

8.1 | Create: Traditional Assessment Guidelines

Examples of Traditional Assessments: Multiple choice, true/false statements, fill in the blank, and matching tests.

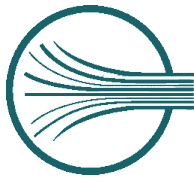
Multiple Choice Tests

Smith and others (2001, pp. 60-61) recommend designing multiple-choice assessment items with the following guidelines in mind. Keep these elements in mind to design a multiple-choice assessment that will accurately test the students' recognition of the lesson material.

1. Make sure each item measures something worthwhile – something for which you have identified an instructional objective.
2. Avoid ambiguity – write test items so that if the learner knows the material, the wrong answers are clearly wrong and right answers are clearly correct.
3. Put all of the information required to answer the item in the question stem, so that the learner knows the full extent of the problem before he/she gets to the possible responses.
4. Use simple, concise language, with a readability level suitable to the audience (note that the average reading level for adult audiences is now 6th grade or lower).
5. Do not repeat words at the beginning of each response option.
6. Avoid confusing the learner by using double negatives and complicated sentence structures.
7. Carefully consider your use of ***always, never, all of the above, none of the above***, etc. With some combinations, you run the risk of measuring the students' ability to work their way through your question rather than testing their knowledge of the content.
8. For fill-in-the-blank assessment items, place the blanks or omissions at the end of the question stem rather than in the middle or at the beginning.
9. Vary the level of thinking involved in your test items (use all the Bloom's thinking levels that are appropriate to the test content: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create).
10. Make sure students have enough time to complete the assessment. Try it out on a colleague or previous student to check the timing.
11. Write the test and then wait a few days and go back over it, imagining that you are a student. This enables you to catch typos, ambiguities, unfair items, etc.

Reference:

Smith, J.K., Smith, L.F., & De Lisi, R. (2001). *Natural classroom assessment: Designing seamless instruction and assessment*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.



Countering Students' Test-Wise Strategies to Promote Learning

The following "test-wise" strategies are often used by students to guess the answers on a multiple-choice test. Take note of the methods recommended by Dewey (n.d.) for defeating those strategies.

Student's Strategy: Pick the longest answer.

Counter-strategy: If you are using five alternative answers for each question, make sure the longest answer is right about a fifth of the time.

Student's Strategy: Pick the B alternative.

Counter-strategy: Make sure each answer is used the same number of times, in random order.

Student's Strategy: Never pick an answer which uses the word "always" or "never" in it.

Counter-strategy: Make sure such answers are correct about a fifth of the time.

Student's Strategy: If there are two answers which express opposites, pick one or the other and ignore other alternatives.

Counter-strategy: Sometimes offer choices of opposites when neither is correct.

Student's Strategy: If in doubt, guess.

Counter-strategy: Minimize the impact of this strategy by using five alternatives instead of three or four.

Student's Strategy: Pick the scientific-sounding answer.

Counter-strategy: Use scientific-sounding jargon in wrong answers.

Student's Strategy: Do not pick a simple or obvious answer.

Counter-strategy: Sometimes make the simple, obvious answer the correct one.

Student's Strategy: Look for words which you remember as related to the topic.

Counter-strategy: When drawing up distracters (wrong answers) use terminology from the same area of the text as the right answer, but in distracters use those words incorrectly so the wrong answers are definitely wrong.

Reference:

Dewey, R.A. (n.d.) *Writing multiple choice items which require comprehension*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.psywww.com/selfquiz/aboutq.htm>