



Synopsis by  
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# Observations on Assessment of Employees

# Varied Metaphors

- The Test Metaphor
  - Assumed to be:
    - “Scientific” by using existing, rational criteria to measure performance
    - Based on “rater” reliability in encoding, retrieving, and evaluating data
    - Using agreed upon “theory” (SOPs) of performance
    - Truthful in that observations truly capture observed phenomenon
  - Uses “means” (elements of work) and “ends” (performance outcomes)

# Metaphors cont'd

- The Political Metaphor
  - Performance review linked to allocation of scarce resources (salary, benefits, etc.)
  - Prone to personal biases and accountability (think controversy)
  - The decision maker (supervisor) has a responsibility to be fair to all parties

# Metaphors cont'd

- The Due Process Metaphor
  - Based on resolving disputes between interested parties
  - This metaphor requires:
    - Adequate Notice – objectives and standards openly published
    - Fair Hearing – supervisor evidence and employee views openly discussed
    - Judgment – based on honest and fair review of findings

# Metaphors cont'd

- Positive Features
  - Due process challenges unreliable data
  - Requires self-examination of internal biases
  - Diminishes arbitrary use of power
- Negative Features
  - Appraisers (supervisors) are not “judges” (i.e. trained neutrality)
  - Dependent on information exchanged (employee testifies, manager response)
  - Can be adversarial (assumes that supervisor and employee have equal knowledge and competence in review process)

# Relevance

- Due process:
  - Supports the need for “decision making fairness”.
  - It requires accuracy (of perceptions and reportage)
  - It challenges the process of creating rating systems
  - It requires balance between employee rights and employer power

# Reference

Folger, R., Konovsky, M.A. and Cropanzano, R. (1992). A due process metaphor for performance appraisal. *Research in Organizational Behavior, Vol. 14, pp 129-177.*