

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Social and Technical Issues in Testing:  
Implications for Test Construction and Usage

Buros-Nebraska Series on Measurement and  
Testing

---

1984

## Preface: Social and Technical Issues in Testing: Implications for Test Construction and Usage

Stephen N. Elliott

*University of Nebraska- Lincoln*

James V. Mitchell

*University of Nebraska- Lincoln*

Barbara S. Plake

*University of Nebraska- Lincoln*, [bplake@unl.edu](mailto:bplake@unl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/burostestingissues>



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

---

Elliott, Stephen N.; Mitchell, James V.; and Plake, Barbara S., "Preface: Social and Technical Issues in Testing: Implications for Test Construction and Usage" (1984). *Social and Technical Issues in Testing: Implications for Test Construction and Usage*. 2.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/burostestingissues/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Buros-Nebraska Series on Measurement and Testing at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Social and Technical Issues in Testing: Implications for Test Construction and Usage by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

## Preface

Tests are constructed and used to facilitate assessment and understanding of human beings in all their multifaceted complexity. Hence, testing by its very nature is both a scientific and a social endeavor.

The interplay between testing and society has resulted in both praise and criticism from concerned citizens, psychologists, educators, and numerous other professional and consumer groups. For over 40 years, Oscar K. Buros, as Director of The Institute of Mental Measurements and Editor of the *Mental Measurements Yearbooks*, contributed immensely to this interplay between testing practices and societal issues. On March 19, 1978, Oscar Buros died. Luella Buros, his wife and lifelong helpmate, completed the work on *The Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook* with the support of the Institute's devoted staff. She also took steps to relocate the Institute to ensure the continuation of the Institute's scholarly work and services for test consumers. The new Buros Institute of Mental Measurements is now at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and is under grant from The University of Nebraska Foundation.

An important objective of the new Buros Institute is to conduct an extended outreach effort that will help communicate more effectively with test users about contemporary issues in testing. Thus, it was the combination of recent social issues focusing on testing and our desire to fulfill more vigorously the mission of the Buros Institute that motivated the development of an annual scholarly symposium and this series on measurement and testing.

We intend each symposium and volume in this series to present state-of-the-art knowledge that will contribute to the *improvement of test construction and test usage*. Such a schema will incorporate topics across a broad spectrum such as theoretical models of human behavior, test standardization procedures, social and legal factors in testing, administration of testing programs, and test-based decision making. Thus, the series will be focused thematically and yet be flexible enough to integrate current and future measurement and testing issues into its schema.

The success of our first Buros—Nebraska symposium and this volume is the result of the efforts of many individuals. We thank Luella Buros for having faith in us to carry on and extend a tradition that has become so important to the measurement field and to test users. Barbara Plake, as editor of the first volume in the series, made conceptual and editorial contributions that were of critical importance to its success. Finally, we want to thank Larry Erlbaum for his support, encouragement, and commitment to the project and to its timely completion.

*Series Editors*  
Stephen N. Elliott  
James V. Mitchell, Jr.  
Lincoln, Nebraska

## Volume Acknowledgments

The quality of this volume was dramatically influenced by the contribution and efforts of several people. Foremost in dedication and assistance were the members of the staff of the Buros Institute of Mental Measurements. The series editors, Stephen N. Elliott and James V. Mitchell, Jr., were prime movers in maintaining product effort and activity.

The presenters at the Buros–Nebraska Symposium on Measurement and Testing provided what might be considered the official kickoff for the volume. Drs. Ellis B. Page, Donald N. Bersoff, Lyle F. Schoenfeldt, Robert J. Sternberg, and James V. Mitchell, Jr., helped to create an intellectually stimulating atmosphere through their presentations that carried momentum into their chapters of the volume. Those chapters are joined by other chapters by Drs. Anne Anastasi, Robert L. Ebel, and Samuel Messick. All the volume authors are sincerely thanked for their cooperation, persistence, and patience during the editing and revision process. I am especially thankful to have a chapter in the volume by Dr. Robert L. Ebel. Dr. Ebel, who served the measurement community with his dedication, creativity, and intellectual integrity, passed away in November, 1982.

A number of dedicated professionals gave their time and talents to review and to provide comment on the chapters of the book. Drs. Gary Melton, Royce R. Ronning, Harry W. Hennessey, Thomas Mehle, Leonard S. Feldt, and Gerald J. Melican are gratefully acknowledged for their comments on the chapters. In addition, Claire S. Parker, Steven S. Benton, and Elizabeth P. Smith provided essential editorial assistance.

Lawrence Erlbaum and the staff of Lawrence Erlbaum Associates are sincerely thanked for their support, assistance, and guidance. Linda Weber of the Buros Institute of Mental Measurements was extremely helpful by providing a variety of essential secretarial support.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Donald H. Plake, and my two daughters, Hilary and Emily, for their support and patience over the long months of intense work that was necessary to produce this volume.

Barbara S. Plake  
*Volume Editor*  
Lincoln, Nebraska

## Dedication

At the combined annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education in April of 1980, Luella Buros, widow of Oscar Buros, was presented with a plaque honoring the achievements of her husband. The inscription read as follows:

### “TRIBUTE”

“Whereas Oscar K. Buros established the series of Mental Measurements Yearbooks, and continued publishing these brilliantly over the last 40 years of his life; and

“Whereas these yearbooks have achieved recognition as classic contributions to the theory and practice of educational and psychological measurement, and of great benefit to our various professions—

“Therefore, we the undersigned officers of the American Educational Research Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education do hereby pay public tribute to the memory of Professor Buros, and to the high principles of quality and integrity which he represented in his work and in his life.”

It was most fitting that Luella Buros received this tribute on behalf of her husband, because she had helped him in many ways from the very beginning of the series, particularly with matters pertaining to business and design. Oscar Buros had dedicated the *Third* and *Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbooks* to his wife, and when she completed *The Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook* after his death, she dedicated it “To the memory of my beloved husband: Oscar Krisen Buros.” The new Buros Institute of Mental Measurements will be dedicating both *Tests in Print III* and *The Ninth Mental Measurements Yearbook* to Oscar Buros. For the first book in this symposium series, however, we decided to take a different path and dedicate the volume to a remarkable couple who had a loving, happy, and productive relationship over so many years. We therefore dedicate this volume to:

*Oscar and Luella Buros*

