

Comments on This Test

I. *Formatting* is an important aspect of test construction. Test items:

- should be grouped by type of question (multiple –choice, completion, etc.) and subject matter
- should have clear instructions explaining how the instructor wants the students to indicate their answers (e.g., circle the letter of the correct answer; write the letter of the correct answer on the answer sheet provided; circle “T” if the statement is completely true, “F” if any part of it is false)
- should be numbered
- may have their point value indicated in parentheses
- should be spaced to facilitate readability and allow enough room to write answers, unless a separate answer sheet or “blue book” is used for recording answers
- should be constructed consistently
- should be arranged in order from easier to more difficult format

II. A number of the test items themselves are in need of improvement.

A. What is the best way to assess the following?

how to change a tire

ability to make tortillas

ability to recognize paintings done by a particular artist

ability to recall the names and symbols of the elements

comprehension of educational theories

solving mathematical problems

ability to research information on a topic

ability to perform statistical procedures

This question is a good one because it requires students to demonstrate not only factual knowledge, but also ability to apply it. However, the question could benefit from improved formatting so that the answers are easily recognized as belonging to their respective questions

B. Criterion, conditions, and content are three elements in a good educational objective (true or false):

True or false. AQIP is an organization concerned with quality in higher education.

These two statements should be separated by space.

The first question would benefit from clearer, more precise wording to avoid alternative interpretations. Both test items would be improved with instructions on recording the answer, and a requirement to correct any part of the statement that is incorrect. Otherwise, students have a 50% chance of answering correctly without

having any knowledge of the topic. An alternative would be to eliminate true-false questions altogether and test students' knowledge using a differently formatted test item.

C. Define the following terms: formative assessment, summative assessment, and alternative assessment.

Listing the three terms with space between them would be a clearer way to format this item; asking for an original example would provide evidence of understanding of the concepts.

D. Things to avoid in assessing students include:

- a) failing to share your objectives
- b) not providing criteria or other guidance re the way performance will be assessed
- c) talking out loud while the students are taking a test
- d) arbitrarily limiting the time available to complete an exam
- e) a & c
- f) a & b
- g) all of the above
- h) none of the above

This item, which addresses important content, could be simplified by reducing the number of choices or instructing students to circle the letter(s) in front of all those that apply, thus eliminating the need for "e", "f", and "g". Also teachers should be careful to make sure students are familiar with the meaning of terms and abbreviated word forms, such as "re" for regarding.

E. A rubric is a tool that is most useful for assessing quantitative achievement.

This item would be improved with instructions on recording the answer, and a requirement to correct any part of the statement that is incorrect. Otherwise students have a 50% chance of answering correctly without having any knowledge of the topic. An alternative would be to eliminate true-false questions altogether and test students' knowledge using a differently formatted test item.

F. The gap between the existing condition and ideal condition:

- a) is known as the need

- b) is a factor in developing instruction, but not a primary one
- c) is the basis for developing goals and objectives
- d) a & c
- e) all of the above
- e) none of the above

This test item could be improved by a few words of clarification in the statement and by eliminating the "none of the above" category. Also, proofread, to be sure there are no errors in numbering or wording.

G. Assessment is related to _____.

This item lacks instructions and the statement is much too general, inviting all sorts of interpretations that could be considered correct. Eliminate this item.

H. Feedback to students should be specific, realistic, judgmental, and provided as quickly as possible after the student's performance. (True or false)

This test item would be improved with instructions on recording the answer, and a requirement to correct any part of the statement that is incorrect. Otherwise, students have a 50% chance of answering correctly without having any knowledge of the topic. An alternative would be to eliminate true-false questions altogether and test students' knowledge using a differently formatted test item. Also, this item should be separated by space from the previous item.

I. What does AQIP stand for?

This question would be more meaningful if students were asked to provide additional information regarding AQIP.

J. When creating a test you should:

- a) Evaluate students only on material that you have covered or for which you hold them responsible.
- b) Make up different forms for each section you are teaching so that the possibility of "sharing information" is minimized.
- c) Make certain that the exam can be taken within the time period of the normal class. Note that the time period for Final Exams is longer. Allow students the full designated time to complete the exam.
- d) All of the above
- e) None of the above

Since it is almost certain that at least one of the answers to this question is presented, "e" is not a good choice to include; if items are being formatted with five choices, "e" could be "a & b", for example. Also, changing the wording somewhat (but not the meaning) from the way the material was originally presented, tests students' understanding as opposed to ability to simply memorize information word-for-word.

K. T F : Objectives form the basis for assessment. T F : Feedback is an important aspect of assessment and continuous improvement.

These two statements need to be separated by space. Also, these test items would be improved with instructions on recording the answer, and a requirement to correct any part of the statement that is incorrect. Otherwise, students have a 50% chance of answering correctly without having any knowledge of the topic. A better alternative would be to eliminate these true-false questions altogether and test students' knowledge using a differently formatted test item. Also, this item should be separated by space from the previous item.

L. What are some ways to improve this test?

This is a good item to place at the end of the test because, like many essay questions, it requires more thought and higher-level thinking skills to answer well. In addition, in this particular case, the placement is a logical one because the student will (presumably) have seen all the items on the test already. Some guidance in the instructions, regarding the number of suggestions for improvement that the instructor is looking for, would be helpful here.