Assessment Tools Overview

Presented by the
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Hiring Reform

- In the Presidential Memorandum (Section 1: Directions to Agencies), the second item talks about assessing applicants using valid, reliable tools

- http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/presidential-memorandum-improving-federal-recruitment-and-hiring-process

- Assessment: Defining the terms

- The importance of effective assessment

- Assessment considerations

- Examples of assessments

- Assessment strategy

Assessment: Defining the Terms

- Personnel Assessment: a systematic approach to gathering information about individuals; this information is used to make employment or career-related decisions about applicants and employees

- Personnel Assessment Tool: any test or procedure (for example, ability test, structured interview, work sample) used to measure an individual's employment or career-related qualifications and interests

U.S. Department of Labor, *Testing and Assessment: An Employer's Guide to Good Practices*, 2000

The Importance of Effective Assessment

- Employees who possess the right competencies are more likely to contribute to an agency's success

- Increases our ability to accurately predict the relative success of each applicant on the job

- Results in hiring, placing, and promoting greater numbers of superior performers

- Results in reduced turnover

The Importance of Effective Assessment

- Decreases the likelihood of a bad hire

- Results in enhanced job satisfaction for new hires and a more cohesive and effective work group

- Results in cost savings to the organization

Costs of Hiring the Wrong Person

Type of employee	Estimated Cost
Entry-level full time employee (FTE)	$5,000-$7,000
$20,000/FTE	$40,000
$100,000/FTE	$300,000
Note: Costs include wasted salary, benefits, severance pay, headhunter fees, training costs, and hiring time	

Source: Corporate Leadership Council, Literature Review, *Employee Selection Tests* Catalog #070-198-213, Washington, DC, March 1998, p.2. Cited in U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board Report, *Assessing Federal Job Seekers in a Delegated Examining Environment*, 2002.

Assessment Considerations

Reliability and Validity

- Reliability: the extent to which an assessment tool is consistent or free from random error in measurement

- Validity: the extent to which an assessment tool measures what it is intended to measure

U.S. Department of Labor, *Testing and Assessment: An Employer's Guide to Good Practices*, 2000
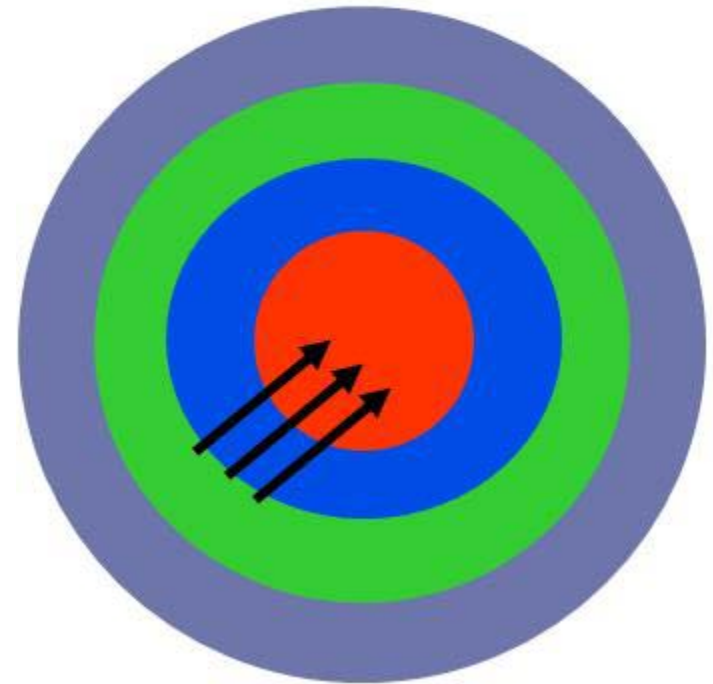
High reliability is a necessary condition for high validity, but high reliability does not ensure validity

Reliable, but not Valid
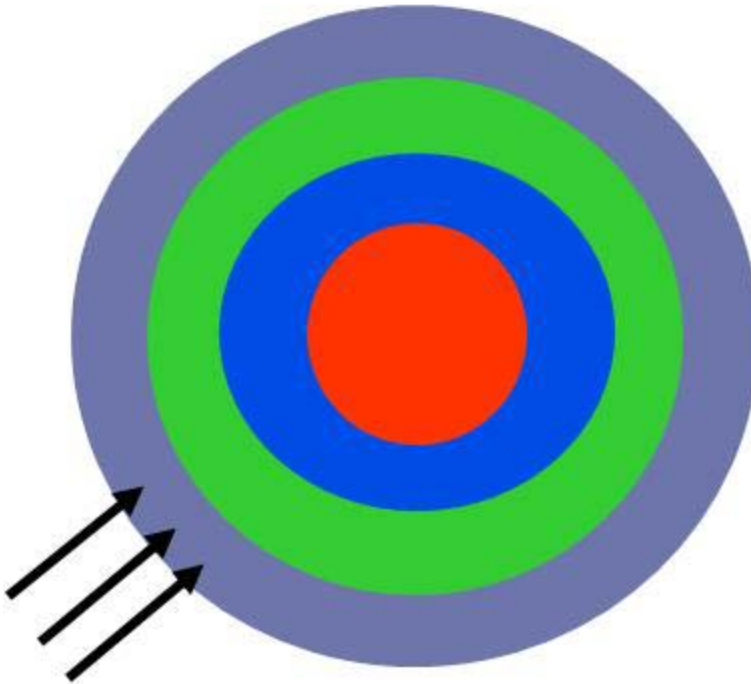
Both Reliable and Valid

Validity of Various Assessment Tools

Validity coefficients quantify the relationship between scores on a selection device and job performance. The higher the coefficient, the better we can predict job performance.

Work Sample Tests	**.54**
Structured Interviews	**.51**
Job Knowledge Tests	**.48**
Assessment Centers	**.37**
Biodata Instruments	**.35**
Reference Checks	**.26**
Training & Experience Point Method	**.11**

Validity Coefficients

Schmidt, F., & Hunter, J. (1998). The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Psychology: Practical and Theoretical Implications of 85 Years of Research Findings. *Psychological Bulletin, 124,* 262-274.

- **Accomplishment Record**

  Applicants provide a written description of a situation to illustrate their proficiency in critical job competencies

  Evaluated by a panel of trained raters against competency-based benchmarks

- **Biographical Data Questionnaire (Biodata)**

  Items about past events and behaviors reflect attributes that predict overall performance for a given occupation

- **Cognitive Ability Test**

  Applicants are asked to solve questions to estimate their potential to use mental processes to solve job-related problems or acquire job knowledge

- **Personality Test**

  Used to generate a profile of traits which can predict job performance or satisfaction with certain aspects of work

- **Rating Schedule (Training & Experience)**

  Standardized system that ranks applicants on their education, experience, training information provided by applicants

- **Situational Judgment Test (SJT)**

  Presents applicants with a description of a work problem or critical situation, and asks them to identify how they would deal with it (can be paper, computerized, or video-based format)

- **Assessment Center**

    Consists of multiple assessments to evaluate small groups of applicants on a variety of job-related competencies

    Designed to resemble actual challenges that will be found in the job

    Applicant performance is observed and evaluated by multiple trained assessors

- **Job Knowledge Test**

    Comprised of specific questions developed to determine how much the candidate knows about particular job tasks or responsibilities

Examples of Assessment Tools

- **Work Sample**

  Requires applicants to perform tasks/ activities that are identical or highly similar to tasks/activities performed on the job

  Scores are assigned by trained raters

- **Writing Assessment**

  Presents applicants with exercises similar to the writing that they would be required to perform on the job

  Rated by teams of two assessors and scored using professionally-developed benchmarks

Good Assessment: How Do I Get There?

Step 1: Identify job-relevant competencies

Step 2: Design the assessment strategy

Step 3: Identify assessment methods

Assessment Considerations

- Technology

- Face Validity/Applicant Reactions

- Subgroup Differences

- Development Costs

- Administration Costs

Step 1: Identify Job-Relevant Competencies

- What is the occupation?

- Do you have job analysis data or other information that identifies the work performed and the job-relevant competencies?

Step 2: Design the Assessment Strategy

The appropriate assessment methods for a given situation will depend on a number of factors, such as:

- Competencies being measured

- Reliability (consistency) of assessment tool

- Validity (accuracy) of assessment tool

Step 2: Design the Assessment Strategy

Also consider the assessment situation, factors such as:

- Number of applicants

- Available resources for development and implementation (e.g., budget, time, and people)

Step 3: Identify Assessment Methods

OPM's Assessment Decision Tool (ADT)

- An interactive system for developing customized assessment strategies

- The ADT presents assessment methods based on:

  - Competencies targeted for assessment

  - Situational factors relevant to the hiring situation (e.g., volume of applicants, level of available resources)

Step 3: Identify Assessment Methods

How does the ADT work?

- A user will identify his or her particular hiring situation, for example:

  - Projected number of applicants

  - Resources available (time, money, staff)

  - Competencies targeted for assessment

- The ADT will present the assessment methods most appropriate for the hiring situation

Assessment Strategy

Sample Table from ADT Report

Competency by Method Matrix

COMPETENCIES	Accomplishment Records	Assessment Centers	Biographical Data (Biodata) Tests	Job Knowledge Tests	Reference Checking
Human Capital Management	Preferred	Potential	Potential	Preferred	Preferred
Oral Communication	Preferred	Preferred	Potential	-	Potential
Partnering	Preferred	-	Preferred	-	Preferred
Strategic Thinking	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	-	Preferred

Competency by Method Matrix (Cont.)

COMPETENCIES	Situational Judgment Tests	Structured Interviews	Training and Experience (T & E) Evaluations	Work Samples and Simulations
Human Capital Management	Potential	Preferred	Potential	Preferred
Oral Communication	-	Preferred	Potential	Preferred
Partnering	Potential	Preferred	Potential	-
Strategic Thinking	Potential	Preferred	Potential	Preferred

View description of | Accomplishment Records ▼ | **Show**

More information on Assessment Methods can be found in OPM's *Assessment Decision Guide* available on the Personnel Assessment and Selection Resource Center located at:

https://apps.opm.gov/adt

Closing Thoughts

- To identify the best assessment methods, it is important to be aware of all the factors that influence the assessment strategy

- Some assessment methods can be developed and administered independently. However, some of the options require a high level of technical expertise to develop and implement