

Constructed Response Items

Short Answer

The short answer item should be reserved for situations where:

- a) the intent is to have students recall information,
- b) computational problems are used, or
- c) a selection type item would make the answer obvious.

Guidelines:

1. State the item so that only a single brief answer is possible.
2. Start with a direct question and switch to an incomplete statement only when greater conciseness is possible by doing so.
3. Leave only one blank and it should relate to the main part of the statement.
4. Place the blanks at the end of the statement.
5. Avoid extraneous clues to the answer.
6. For numerical answers, indicate the degree of precision expected and the units in which they are to be expressed.

Essays – Restricted Performance & Extended Performance

The essay item:

- a) is inefficient for knowledge outcomes
- b) measures the ability to organize, integrate, and express ideas.
- c) does not provide a representative sample of content
- d) is subjective, difficult to score and less reliable

Short Essay – Restricted Performance

1. places strict limits on the answer to be given
2. focuses on a narrowly defined problem
3. requires a specific form of answer (list, define)
4. focuses on specific learning outcomes
5. measures comprehension, application and analysis
6. is easier to score

Essay – Extended Performance

1. provides almost unlimited freedom for the scope and form of the response
2. often requires time or page limits
3. demonstrates student skills of synthesis and evaluation
4. provides for creativity
5. lacks reliability

Guidelines for Essay Items:

1. Use essay questions to measure only complex learning outcomes.
2. Relate the questions as directly as possible to the learning outcomes being measured.
3. Formulate questions that present a clear task to be performed.
4. Do not permit choice of questions unless the learning outcome requires it.
5. Provide ample time for answering & suggest a time limit for each question.
6. Evaluate answers in terms of learning outcomes.
7. Score restricted performance answers using a point method or scoring key.
8. Score extended performance answers using a rubric.
9. Evaluate one question at a time for the entire class.
10. Shield the identity of students during the marking.
11. For high stakes assessment, have two or more people grade each answer.