

# 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)<sup>1</sup>.

### 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)?

<sup>1</sup>List of all references in the complete JITT guide.

