



Validity in Educational and Psychological Assessment

By Paul E Newton, Stuart D Shaw

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Validity is the hallmark of quality for educational and psychological measurement. But what does quality mean in this context? And to what, exactly, does the concept of validity apply? These apparently innocuous questions parachute the unwary inquirer into a minefield of tricky ideas. This book guides you through this minefield, investigating how the concept of validity has evolved from the nineteenth century to the present day.

Communicating complicated concepts straightforwardly, the authors answer questions like:

- What does 'validity' mean?
- What does it mean to 'validate'?
- How many different kinds of validity are there?
- When does validation begin and end?
- Is reliability a part of validity, or distinct from it?

This book will be of interest to anyone with a professional or academic interest in evaluating the quality of educational or psychological assessments, measurements and diagnoses.

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Editorial Review

Review

'Countless books have addressed validity, but this is the first volume to provide a comprehensive treatment of the evolution of validity theory in the last century and a framework for evaluating educational and psychological testing in the 21st century.'

(Wayne J. Camara 2013-07-02)

'In this groundbreaking book, Newton and Shaw show how the "consensus" view of validity—that validity is not a property of tests, but of inferences made on the basis of the evidence they elicit—was at best rather shallow. Notably, the "consensus" view leaves unresolved important tensions between those who see validation as a never-ending process (e.g., Cronbach, Messick) and those who understand the needs of those who produce assessments to be able to say that they have undertaken necessary due diligence to attest to the quality of assessments (e.g., Ebel, Kane). As well as providing an excellent, scholarly review of the history of the idea of validity, Newton and Shaw show how a modified version of Messick's facet model of validity can produce a rigorously grounded, and yet practical, approach to assuring the quality of educational and psychological assessments. Every serious scholar of assessment should read this book.'

(Dylan Wiliam 2013-06-17)

'At last - a scholarly and well-argued book that means validity, the key concept in any assessment, is no longer an essentially American debate. Its scope, logic and clarity will quickly make it the standard international text.'

(Gordon Stobart)

'With concerns over the validity of educational and psychological tests and assessments growing, this book by Paul Newton and Stuart Shaw is a welcome, and much needed, contribution to the measurement literature. Anyone concerned with the technical quality and value propositions surrounding large-scale testing and assessment ought to read this book. Newton and Shaw take the reader through the history of "validity" as researchers across time and across disciplines use the term. In doing so, they advance the debate by offering a unique and novel framework for assessing issues of test validity. Newton and Shaw leave us with some new concepts—theoretical plausibility and practical viability—for judging the evidence in support of a test's validity. This book presents today's and tomorrow's perspectives on validity as the core idea in educational and psychological assessment. It is a must read for those working in the broad field of psychometrics.'

(Howard T. Everson)

[This book] was enlightening in terms of helping me reflect on a range of issues around testing and validity. It provides a good way of thinking about these issues in a way that takes into account a range of views from different stakeholders about why a particular testing policy exists. The framework enables different agendas to be made explicit and tensions between different purposes of a particular policy laid bare. It provides a way of critically evaluating policy and making decisions about implementing testing and assessment policies. I wish I had read this book before writing a sub chapter called 'Why Assess?' - covering the same ground on issues of dyslexia assessment would have been easier using Newton and Shaw's revised framework...I would recommend the book to experienced practitioners who want to reconsider the validity of assessments that they undertake. It is perhaps useful for trainers as a book that enables trainee psychologists to consider the social context in which psychometric measures are used and to consider validity in terms which take them beyond the technical aspects of testing and assessment. It is also a useful book for policy makers to consider, especially around the social issues related to assessment and testing policy implementation. (Dr Garry Squires, programme director for the Doctorate in Educational Psychology, University of Manchester)

About the Author

Paul E. Newton is Professor of Educational Assessment at the Institute of Education, University of London. His research focuses primarily upon issues related to the evaluation of large-scale educational assessment systems, and he is particularly interested in theories of validity for educational and psychological measurement, past and present. He has published on a range of assessment topics, including validity, comparability, assessment purposes, national curriculum test reliability, and the public understanding of measurement inaccuracy.

Having obtained a PhD in developmental psychology, Paul moved into educational assessment and has spent most of his career as a researcher within a range of assessment agencies – including the Associated Examining Board, the National Foundation for Educational Research, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Ofqual and Cambridge Assessment.

Paul is a member of the Editorial Board of the international journal *Assessment in Education: Policy, Principles and Practice* and has served on a variety of national and international committees, including the Executive Committee of the International Association for Educational Assessment. He was a member of the Assessment Reform Group, until its retirement in 2010, and is a Fellow of the Association for Educational Assessment – Europe.

Stuart D. Shaw has worked for Cambridge Assessment since January 2001 where he is particularly interested in demonstrating how Cambridge Assessment seeks to meet the demands of validity in its assessments. Before leading a research team in the area of mainstream international examinations, Stuart worked on a range of Cambridge English products with specific skill responsibilities for assessing writing. He has experience in the areas of researching and managing English second language writing assessment; developing, revising and introducing assessment procedures for new testing scenarios and disseminating good practice to others through mentoring, lecturing, informal advice; and the establishment of criteria for good practice in the type of public examination offered by Cambridge English and Cambridge International Examinations.

Stuart has a wide range of publications in English second language assessment and educational research journals. Stuart is a Fellow of the Association for Educational Assessment in Europe and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors.

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