

TEST QUESTIONS

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING



WHAT IS IT?



Tests and quizzes are among the most prevalent forms of assessment instruments in use on college campuses. Whether **summative** (assessment of student learning at the conclusion of a unit, course, or program) or **formative** (assessments meant to provide timely and effective feedback during the term or class), tests and quizzes represent a key form of information for students and instructors about learning in the classroom (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2013)¹.

RESEARCH...



Research suggests that while well-designed multiple-choice questions (MCQs) can be used to assess multiple dimensions of Bloom's Cognitive Process Domains, most MCQ tools focus on lower-order skills like remembering and understanding (Momsen et al., 2010).

However, well-constructed MCQs can be used to assess higher-level thinking such as apply or analyze, by asking students to apply course concepts through realistic problems or scenarios (Freeman et al., 2011).

DATA ...



49% of UCD students report being required to create or generate new ideas, products, or ways of understanding

76% report being required to recognize or recall specific facts, terms, and concepts (UCUES, 2018)

TEACHING STRATEGIES...



- Develop clear scoring keys, rubrics, and/or other guidelines for yourself and your TAs. Since this is essential for equitable opportunity, use a “norming” process to increase consistency across graders.
- Test students early and often, reducing the impact of a single poor performance on a student’s cumulative grade, while also giving them valuable feedback that they can use to improve. The early data is also valuable to convey student progress and inform your instructional process.
- On assessments, combine selected response questions (typically a single correct answer, and comprise fill-in-the-blank, true-false, multiple choice, and/or matching task) and constructed response (student-generated answer).
- Ensure the statement or question is clear and concise, avoiding overlapping answers and numerical answers that are too close. To do so, it’s best to use mutually exclusive response options, and to include only one correct, clearly best answer.
- Use consistent and clear language, using sentence structure and vocabulary that are appropriate for the audience.

STUDENTS SAY...



“I enjoy classes more when there are many tests or quizzes that are less consequential toward my grade. This helps me because if I do poorly on one, it has less of an impact overall.”

“I do better on exams where the open-ended questions are broken into smaller individual essay questions, instead of one long essay that requires me to focus on the composition, not just the content.”

REFLECTION...



- To ensure equitable and transparent assessments, how do you vertically align course learning outcomes to assessments and learning activities?
- How do you make sure your exams are valid (that questions actually measure the learning you intend to measure) and reliable (consistently measure the learning and distinguish between varied levels)?

¹List of all references in the complete JITT guide.

