Testing and Grading

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September 18, 2018
5:00 – 7:00 PM

CSE E121
Pre-Self Check

What made you show up for this workshop on testing and grading? Select all that apply.

a. I have never had a formal training on testing and grading
b. This training is required by my department and program area
c. As a student, I had issues with my instructors and their testing and grading policies
d. Some students in my classes have issues with my testing and grading policies
e. I need to improve my effectiveness as an instructor in light of new beliefs.
Agenda

• Surface prior ideas and goal setting
• Assessment, testing, and grading
• Testing in support of learning: Knowledge, skills, processes, and dispositions/attitudes
• Test construction:
  • Multiple choice items and Essays
• Grading
Testing and Grading

Activity 1a:
• Write one learning goal/objective for this 2-hour session
(Learning goal - A statement that describes what you are expecting to know and be able to do with this knowledge)

Activity 1b: Surfacing Previous knowledge
• What is assessment?
• What is the relationship between a test and assessment?
Assessment-Test Relationship

**Assessment:**
- General term that includes the full range of procedures used to gain information about student learning
- Answers the question: How well does the individual perform?

**Test:**
- An instrument or systematic procedure - measures a sample of behavior by posing a set of questions in a uniform manner.
- How well does the individual perform? Either in comparison with others or in a comparison with a domain of performance tasks?
Relationship Between Instructional Process and Assessment

**Instructional process** – facilitates students’ learning

- Instructional goals
- Pre-requisite knowledge
- Providing relevant and appropriate instruction
- Assessing the learning outcomes
- Using the results

**Assessment**

- Promotes students’ learning
- Provides information to improve instruction
- Indicator of student learning – how well they have learned the course material
From Instructional Process to Testing

Instructional Objectives

Instructional Content Knowledge

Test Objectives

Test Items
Good Tests

• Relevant - test items should match the test objective it is designed to measure in order to be judged relevant.

• Balance - the distribution of items should match the emphasis of the teaching

• Reliable - consistency of measurement

• Efficiency - number of items required/necessary to adequately test the objectives of the test

• Objectivity - all scorers must agree on the correct responses

• Difficulty - should challenge but not defeat

• Fairness - all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievements.

• Absence of bias
Testing: Types of Items

1. **Objective tasks** – single right or best answer determined in advance
   - Students supply answer
     - Short answer; completion
   - Students choose/select answer from given number of alternatives:
     - Matching
     - True/false
     - Multiple choice

2. **Performance tasks** – essays, construct model, perform for an audience - speech
RELATION OF ITEM TYPE TO TEST OBJECTIVES

Some questions to consider:

1. Why are you giving this test?
2. What do you want to accomplish by giving this test?
3. In a perfect world, without any constraints how would you go about selecting the test items?
## Relation of Item Type to Test Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Essay or Oral</th>
<th>Short Answer</th>
<th>Multiple Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to organize</td>
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<td>Discourages bluffing</td>
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<td>Potential diagnostic value</td>
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<td>Easily and reliably scored</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takes little time to prepare</td>
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<td>Measures higher mental processes</td>
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<td>Broad content sampling</td>
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<td>Measures application</td>
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Steps in Writing Examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>COURSE CONTENT (Objectives)</th>
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<th>50 Items</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Bloom’s Taxonomy

New Version

Old Version
Reflection

What cognitive levels do you aim for in your teaching?

How should you consider these cognitive levels in your testing?
## Steps in Writing Examinations

### DEVELOPING A TEST BLUEPRINT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COGNITIVE LEVEL</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COURSE CONTENT (Objectives)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>18% (N=9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene</td>
<td>30% (N=15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>22% (N=11)</td>
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<table>
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</table>

Steps in Writing Examinations
## Steps in Writing Examinations

### Developing a Test Blueprint

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18% (N=9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30% (N=15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22% (N=11)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 2

Complete column 1 by writing 3 concepts or objectives from your discipline
### Steps in Writing Test Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IF YOU WANT TO MEASURE:</th>
<th>USE THESE KEY WORDS IN THE EXERCISE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remember</td>
<td>Define label when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe list who select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify, match where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>Defend explain infer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss generalize how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distinguish, give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example, why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>Apply modify show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate predict solve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discover, relate, how</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Compare break Down Illustration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contrast distinguish separate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Categorize estimate order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Appraise conclude justify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argue criticize interpret discriminate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choose decide support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create</td>
<td>Combine integrate summarize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compile organize</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop create</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Guide for Preparing Tests with Different Item Formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM FORMAT</th>
<th>IDEAL AVERAGE DIFFICULTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion and short answer</td>
<td>50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-response multiple choice</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-response multiple choice</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-response multiple choice</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True-false</td>
<td>85*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Expect a student of average ability to answer about one-half of the items correctly. (Lord, 1952). Difficulty is defined as the percent correct.
Test Item Construction

Instructional objectives → test objectives → test blue print (table of specifications) → mechanics of Item construction
Fairness

ETS Guidelines for Fairness Review of Assessments

• Fairness – not just an exercise in political correctness
• Fairness is essential for valid measurement, and validity is essential for fair measurement.
• A fair test is one that is valid for different test takers within the intended population of test takers for the test.
Fairness Guideline

Attending to potential fairness issues will help to control construct-irrelevant variance and therefore increase validity.

1. Avoid cognitive sources (i.e., knowledge not required to answer question correctly) of construct-irrelevant variance.

2. Avoid potentially sensitive sources (e.g., controversial, emotional, etc.) of construct-irrelevant variance.

3. Avoid physical sources (i.e., those that interfere with the ability to see, hear, or otherwise sense the questions) of construct-irrelevant variance.
Fairness Guideline For All...

consider the mechanics of the test but also the socio-educational environments in which the learning is occurring

• Age
• Disability
• Ethnicity
• Gender
• National or regional origin
• Native language
• Race
• Religion
• Sexual orientation
• Socioeconomic status
Multiple Choice Items

• Statement form
• 3-5 responses offered to complete the statement, only one is correct

Mary made a table in which she compared the cells of both plants and animals. Which of the following cell structures would be in both of Mary’s columns? **Stem**

A. Chloroplast
B. Cellulose cell wall
C. Mitochondria <----- **Key**
D. Centriole
Item Writing

Guidelines for Multiple-choice questions

• Purpose
• Central idea
• Language
• Knowledge required outside the discipline
• Answer options
• Level of difficulty
Purpose

• Keep purpose of question clearly in mind.
• If intent is to assess factual or procedural knowledge, do not “dress it up” to appear otherwise.
• If intent to assess critical thinking, be sure that the question cannot be answered on the basis of factual or procedural knowledge alone.
Central Idea

• Structure each MC question around one central idea
• Central idea should be clearly evident in question
• All answer options should relate to the question in the same way. Avoid a “potpourri” of answer options.
• Whenever possible, questions should be closed. E.g., What is the capital of Minnesota?
Language

• Language used in question should be simple, direct, and free of ambiguity.
• Question should not assess reading ability or vocabulary, if that is not its purpose.
• To the extent possible, overall reading level should be monitored.
• Use of vocabulary words is fine when they are part of the content being assessed.
• Avoid use of words such as “except” or “not” or “least.”
I. Reducing Errors Due to Reading Difficulty or Reading Speed

- **Avoid writing items with an unnecessarily difficult vocabulary.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Poor</strong></th>
<th>The promiscuous use of sprays, oils, and antiseptics in the nose during acute colds is a pernicious practice because it may have a deleterious effect on:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|          | A. the sinuses.  
|          | B. red blood cells.  
|          | C. white blood cells. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Better</strong></th>
<th>Frequent use of sprays, oils, and antiseptics in the nose during acute colds may result in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|            | A. spreading the infection to the sinuses.  
|            | B. damage to the olfactory nerve.  
|            | C. Destruction of white blood cells. |

- **Avoid repeating words.**

| **Poor** | Entomology is  
|----------|------------------------------------------------------|
|          | A. the study of bird.  
|          | B. the study of fish.  
|          | C. the study of insects. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Better</strong></th>
<th>Entomology is the study of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|            | A. birds  
|            | B. fish  
|            | C. insects |
### I. Reducing Errors Due to Reading Difficulty or Reading Speed

#### Eliminate unnecessary words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| There were many different theories about the origin of mankind. The man associated with the theory of evolution was:  
   A. Darwin  
   B. Galileo  
   C. Freud | The man associated with the theory of evolution was  
   A. Darwin  
   B. Galileo  
   C. Freud |

#### State the problem in the stem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Abraham Lincoln  
   A. chopped down the cherry Tree.  
   B. signed the Declaration of Independence.  
   C. wrote the Emancipation Proclamation | The president who wrote the Emancipation Proclamation was:  
   A. George Washington.  
   B. Thomas Jefferson.  
   C. Abraham Lincoln. |
### I. Reducing Errors Due to Reading Difficulty or Reading Speed

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#### Place blanks near the end of the sentence.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ______________ is a long haired wild ox found in Tibet.</td>
<td>The long haired wild ox found in Tibet is called a ______________.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowledge Outside the Discipline

• Should not contribute to a student’s ability to answer a question or to the attractiveness of any of the answer options in a MC question

• Is a major source of construct-irrelevant variance (i.e., you’re not assessing what you intend to assess) for all students, and it therefore impacts test validity
Answer Options

• Be careful not to unintentionally use an important word from the question only in the correct answer.

• Answer options should not overlap or be subsets of each other.

• Answer options should be similar in format and reasonably comparable in length.

• Avoid tricky distinctions between answer options.

• Minimize use of “All of the above” and “None of the above.”
II. Avoiding Giving Clues in the Question

- **Watch for grammatical clues.**

  **Poor**  
  A long, winding, gravel crest of glacial origin is a  
  A. kame  
  B. ridge  
  C. Esker  

  **Better**  
  A long, winding, gravel crest of glacial origin is a/an  
  A. kame  
  B. ridge  
  C. Esker

- **Avoid using clues in the stem that give away the correct response.**

  **Poor**  
  When linking two clauses, one main and one subordinate, one should use a  
  A. coordinate conjunction such as and or so  
  B. subordinate conjunction such as because or although.  
  C. preposition such as to or from.  
  D. Semicolon

  **Better**  
  When linking two clauses, one main and one dependent, one should use a  
  A. coordinate conjunction such as and or so  
  B. subordinate conjunction such as because or although.  
  C. preposition such as to or from.  
  D. Semicolon
Use plausible options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Who discovered the North Pole?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Christopher Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Ferdinand Magellan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Roberto Peary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Marco Polo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Who discovered the North Pole?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Roald Amundsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Richard Byrd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Roberto Peary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Robert Scott</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avoid the use of all the above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Which of the following factors must be considered in computing basal energy requirements?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. All of the above</td>
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<th>Which of the following factors must be considered in computing basal energy requirements?</th>
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<td></td>
<td>A. Weight only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Age only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Height and weight only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Age, height, and weight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. Avoiding Ambiguity in the Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Include only one correct or best answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Poor** | A color-blind boy inherits the trait from a  
| | A. male parent.  
| | B. female parent.  
| | C. maternal grandparent.  
| | D. paternal grandparent.  
| **Better** | A color-blind boy most probably inherits the trait from his  
| | A. father  
| | B. mother  
| | C. paternal grandparent.  
| | D. paternal grandmother.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write options that have parallel grammatical construction.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Poor** | An electric transformer can be used  
| | A. for storing up electricity.  
| | B. to increase the voltage of alternating current.  
| | C. it converts electrical energy into mechanical energy.  
| | D. alternating current is changed to direct current.  
| **Better** | An electric transformer can be used to  
| | A. store up electricity.  
| | B. increase the voltage of alternating current.  
| | C. Convert electrical energy into mechanical energy.  
| | D. change alternating current to direct.  

### III. Avoiding Ambiguity in the Question

- **Place blanks near the end of the sentence.**
  - **Poor**  The _____ is a long haired wild ox found in Tibet.
  - **Better** The long haired wild ox found in Tibet is called a _______.

- **Avoid negatives in the stem.**
  - **Poor** Which one of the following is not a safe driving practice on icy roads.
    A. Accelerating slowly.
    B. Jamming on the brakes.
    C. Holding the wheel firmly.
    D. Slowing down gradually.
  - **Better** All of the following are safe driving practices on icy roads EXCEPT.
    A. accelerating slowly.
    B. jamming on the brakes.
    C. holding the wheel firmly.
    D. slowing down gradually.
Level of Difficulty

• Level of difficulty should be appropriate for students who will complete the assessment.

• A range of difficulty should be represented among the collection of questions in the assessment.

• For MC questions, difficulty can often depend on the answer options.

• When finer distinctions are required among answer options, the question will be more difficult.
Increasing the Cognitive Level of Items

• Example: Combine two elements in the stem and in the responses.

How has the rate of unemployment in the United States been affected by the size of the American foreign trade deficit since 1980?

A. It has decreased because American business now recognizes the economic value of hiring American labor.

B. It has decreased because tariffs on foreign goods have raised the price of these products to an extent where American goods are less expensive.

C. It has increased because cheap foreign labor makes foreign goods less expensive.

D. It has remained the same because the trade deficit has inspired a “buy American-made products” that has offset the initial decline in employment.
Increasing the Cognitive Level of Items

• **Example: Use scenarios or problem situations.**

A bag containing a solution “A” was dropped into a beaker of water. After five minutes it was found that water was moving into the bag containing solution “A”.

1. The movement of water into the bag is an example of the process called
   a. Diffusion.
   b. Osmosis.
   c. Active support.

2. Water will continue to move into the bag until the number of molecules of
   a. Solution A” is equal on both sides of the bag.
   b. Solution “A” is greater outside the bag than inside the bag.
   c. Water is greater inside the bag than outside the bag.
Activity 3

1. In row 3, write 3 cognitive levels from Bloom’s Taxonomy that would be applicable to your concept selections

2. Write two test items of different cognitive levels applicable to the content identified

3. Share with a partner and discuss why the items are applicable to the areas chosen (content & Cognitive level)
Writing and Scoring Essay Questions

Frame questions so that the task is clearly defined.

Specify the value and time limit for each question.

Write a trial response to each essay question.

Prepare a tentative scoring key in advance.
Writing and Scoring Essay Questions

Alert students if penalties for spelling or grammar are given.

Evaluate essays anonymously by mixing papers and masking names.

Score all answers to one question before scoring the next question.

Scan longer essays to presort into stacks of high, medium and low quality and then reread to assign marks.

Score all answers to one question before scoring the next question.
1. What are the components of a course grade?

2. Should norm referenced or criterion referenced grading be used?

3. Should grades be curved and on what basis?

4. Are grading policies clearly stated in the course syllabus?

5. Are grading criteria flexible?

6. What is the policy for make up examinations, late papers, dropping a grade?

7. Should you penalize students for guessing on an examination?

8. How should course grades be calculated?
Administering the Test

1. Preparing alternate forms and use of form codes
2. Numbering tests
3. Seating students
4. Passing out materials
5. Collecting and accounting for materials
6. Handling Cheating
7. Additional suggestions
Looking Back...Looking Forward

• Review your objectives that you wrote at the start of the session. To what extent were your objectives achieved? Share your thoughts with your neighbor.

• Reflect on the topics discussed over the 2-hour period:
  Write 2 questions you still have about testing and grading
Acknowledgement

• Handbook on Testing and Grading
  by
  Dr. Sue Legg, Ph.D.
  Psychometrician and
  Past Director of Office of Instructional Resources

http://www.teachingcenter.ufl.edu/ta_development.html
(See Online Resources at the bottom of page)
References