

## Test Item Quality Checklist (Adapted from Stiggins et al., 2004)

### **I. General guidelines**

Keep wording simple and focused. Aim for the reading level that matches your most challenged readers. (What do you know about the reading ability of your students?)

Ask a question.

Avoid providing clues within and between items.

Correct answer should not be obvious without mastering the material being tested.

Highlight words critical to the question (e.g., most, all, least, not)

### **II. Guidelines for multiple choice items**

State whole question in item stem.

Eliminate repetition of material in response options.

Be sure there is only one correct or best answer.

Keep response options brief and parallel.

Make all response the same length.

Limit use of all or none of the above.

Use “always” and “never” with caution.

### **III. Guidelines for True/False items**

Make sure the item is entirely true or entirely false as stated.

### **IV. Guidelines for matching items**

Provide clear directions for the match to be made.

Keep list of trigger items between 5 and 10.

Include only homogeneous items, items about the same topic,

Keep wording of response options brief and parallel.

Provide more responses than trigger items.

## **V. Guidelines for fill-in items**

Ask a question

Provide one blank per item.

Do not make the length of the blank a clue.

Put the blank toward the end of the item.

## **VI. Guidelines for assembling the test**

Arrange items from easy to difficult.

Try to group items covering the same achievement targets together, or identify the target each question addresses.

Try to group similar formats together.

Make sure the test is not too long for the time allowed. Have an estimate for time allotted per item.

## **VII. Writing directions**

Write clear, explicit instructions for each item type.

State the point value of each item type.

Indicate how the answer should be expressed (e.g., should the word 'true' or 'false' be written, or 'T' or 'F'? Should numbers be rounded to the nearest tenth? Should units such as months, meters, or grams be included in the answer?

## **VIII. Formatting test items**

Be consistent in the presentation of an item type.

Keep all parts of a test question on the same page.

Avoid crowding too many questions on the same page.

## Assessment for learning strategies when assessing knowledge and reasoning with selected response tests

### Where am I going?

1. Make achievement targets clear.
  - a. Write targets in student-friendly language
  - b. Share test plans at the outset.
  - c. Have students match propositions with test plan cells.
  - d. Have students develop propositions along the way.
2. Use strong and weak models
  - a. Students identify wrong multiple-choice and fill-in answers and say why.

### Where am I now?

3. Provide descriptive feedback
  - a. Provide feedback target by target on a test.
  - b. Use definition of quality as a basis for evaluation of strengths and areas for study.
4. Teach students to self-assess
  - a. Students use test plans as a basis for evaluation of strengths and areas for study.
  - b. Students complete self-evaluation and goal-setting form on basis of test or quiz results.

### How can I close the gap?

5. Teach focused lessons
  - a. Students use item formulas to write items.
  - b. Students answer the question: How do you know your answer is correct?
  - c. Students turn propositions into items and practice answering the items.
  - d. Students create test items for each cell on the table of specifications and quiz each other.
  - e. Students use graphic organizers to practice patterns of reasoning.
6. Students practice revising
  - a. Students answer the question: How can I make this answer better?
7. Students reflect on and share what they know
  - a. Students engage in self-reflection: I have become better at \_\_\_\_\_. I used to \_\_\_\_\_, but now I \_\_\_\_\_.