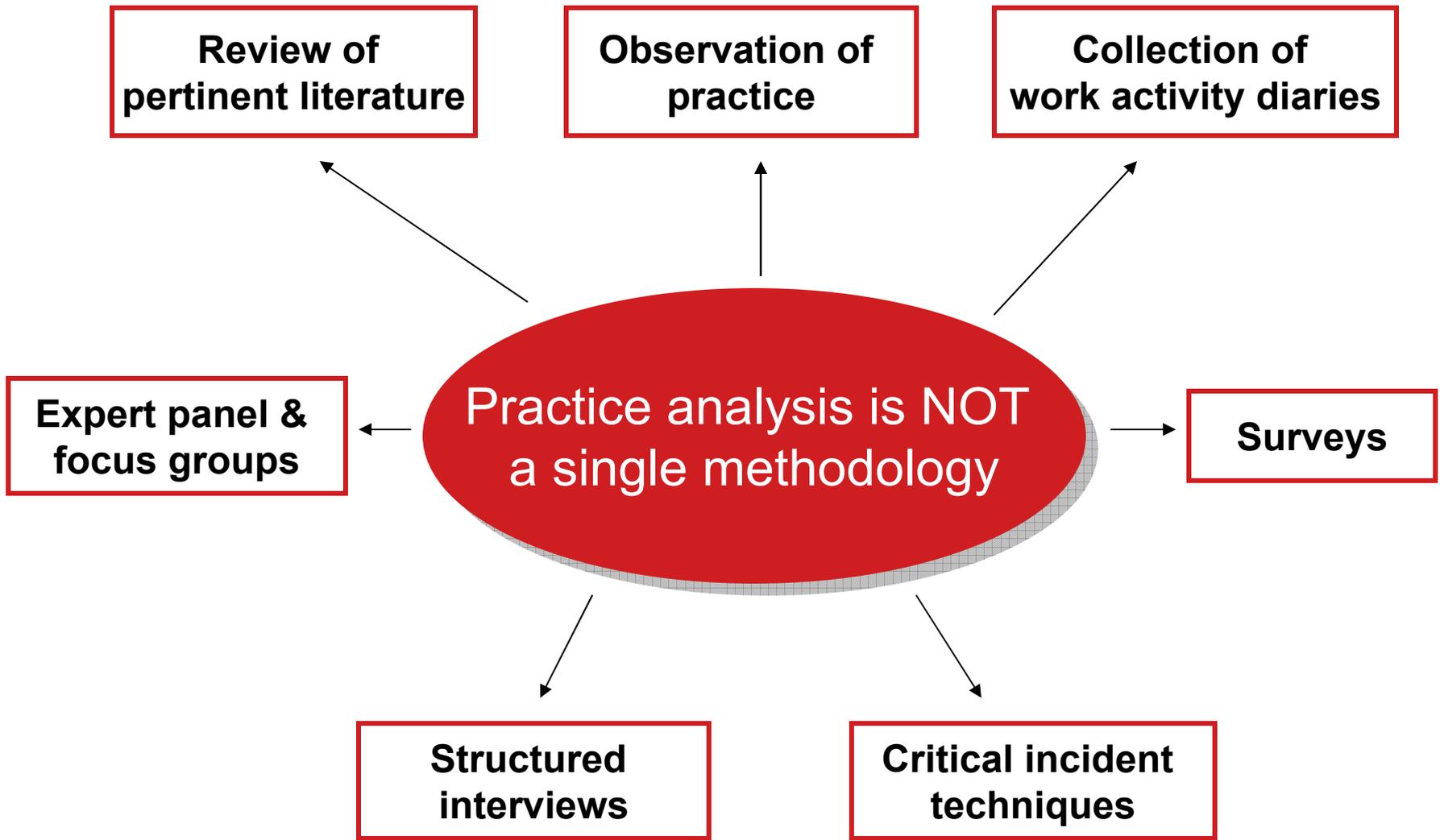
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Decisions should be based on what is in the best interest of the standard for the profession – NOT what will make members happy

What is a practice analysis?

A systematic collection of data describing the knowledge, skills and/or competencies required to competently practice a profession

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We all know what we do.

Why is a practice analysis needed?

To confirm the validity of the examination content and the eligibility requirements

Validity …

The extent to which an assessment method actually measures what it purports to measure

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To conform to standards of the testing and certification industries

- The certification program must analyze, define, and publish performance domains and tasks related to the purpose of the credential, and the knowledge and/or skill associated with the performance domains and tasks, and use them to develop specifications for the assessment instruments (*Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs*, NCCA)

- Appropriate methodology and procedures (such as collecting and maintaining statistical data) shall be defined to reaffirm . . . the fairness, validity, reliability, and general performance of each exam (*ISO/IEC 17024*)

- The content domain to be covered by a credentialing test should be defined clearly and justified in terms of the importance of the content for credential-worthy performance in an occupation or profession. A rationale should be provided to support a claim that the knowledge or skills being assessed are required for credential-worthy performance in an occupation and are consistent with the purpose for which the licensing or certification program was instituted. *(The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, AERA, APA, & NCME)*

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To enhance the legal defensibility of the certification program

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- Establishes a profile of the profession

- Tracks trends in professional practice

- Informs the development and refinement of professional development programs

- Promotes the certification program

- Builds credibility for the program

- Fosters transparency

- Provides an avenue for stakeholder involvement in the certification process

Bonus

Other benefits of practice analysis

How do we conduct a practice analysis ...

that is consistent with best practices?

- Participation of key stakeholders (e.g., professionals, employers)

- Representative sampling (generalizability)

- Captures current practice while anticipating future change

- Competency vs. knowledge-focused

- Confirmation of representativeness of content

- Replicable methodology

- Reliability of raters and data collection tools

- Collection of confirmatory quantitative data

- Timeliness

- Development of test specifications informed by both practice analysis data and subject matter expertise

What to consider when selecting practice analysis methodologies/procedures

- Is the methodology commonly used?
- How much time is required for implementation?
- What is the cost?
- Will the methodology yield high-quality results?
- What is the reliability of the method (i.e., consistency of results)?
- How might stakeholders view the methodology (e.g., pertinence, user-friendliness)?
- What is the potential value-added?

Overall cost-benefit?