Computer Based Testing (CBT) in the Service of Test Accommodations

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Abstract

In the last two decades there has been an increase in the number of university applicants who are diagnosed as learning disabled (LD) and for whom test accommodations on university entrance exams are provided. The most frequent recommendation in the diagnostic reports of LD applicants is to extend the time limits of their tests. In the context of high-stakes testing, this kind of accommodation raises the question of equity: is it fair to extend the time limit of a speeded test to a particular group of examinees? Does it really give the LD a fair chance? And if so, by how much should the time limit be extended? Administering a computer-based version of the test to the LD can largely circumvent these issues.

University applicants in Israel were required, until recently, to submit scores on the Psychometric Entrance Test (PET) to universities. This paper discusses the issues associated with test accommodations in general and with PET accommodations in particular. It then describes the process of constructing a Computerized Adaptive Test (CAT) which is equivalent to the paper and pencil version of the PET, and presents data pertaining to the equivalence of the CAT and paper & pencil versions of the test.