

Thomas Tests for Selection and Training (TST)



PPA & TST – A Vital Partnership

Overview

The TST is a workplace oriented test battery and is one of the very latest and most advanced normative aptitude tests available.

The British Civil Service commissioned the original research for the TST in the mid 1980's which was carried out at Plymouth University, under the auspices of Professor Sidney Irvine, Head of the Human Assessment Laboratory. In 1992, numerous (documented) reliability and validity studies had been completed for the Directorate of various Government Departments. TST is the result of this comprehensive research program and is available now as an important managerial tool.

Purpose

The purpose of the Thomas TST is to provide an indication of the ability of the individual to respond positively to training programs. The score has been described in technical publications as a measure of Fluid Intelligence. The higher the score, the better the individual is likely to be at performing mental tasks accurately and quickly. Results from a TST are given in two forms: a TQ (Training Quotient) score and a percentile rating showing the position of the candidate compared to the general population.

Unique Qualities

The TST maintains all the positive attributes of traditional aptitude and IQ assessments. However, unlike their traditional counterparts, the TST has been devised from the knowledge of what makes mental tasks difficult. This allows for the continuous construction of test items of fixed difficulty. Whereas IQ is an education-based indicator, the TST has been developed specifically for the workplace.

Equal Opportunity Knowledge Levels

The TST has been constructed to incorporate maximum equal opportunity knowledge levels, in that the knowledge requirement for the completion of the battery is no more than that of the normal school level. It is the unique design of the tests that gives them their superior flexibility and allows uncompromised extrapolation to different levels.



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Test Battery Description

FEATURE DETECTION *a perceptual speed measure*

Description - This test assesses how quickly and accurately an individual can check for error/accuracy and then describe the data or make a notation against that data. In addition it is a general literacy assessment.

Areas of relevance - Administrative and clerical tasks, particularly those which demand either speed or accuracy. This test is also applicable to clerical book-keeping, and other clerical functions that have practical accountancy relationships, e.g. invoice clerk.

REASONING TEST *Deductive reasoning measure*

Description - This test assesses the ability of an individual to hold information in his/her memory and solve problems after receiving either verbal or written instructions. A high score would suggest quick learning ability, and fluent verbal reasoning skills. It is a useful measure of negotiation ability.

Areas of relevance - Roles that require the necessity to think on ones feet and transform that thought into reasoned argument or suggestion. Roles that require the incumbent to react quickly to new processes or situations, i.e. sales, marketing people and general management.

NUMBER SPEED AND ACCURACY *Mental agility and general memory assessment*

Description - This is a numeracy test. It is relevant to all roles that emphasize a need for numerical aptitude.

Areas of relevance - Some technical sales, and retail sales roles. Most managerial roles, particularly those that have a clear numeracy requirement, i.e. credit control, book-keeping, accountancy.

WORKING MEMORY *Information retention and deductive logic*

Description - This is a deductive problem solving measure for roles with a high mental work load and where there is a requirement for a substantial attention span and concentration over long periods.

Areas of relevance - Computer applications such as programming and hardware fault recognition, navigation, technical/financial data interpretation.

ORIENTATION *A spatial orientation measure*

Description - This measure examines an individual's ability to deal with mechanical and technical logic problem solving.

Areas of relevance - Any task where mental visualization is required i.e. logical or practical problem solving, plan/diagram interpretation. Any technical or engineering role, including apprentices and/or trainees. The above could include computer hardware technicians.



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Potential Limitations

The following outlines the potential limitations when there are low percentile scores in each of the tests.

Low percentile scores in:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Feature detection | Likely to be slow and inaccurate
Likely to be slow to learn
Could be careless
May be slow to learn discerning tasks
May not spot things that should matter |
| 2. Reasoning | Not a strong problem solver
Poor at holding information/thinking
Slow to draw conclusions
Poor negotiator |
| 3. Number speed and accuracy | Slow to manipulate numbers
May be reluctant to handle numbers
Likely to lack numerical intuition
May have low level mental agility |
| 4. Working memory | Poor retention of information
Poor at sequences
Low level concentration span
Poor deduction ability
Unsuited to high mental workload |
| 5. Orientation | Poor at mental visualization
Poor at interpreting diagrams/shapes
Unsuited to technical and mechanical problem solving |
| Overall low GTQ/low percentile | May need too much time to absorb information
Reticent to progress change |



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