Advantages and Disadvantages:



For Types of Test Items

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| **Test Type** | **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** |
| **Multiple‐**  **Choice Items** | 1. Large number of items can be given  in a short time period.  2. Broad domain can be covered.  3. Higher and lower level expectations  can be assessed – if constructed well.  4. Scoring is usually quick and objective.  5. Less influenced by guessing.  6. May provide diagnostic information  by analyzing patters of incorrect responses. | 1. Often only used to test “facts” – teachers  not aware they are suited to higher thinking.  2. Takes substantial time to construct.  3. Not useful when “show your work” is required.  4. Often hard to find suitable options.  5. Reading ability can influence student  performance.  6. Generally does not provide feedback to  correct errors in understanding. |
| **True‐False**  **Items** | 1. A large number of items can be given  in a short time (e.g., 3‐4 per minute)  2. Scoring is usually quick and objective. | 1. Difficult to construct statements that are  defensibly true or absolutely false.  2. Strong element of guessing.  3. Need a large number for high reliability. |
| **Matching**  **Items** | 1. An efficient way to assess the  association between a variety of  items within a given topic.  2. Easy to construct.  3. Scoring is usually quick and objective.  4. Easily administered to a large number of students. | 1. Difficulty to generate a sufficient number of  plausible premises.  2. May limit assessment to lower levels of understanding.  3. Homogeneous topics are required.  4. May overestimate learning due to influence  of testing. |
| **Short‐**  **Answer/ Fill‐ in‐the‐Blanks Items** | 1. Guessing is reduced; student must  construct an answer.  2. Requires increased cognitive ability to generate answers.  3. Effective for assessing who, what, where, and when information.  4. Relatively easy to construct.  5. Broad range of knowledge can be  assessed including creativity and spontaneity. | 1. Accuracy of assessment may be influenced  by handwriting/spelling skills.  2. Scoring can be time consuming and expensive due to subjectivity.  3. May overestimate learning due to bluffing.  4. Not useful for complex or extended  outcomes.  5. Often criticized for encouraging rote  memorization. |
| **Essay Items** | 1. Encourages the organization of  knowledge, integration of theories  and expression of opinions.  2. Promotes original, novel thinking.  3. Advantageous for assessing complex learning outcomes such as application, synthesis and evaluation levels.  4. Takes less time to construct than  other test item types.  5. Stimulates increased studying as  students cannot answer via simple recognition. | 1. Subjective scoring is less reliable, more time  consuming and subject to bias.  2. Grading may be influenced by handwriting, length of response and writing skills.  3. Provides a deep but small sample of students’ performance.  4. Bluffing and the quality of writing can  influence scores. |

Approximate Length of Time for Test Item Answering

This will help you in determining the length of a test and/or how long you will give students to complete a pencil and paper test.

**Item Type Average Time**

True‐false 30 seconds Multiple‐choice 1 minute Multiple‐choice of higher level learning objectives 1.5 minutes Short Answer 2 minutes Completion 1 minute

Matching 30 seconds per response

Short Essay 10‐15 minutes Extended Essay 30 minutes Visual Image 30 seconds