Multiple Choice Questions

What are Multiple Choice Questions?

Multiple choice items have a stem, in the form of a question or incomplete statement, and three or more alternatives answers, one of which is correct, while the others are distracters.

Educational Value

- They are effective tools for assessing the first three levels of Bloom’s taxonomy of the cognitive domain (knowledge, comprehension, application).
- Provide an efficient assessment of mastery of a large number of objectives and broad sampling of knowledge.
- Multiple choice answers are quick to score, and measure the learner’s knowledge without being influenced by writing or verbal ability.
- Some authors argue that a cleverly constructed multiple choice item can assess any level of cognitive learning; however, the requirement of the task is the selection of an alternative, and the instructor cannot observe the process by which that selection is made.

Examples of Classroom Application

**Poor Example:**
Validity refers to
a) the consistency of the test scores
b) the inference made on the basis of the test scores
c) measurement error determined by standard deviation
d) the stability of test scores

**Improved:**
The inference made on the basis of test scores refers to
a) reliability
b) stability
c) validity
d) measurement of error
In this example, the stem clearly describes the question or task.

Getting Started

- Guidelines for Writing Effective Multiple choice Items.
  

- How to write a good multiple choice question tutorial.
  
  [http://hotpot.uvic.ca/howto/mcquestion.htm](http://hotpot.uvic.ca/howto/mcquestion.htm)
Contact the CID at cid@vcc.ca. An IA can help you determine if multiple choice questions are right for your class and explain how to plan a lesson or test using them.

More Information

*Educational:*

- Multiple Choice, Wikipedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiple_choice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiple_choice)