



CAME Voice/Voix

## **Geoff Norman on “Health Measurement Scales: A Practical Guide to their Development and Use”**

The fifth edition of this book has now been published. A reasonable question might be, “Why buy yet another edition? Has measurement really changed all that much?” Well, one perspective is to look back at the history of the book. It began when I was doing a sabbatical in Cambridge, England in 1986. Streiner and I had been teaching a course on measurement for a few years and were frustrated that there really was no adequate textbook. Classics like Anastasi and Cronbach seemed to be directed more at users of measurement scales, not developers. Yet in health sciences we all seem to be making our own scale to measure this that or the other thing.

We had just bashed off the first edition of “PDQ Statistics”, so decided to have a go at it. In due course I actually walked a few chapters over to Cambridge University Press, and met with a woman named Faith Somebody, who gave me some invaluable advice that began with “There’s too many references”. She explained that you write books either to impress your colleagues or to teach your students, not both. But in the end, she turned it down; the editorial staff didn't feel it had much potential sales. (Please forgive me, I was smirking so bad I had to stop typing).

Obviously she was wrong on both counts. And the evidence is there – 50,000 sales (so people do learn from it) and 10,000 citations (yes you read it right. More than anything else I’ve done by a mile).

So why buy a new one? First of all, it just keeps getting bigger and bigger. More and more stuff. In particular, in this edition there are at least two big changes. First, we have a chapter devoted to ethics. Second, we’ve completely redone the chapter on Generalizability theory to bring it in line with Brennan’s formulation, and also to highlight the use of the G String software to do the work for you. But no offense if you decide to stay with the one you have.

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Streiner DL, Norman GR Health Measurement Scales: A Practical Guide to their Development and Use.. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). Oxford University Press, 2014.