

The Department of Educational Psychology's Research Methods, Measurement, & Evaluation (RMME) program and the Department of Statistics at the University of Connecticut present:

Test Validation for a Crisis: Five Practical Heuristics for the Best and Worst of Times

Dr. Andrew Ho, Harvard University

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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.



Dr. Andrew Ho is the Charles William Eliot Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is a psychometrician whose research aims to improve the design, use, and interpretation of test scores in educational policy and practice. Dr. Ho is known for his research documenting the misuse of proficiency-based statistics in state and federal policy analysis. He has also clarified properties of student growth models for both technical and general audiences. His scholarship advocates for designing evaluative metrics to achieve multiple criteria: metrics must be accurate, but also transparent to target audiences and resistant to inflation under high stakes. Dr. Ho is a director of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement

of Teaching and has served on the governing boards for NCME and NAEP. He has chaired the research committee for the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning at Harvard, which governed research on "massive open online courses". He holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and M.S. in Statistics from Stanford University. Before graduate school, he taught middle school creative writing in his hometown of Honolulu, Hawaii, and high school Physics and AP Physics in Ojai, California.

ONLINE INTERDISCIPLINARY SEMINARS ON STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH: Support for this seminar comes from Department of Educational Psychology's Research Methods, Measurement, & Evaluation (RMME) program and the Department of Statistics at the University of Connecticut (UConn), the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute (SAMSI), and the New England Statistical Society (NESS). This seminar aims to promote connection between the statistics and social/behavioral science communities and encourage interdisciplinary research across faculty and students.

For announcements and WebEx live streaming links, please contact Tracy Burke (tracy.burke@uconn.edu). For questions related to the seminars, please feel free to contact the session organizers, Prof. Xiaojing Wang (xiaojing.wang@uconn.edu) and/or Prof. Betsy McCoach (betsy.mccoach@uconn.edu). For information about previous and upcoming speakers, please visit <https://stat.uconn.edu/online-seminars/> or <https://rmme.education.uconn.edu/>.

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