

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING: AN INTRODUCTION

Second Edition

This book is an introductory text to the field of psychological testing primarily suitable for undergraduate students in psychology, education, business, and related fields. This book will also be of interest to graduate students who have not had prior exposure to psychological testing and to professionals such as lawyers who need to consult a useful source. *Psychological Testing* is clearly written, well organized, comprehensive, and replete with illustrative materials. In addition to the basic topics, the text covers in detail topics that are often neglected by other texts such as cross-cultural testing, the issue of faking tests, the impact of computers, and the use of tests to assess positive behaviors such as creativity.

George Domino is the former Director of Clinical Psychology and Professor of Psychology at the University of Arizona. He was also the former director of the Counseling Center and Professor of Psychology at Fordham University.

Marla L. Domino has a BA in Psychology, an MA in Criminal Law, and a PhD in Clinical Psychology specializing in Psychology and Law. She also completed a post-doctoral fellowship in Clinical-Forensic Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Law and Psychiatry Program. She is currently the Chief Psychologist in the South Carolina Department of Mental Health's Forensic Evaluation Service and an assistant professor in the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of South Carolina. She was recently awarded by the South Carolina Department of Mental Health as Outstanding Employee of the Year in Forensics (2004).

SECOND EDITION

Psychological Testing

An Introduction

George Domino

University of Arizona

Marla L. Domino

Department of Mental Health, State of South Carolina

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Preface

My first professional publication in 1963 was as a graduate student (with Harrison Gough) on a validation study of a culture-fair test. Since then, I have taught a course on psychological testing with fair regularity. At the same time, I have steadfastly refused to specialize and have had the opportunity to publish in several different areas, to work in management consulting, to be director of a counseling center and of a clinical psychology program, to establish an undergraduate honors program, and to be involved in a wide variety of projects with students in nursing, rehabilitation, education, social work, and other fields. In all of these activities, I have found psychological testing to be central and to be very challenging and exciting.

In this book, we have tried to convey the excitement associated with psychological testing and to teach basic principles through the use of concrete examples. When specific tests are mentioned, they are mentioned because they are used as an example to teach important basic principles, or in some instances, because they occupy a central/historical position. No attempt has been made to be exhaustive.

Much of what is contained in many testing textbooks is rather esoteric information, of use only to very few readers. For example, most textbooks include several formulas to compute interitem consistency. It has been our experience, however, that 99% of the students who take a course on testing will never have occasion to use such formulas, even if they enter a career in psychology or allied fields. The very few who might need to do such calculations will do them by computer or will know where to find the relevant formulas. It is the principle that is

important, and that is what we have tried to emphasize.

Because of my varied experience in industry, in a counseling center, and other service-oriented settings, and also because as a clinically trained academic psychologist I have done a considerable amount of research, I have tried to cover both sides of the coin – the basic research-oriented issues and the application of tests in service-oriented settings. Thus Parts One and Two, the first eight chapters, serve as an introduction to basic concepts, issues, and approaches. Parts Three and Four, Chapters 9 through 15, have a much more applied focus. Finally, we have attempted to integrate both classical approaches and newer thinking about psychological testing.

The area of psychological testing is fairly well defined. I cannot imagine a textbook that does not discuss such topics as reliability, validity, and norms. Thus, what distinguishes one textbook from another is not so much its content but more a question of balance. For example, most textbooks continue to devote one or more chapters to projective techniques, even though their use and importance has decreased substantially. Projective techniques are important, not only from a historical perspective, but also for what they can teach us about basic issues in testing. In this text, they are discussed and illustrated, but as part of a chapter (see Chapter 15) within the broader context of testing in clinical settings. Most textbooks also have several chapters on intelligence testing, often devoting considerable space to such topics as the heritability of intelligence, theories of trait organization, longitudinal studies of intelligence, and similar topics. Such topics are of course important and fascinating,

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Preface

but do they really belong in a textbook on psychological testing? If they do, then that means that some other topics more directly relevant to testing are omitted or given short shrift. In this textbook, we have chosen to focus on testing and to minimize the theoretical issues associated with intelligence, personality, etc., except where they may be needed to have a better understanding of testing approaches.

It is no surprise that computers have had (and continue to have) a major impact on psychological testing, and so an entire chapter of this book (Chapter 17) is devoted to this topic. There is also a vast body of literature and great student interest on the topic of faking, and here too an entire chapter (Chapter 16) has been devoted to

this topic. Most textbooks begin with a historical chapter. We have chosen to place this chapter last, so the reader can better appreciate the historical background from a more knowledgeable point of view.

Finally, rather than writing a textbook about testing, we have attempted to write a textbook about testing the individual. We believe that most testing applications involve an attempt to use tests as a tool to better understand an individual, whether that person is a client in therapy, a college student seeking career or academic guidance, a business executive wishing to capitalize on strengths and improve on weaknesses, or a volunteer in a scientific experiment.

Acknowledgments

In my career as a psychologist, I have had the excellent fortune to be mentored, directly and indirectly, by three giants in the psychological testing field. The first is Harrison Gough, my mentor in graduate school at Berkeley, who showed me how useful and exciting psychological tests can be when applied to real-life problems. More importantly, Gough has continued to be not only a mentor but also a genuine model to be emulated both as a psychologist and as a human being. Much of my thinking and approach to testing, as well as my major interest in students at all levels, is a direct reflection of Gough's influence.

The second was Anne Anastasi, a treasured colleague at Fordham University, a generous friend, and the best chairperson I have ever worked with. Her textbook has been truly a model of scholarship and concise writing, the product of an extremely keen mind who advanced the field of psychological testing in many ways.

The third person was Lee J. Cronbach of Stanford University. My first undergraduate exposure to testing was through his textbook. In 1975, Cronbach wrote what is now a classic paper titled, "Beyond the two disciplines of scientific psychology" (*American Psychologist*, 1975, vol. 30, pp. 116–127), in which he argued that experimental psychology and the study of individual differences should be integrated. In that paper, Cronbach was kind enough to cite at some length two of my studies on college success as examples of this integration. Subsequently I was able to invite him to give a colloquium at the University of Arizona. My contacts with him were regrettably

brief, but his writings greatly influenced my own thinking.

On a personal note, I thank Valerie, my wife of 40 years, for her love and support, and for being the best companion one could hope for in this voyage we call life. Our three children have been an enormous source of love and pride: Brian, currently a professor of philosophy at Miami University of Ohio; Marisa, a professor of health economics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and Marla, chief forensic psychologist in the Department of Mental Health of South Carolina, and co-author of this edition. Zeno and Paolo, our two grandchildren, are unbelievably smart, handsome, and adorable and make grandparenting a joy. I have also been truly blessed with exceptional friends whose love and caring have enriched my life enormously.

George Domino
Tucson, AZ

An abundance of gratitude to my father for giving me the opportunity to collaborate with one of the greatest psychologists ever known. And an immeasurable amount of love and respect to my heroes – my Dad and Mom. I would also like to thank my mentor and friend, Stan Brodsky, whose professional accomplishments are only surpassed by his warmth, kindness, and generous soul.

Marla Domino
Columbia, SC