

5 Ways to... Make Better Objective Tests

1

Make a Test Plan

A test plan helps you keep track of the number of items, the content of the item and the learning objective of the item. Using a plan can help you create a test with better content validity that represents what you taught and what students were expected to learn.

2

Write Items after Class

Write 1-2 items after each class while the experience is still fresh. Write matching pairs of items, i.e., two items that measure the same topic. Use one for review or practice and the other for the exam.

3

10 Rules for Writing Good Test Items

Good test items have specific characteristics. Following a few rules can help you write better items. The stem of the question should: 1) be short, 2) include a complete question, and 3) avoid negative construction. Response options should be 4) brief, 5) grammatically parallel, and 6) equal in length. They should avoid *no-exception words* such as *always* and *never* (7), and avoid *all of* and *none of the above* as options (8). The number of response options should vary as appropriate (9) and the position of the best answer should vary (10).

4

Test Complex Learning Objectives

Multiple choice items can test complex learning and abilities such as understanding, analysis, and evaluation. Some types of items include: 1) prediction, 2) identify a principle or theory, 3) assertion-reason, 4) you are the teacher, 4) ConcepTests, and 5) multiple choice + short written justification.

5

Use Feedback to Improve Test Items

Use feedback from fellow teachers, students and computer-generated item analyses to improve the quality of your items and tests over time. Each source can give you valuable information—ranging from concerns about content and form of the items (e.g., ambiguity) to their technical properties (e.g., item difficulty).

Additional assistance...

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