

Products and Services workgroup update: July 2008

Most of our workgroup's efforts in the past year have been related to the ongoing needs assessment. After compiling the results of each region's needs assessment performed during the spring of 2007, we presented the results at the Chicago national conference. A follow-up survey of the Centers during the winter of 2007-2008 helped us prioritize the most pressing needs of the Centers as a whole. The top five topics as identified and presented at the NLTAPA general business meeting at TRB in January 2008 were, in order: *Asset and Pavement Management for Local Agencies, Low Cost Road Safety Improvements, Pavement Maintenance, Erosion Control and Storm Water Pollution Prevention, and Basic Roadside Safety*. Now we are entering information about available materials into the database housed at the Clearinghouse and posting electronically-available materials on an ftp site.

As a result of a conversation at TRB in January 2008 between Jim Grothaus, the chair of NLTAPA's Partnership workgroup; Mike Sheehan, NACE's liaison to NLTAPA; Sue Miller, NACE's then President-Elect, now President; Ken Skorseth, NLTAPA's liaison to NACE; and George Huntington, Co-Chair of NLTAPA's Products and Services workgroup, our workgroup decided to survey the NACE Board of Directors using a format similar to the one used to survey NLTAPA. As we hoped, the results from NACE were reasonably close to those from NLTAPA.

The figure below titled *NACE (top ten) & NLTAPA (top five; second five; next ten)* shows that all top five topics as identified by NLTAPA were in NACE's top seven priorities. Two additional topics ranked highly by NACE but in the second ten by NLTAPA were *Bridge Repair and Inspection* and *Signs and Pavement Markings*. The reason for the discrepancy for *Signs* is obvious – the NLTAPA survey was conducted before the final federal rule on retroreflectivity went into effect, while the NACE survey took place afterwards. For *Bridges*, we may need to take another look at our bridge programs – perhaps we assume that since the State DOTs handle inspections we don't need to worry about it, but the counties need more information on repairs. The other topic ranked in the top ten by NACE but not by NLTAPA was *Supervision and Management*. Perhaps we need to take another look at this, too. Still the results for NACE and NLTAPA were quite close, indicating our perceptions of our unmet needs are close to those of one of our primary customers – good news.

The levels at which training should take place were also queried in both the NLTAPA and NACE surveys. In general, it was NACE's perception that training needs to take place at a somewhat higher level. Perhaps it is their view that training of entry level and intermediate level employees is conducted by the advanced and management level employees, so NACE sees a greater need for training these more experienced employees. Of course this raises the dilemma for Centers that one needs more expertise to train an advanced employee than it takes to train a rookie. Aside from NLTAPA's considerably greater perceived need for entry level training, the discrepancy between our two organizations was not too great, as shown in the figure below titled *Training Expertise Levels*.

We also asked NACE about their preferred delivery formats. Again, the discrepancy between NACE and NLTAPA was small. Both organizations showed a definite preference for the traditional training methods – slides, videos, and manuals.

The FHWA's Office of Professional and Corporate Development solicited training materials from Centers that indicated in the survey that they had available materials in the top five topics. As this is being written, four Centers (Ohio LTAP – *Pavement Maintenance*; Florida LTAP = *Basic Roadside Safety* and *Low Cost Safety Improvements*; Maryland LTAP – *Asset and Pavement Management Systems for Local Agencies*; and Wyoming LTAP – *Erosion Control and Storm Water Pollution Prevention*) are entering

information into a database housed at the FHWA's Clearinghouse describing the available materials in the top five topics using the format proposed by the National Transportation Training Directors (NTTD) and the Transportation Curriculum Coordination Council (TCCC). We hope to present these compilations at the national conference in Breckenridge and post materials electronically on a password-protected ftp site – those materials that are not available electronically will have to be obtained through the Center that provided them. Contact information and a description of the materials should be available in the database for all submitted materials.

Future activities include: soliciting feedback from the Centers on our progress so far; compiling LTAP/TTAP materials on additional topics including those of importance to the TTAP Centers; entering these additional materials' descriptions into the database; posting the electronic materials on the ftp site; and entering materials from sources outside the LTAP/TTAP community into the database. Please let us know what you think.

By George Huntington

NLTAPA Products and Services workgroup Co-Chair

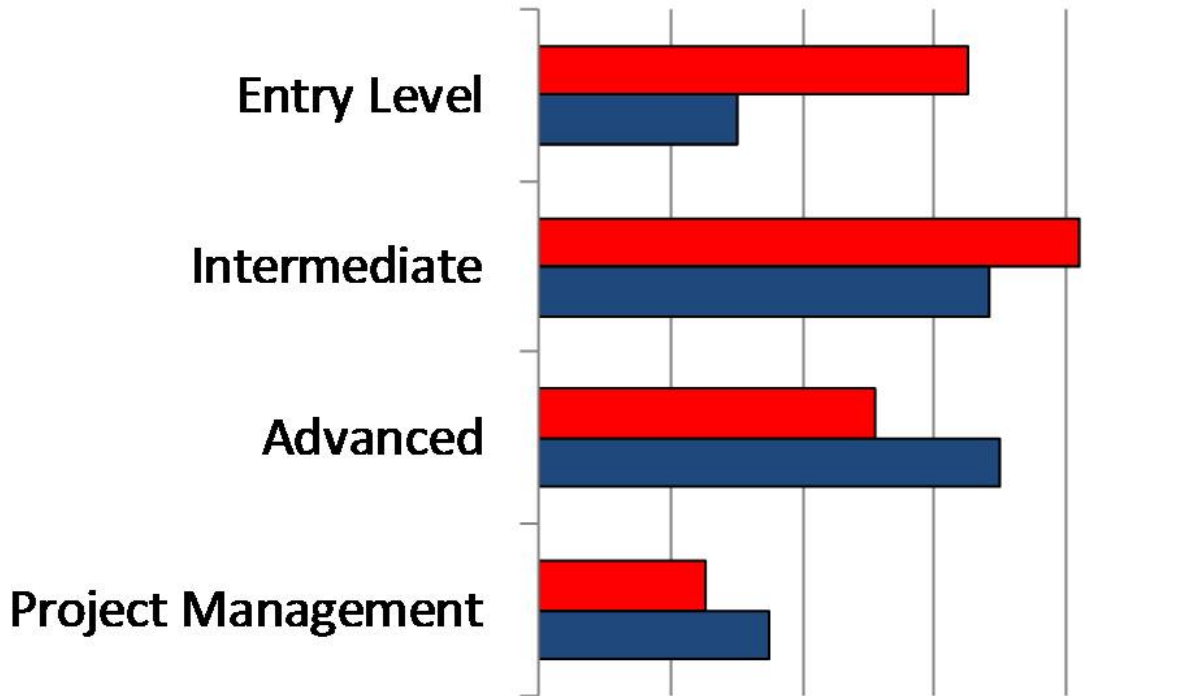
July 7, 2008

NACE (top ten) & NLTAPA (top five; second five; next ten)



Trainee Expertise Levels

NLTAPA & NACE



Desired Formats

NLTAPA & NACE

