

- SUSIE:** Dr. Metric, what is test reliability, and why is it important?
- DR. METRIC:** I am glad you asked me this, Susie. Test reliability is one of the most important concepts in assessment. Test reliability refers to the consistency or stability of test scores.
- SUSIE:** What do you mean by consistency or stability?
- DR. METRIC:** Well, Susie, when we speak of consistency or stability of test scores, we are talking about the ability of an assessment to produce the same test score on two different occasions.
- SUSIE:** So Dr. Metric, are you saying that you want a test to produce the same test score if a person takes the test several times?
- DR. METRIC:** Yes, Susie. To the extent that the test produces the same score at two or more times, the test is reliable. We call this test reliability.
- SUSIE:** What if there are two or more different forms or versions of the test?
- DR. METRIC:** Yes, Susie. I see where you are going. It is also important that an assessment produce the same score regardless of which form of the test is taken. This is called parallel forms reliability.
- SUSIE:** So, Dr. Metric, if a test produces the same score when taken at different times and produces the same score for each version of the test, is it reliable?
- DR. METRIC:** Yes, Susie. But tests vary in their level of reliability. They can be seen as ranging from very reliable to not very reliable.
- SUSIE:** How do we know how reliable a test is, Dr. Metric?
- DR. METRIC:** This is a very good question, Susie. There are several statistical tests to find out the test reliability or the parallel forms reliability. There are even ways to estimate the reliability when you are not able to administer the test more than once or are unable to administer more than one form of the test.
- SUSIE:** Wow, Dr. Metric. That sounds hard.
- DR. METRIC:** Well, Susie, there is a bit of math involved, but we can see that it is not that hard in a later lesson. For now, you should know that most reliability indexes range from zero to one. The

higher the number the more reliable the test is. Usually, you want a test to have a reliability of 0.80 or above. When important decisions are made on the basis of the test, we like to see reliability closer to 0.90.

SUSIE:

Thanks, Dr. Metric. You have been very helpful in assisting me in understanding the concept of test reliability.