TESTING AND ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT

• Psychological assessment is an important part of the work of an industrial psychologist

• Assessment is used to the benefit of the employee and the employer – for evaluation, placement, training, promotion, developmental activities etc.

• Assessment forms a key area of the training of industrial psychologists

• Industrial psychology students have to become knowledgeable about theoretical and psychometric principles of assessment and know of different types of tests to know how testing and assessment works
EXAMPLE 1

Background
In a small family-owned business, the director appointed his daughter-in-law as the PRO (public relations officer) for the company. His reasons for appointing her were:

- She had told him, based on having completed a short questionnaire in a popular women’s magazine, that she had good interpersonal skills
- She was very enthusiastic about the job
- She was certain that she could learn about those aspects of the job that she was not formally trained in
Outcome – complaints after three months

- She has been short-tempered with important clients and flares up when under stress

- She much prefers working alone at her computer to interacting with clients and staff

- She is hesitant to make contact with potential new clients

- She has had difficulty managing the PR budget – thereby placing undue constraints on work activities
EXAMPLE 2

- The IOP-MINCO group is looking for a highly skilled, motivated and professional person as PA to the CEO. Applicants should be professional and assertive and must be able to work under pressure to meet deadlines and manage the office of the CEO. The duties also include filing and retrieval of documents, responsibility for all appointments and managing the diary of the CEO, secretarial duties, taking minutes at meetings convened by the CEO as well as assisting the CEO to reflect a positive image of the company in dealing with the public.

- Applicants should have appropriate qualifications as well as 3 years’ experience in a relevant field, secretarial skills, including office management, computer literacy, public relations, awareness of human rights issues, writing skills and a pleasant personality are further requirements.
Typical selection process

- Job analysis
- Advertisement
- Application form
- Screening
- Interview
- Assessment
- Reference check
- Decision
IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN JOB ANALYSIS

• What are the requirements of the job?

• What must the job incumbent do?

• What cognitive abilities / skills / personality and interests are required to perform the job efficiently?

• What education or qualifications are required?

• What previous or on-the-job-training is required?
PROCESS

• Distinguish between the following requirements:
• Technical (3 years’ experience, computer literacy, office management, word processing, etc.).
• Cognitive (planning and organizing, managing the office, appointments and the diary of the CEO)
• Personality (tolerance for stress, pleasant personality, able to work under pressure and meet deadlines, work well with others – PR function)
• Other? Unstated requirements? Which candidates cannot be considered?
• The process of identifying and describing the criteria for effective job performance is known as JOB ANALYSIS.
• Firstly, the job must be described. A thorough JOB DESCRIPTION also promotes fair and equitable testing and assessment.
WHAT ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS?

• They are tools used to obtain information about individuals or groups in order to improve decision making

• Objective and standardised measures of a sample of behaviour

• Note the differentiation in Chapter 1 of key terms such as psychological assessments, psychometrics, competency-based assessment, assessment battery, etc.

• The major application in industry is to obtain information for selection, placement and development decisions – see applications relating to the advertisements examples in Study Unit 1.
WHAT ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS?

• Testing is one key element to an evaluative process

• Psychological tests provide important information that is used to match the applicants to the job opportunity (Figure 1)

• However, test and assessment results are a fraction of the information needed to make decisions [see Figure 2]

• Take note of “Important issues” section on Chapter 1
Scenario of assessment
(Figure 1)

Opportunity    Applicant pool

Matching
Integrated decision-making
(Figure 2)
THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT of 1998

• Responsibility for the proper use of tests rests with the individual use

• Justification in terms of legislation:

Psychological testing and other similar assessments of an employee are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used
• has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable
• can be applied fairly to all employees and
• is not biased against any employee or group
THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT of 1998

• Legislation of assessment in terms of industry. Other similar assessments include all other measurements – even the interview. Can only assess if it is based on the inherent requirements of the job and need to have 2 or more measurements for any dimension.

• Fairness – perception, subjective, socio-political – Vague and not definite answer.

• Bias – statistical / technical concept – yes or no answer
Lessons

• For better outcome – you need better input… Example 1 is an example of bad practice while Example 2 is the appropriate process

• There are processes that can ensure fairness and equity when decisions are made for evaluation, placement, training, promotion, developmental activities, etc.

• Testing and assessment results can provide important information for such decisions

• However, compliance with legislation is important