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STUDY OF THE LITERATURE ON CRITERIA: III. GENERAL CATEGORIES FO--ETC(U)

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# RESEARCH NOTES

Research Note 52-1

February 1952

STUDY OF THE LITERATURE ON CRITERIA:  
III GENERAL CATEGORIES FOR CLASSIFYING CRITERIA

PJ 4904-03

PERSONNEL RESEARCH SECTION  
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## PROJECT REPORT

### STUDY OF THE LITERATURE ON CRITERIA: III GENERAL CATEGORIES FOR CLASSIFYING CRITERIA

#### I. Problem

A. Background - This report is the third in a series which will summarize the literature on criteria. The complete plan of research and a general introduction to the problem is presented in the first report,<sup>1/</sup> and in the Program Plan for PR 4904. Briefly, an attempt will be made to organize and summarize the material on each subject as it appears in the literature. There will be no effort to edit, interpret, criticize or clarify the ideas. As in the previous report, the material is presented in outline form. The intention is to present a concise over-all picture of the material by subject. Viewpoints are therefore generally not detailed, since it is expected that those interested in a particular aspect of the problem will first be concerned with general coverage of the area, and will then desire to consult the original source for further details. Whenever viewpoint has been taken by more than one author, all are listed.

B. Purpose - The purpose of this report is to present the material gathered from the literature relating to problems concerning general categories for classifying criteria.

#### II. Procedure

A. description of the method used in gathering the material may be found in report Number 1 of this series.

#### III. Summary of the Methods of Classifying Criteria

The sources of each idea are given by numbers in parentheses which refer to articles in the appended bibliography. This bibliography is part of a complete bibliography on criteria. Numbers are not consecutive, since each article retains the same number that it has in the larger, complete bibliography.

A variety of methods of categorizing or classifying criteria as they appear in the literature are presented here. These methods are not mutually exclusive; the principles of classification have much in common. It appears that the varied viewpoints of the various authors has considerable influence on the method of classification they employ.

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<sup>1/</sup> Study of the Literature on Criteria: I. The Problem of Definition. PJ 4904-02



A. Attempts to Classify Criteria on the Basis of Degree of Availability.

1. Ultimate, intermediate, immediate (101)

a. An ultimate (or remote (56)) criterion is the complete final goal of a particular type of selection or training, often stated in broad un-quantifiable terms, usually multiple and complex and determined on rational grounds.

b. Intermediate criteria are those judged by rational analysis or empirical evidence to be related to the ultimate criterion.

c. Immediate - This term is used to differentiate that criterion measure which first becomes available from other partial criteria which become available at various later stages in the course of training or performance on the job. "A convenient index or predictor of a broader and less readily observable area of behavior." (3)

B. Attempts to Classify Criteria on the Basis of Degree of Objectivity.

Objectivity is defined as "persistence of the trace of behavior to be observed." (101) Objectivity is a continuum ranging from the most objective type, where a permanent record is left by the behavior which may be scored and evaluated at leisure, through less objective types where no record is left but the criterion is still analyzable into rather simple units; to the least objective type involving the undefined rating of a complete behavior sequence. (90, 101)

1. Advantages of greater objectivity: Objective measures are likely to be free from the influence of the observer who is subject to biases, and variations in standards and interpretation. (28, 90, 101)

2. Advantages of less objectivity: The question of the feasibility of objective measure, arises i.e., problems of specifying and controlling the external conditions to get a standard task, and standard influence of other people. Reliability is often quite low because of the difficulty of controlling external conditions. (73, 101) In less objective situations the observer can make allowances for variations in external conditions. (101) An objective criterion usually covers only a part of the total job, a part whose relationship to the whole can't be exactly estimated. (28) In some situations, an over-all view is important. (101)

3. Example of a classification based on degree of objectivity. (55)

a. Product - what is produced by some specific type of activity - i.e., some objective products resulting from the occupational activity of a subject working through a given length of time.

b. Action - measures of an activity while it is taking place (direct observation of the occupational activity itself).

c. Subjective impression criteria - i.e., ratings.

C. Attempts to Classify Criteria on the Basis of Degree of Independence of the Measures being Validated. (87, 88, 114)

1. External - an outside measure independent of test itself.

2. Internal - score on the test itself (intermediate between external and internal are scores on other tests).

D. Attempts to Classify Criteria According to Area or Trait to be Measured.

1. Example of such a classification (81)

a. Character and personal habits

b. Health and physique

c. General education

d. Specialized skill

e. Personal traits

f. Executive potentialities

g. Personality

h. Personal appearance

E. Attempts to Classify According to Source or Method of Obtaining the Measure.

1. Example of such a classification (53)

a. Outcome of an activity, e.g., failure or success  
in school.

b. A similar measurement with known validity.

c. Associate ratings.

d. Self ratings.

e. Factors in factor analysis.

f. Diagnosis or authoritative statement from qualified persons other than associate ratings.

g. Type of samples grouped according to a criterion, (group membership criterion) e.g., type of vocation.

h. Internal consistency, e.g., total score of battery is criterion for items.

i. Curve fitting of the scores to a known law.

j. A derived function, e.g., the most predictable criterion.

F. Suggested Classification According to Type of Measure. (28, 115)

1. Objective records of individual performance, objective records of group performance.

2. Differences between groups of known characteristics.

3. Results of exams or tests of knowledge and skill (theoretical or practical exams).

4. Grading and assessments.

IV. Personnel

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B. Project Director: Richard H. Gaylord

C. Research Associate: Eva R. Stunkel

Date: May 28, 1951



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