The COVID-19 pandemic has raised debate about the place of education and testing in a hierarchy of needs. What do tests tell us that other measures do not? Is testing worth the time? Do tests expose or exacerbate inequality? The academic consensus in the open-access AERA/APA/NCME Standards has not seemed to help proponents and critics of tests reach common ground. I propose five heuristics for test validation and demonstrate their usefulness for navigating test policy and test use in a time of crisis: 1) A "four quadrants" framework for purposes of educational tests. 2) The "Five Cs," a mnemonic for the five types of validity evidence in the Standards. 3) "RTQ," a mantra reminding test users to read items. 4) The "3 Ws," a user-first perspective on testing. And 5) the "Two A's Tradeoff" between Assets and Accountability. I illustrate application of these heuristics to the challenge of reporting aggregate-level test scores when populations and testing conditions change as they have over the pandemic (e.g., An, Ho, & Davis, in press; Ho, 2021). I define and discuss these heuristics in the hope that they increase consensus and improve test use in the best and worst of times.

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