BOOK REVIEW

*The principles and practice of psychological assessment* by Alwyn Moerdyk

Reviewed by Mariana Petersen-Waughtal  
Directorate: Curriculum and Learning Development  
University of South Africa  
Petterm1@unisa.ac.za

The author commences the book with a question: ‘there are numerous books that deal with psychological assessment, so why another?’ This was my initial question as well when I was asked to review this book. And the answer the author gives: ‘most of the existing texts tackle the issue of assessment from a clinical psychology or mental health perspective, while very few approach assessment from an organisational perspective’ explained it all. If we consider that assessment within the organisational context is one of the fastest growing fields in Psychological Assessment, then this book is very topical.

*The principles and practice of psychological assessment* is divided into five sections. Section 1, Basic Theory of Assessment, looks at what assessment entails, processes for gathering data and the development of psychological measures. Section 2, Introduction to Psychometric Theory, covers reliability, validity, and interpretation of assessment results, fairness and how to manage the assessment process. The
third section, Domains of Assessment, explores intelligence, ability, personality and competence assessment. Section 4, Assessment in the Organisational Context, looks at the different kinds of assessment in organisations, career counselling assessment, interviewing and assessment centres (also referred to as the Rolls Royce of assessment). The last section of the book, The Future of Assessment in Organisations, concludes with new developments in assessment that cover some interesting topics such as Assessment via the Internet and Artificial intelligence.

In addition, the textbook also includes navigational tools such as bolded in-text terms explained in a comprehensive glossary (one of the best that I have come across), objectives for each chapter, and additional reading lists and self-assessment in the form of short paragraph and essay type questions at the end of each chapter. A cognitive map that presents the various types of tests and item formats is also included - a very useful tool for first time test users. Finally, Appendix 2 shows how to calculate correlations using Statistica, Excel and SPSS.

I would like to conclude this review with a quote from the foreword (by Adrian Furnham): ‘To find a wonderfully produced and handsome book that covers most, if not all, of the areas of interest to industrial/organisational psychologists and human resources managers under one cover is a real pleasure. When this is done in a way that is theoretically sound and current, while at the same time being practical and hands on, it becomes a very worthwhile addition to the literature on the topic. An added bonus is the fact that the text draws on and even contributes to international best practice while remaining sensitive to the issues facing the dynamics and complexities of the South African workplace.’

**Title:** The principles and practice of psychological assessment  
**Author:** Alwyn Moerdyk.  
**Publisher:** Van Schaik Publishers  
**Date:** 2009  
**ISBN:** 9780627027802  
**Pages:** 294

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Mariana Petersen-Waughtal is an Educational Consultant at the Directorate: Curriculum and Learning Development (at Unisa). Prior to being an Educational Consultant, she lectured for 7 years in Psychology. Her research interest areas focus on determining student needs, students’ learning experiences, experiences of specific aspects of campus life, and emotional intelligence within a group context.