

Review

Major Evaluation Techniques in English

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Abstract

In a comprehensive program of appraisal in the modern colleges, objective tests constitute one of the major techniques of evaluation. Other major techniques for assessing pupil growth development may be Anecdotal records and observational methods, short answer test, oral and essay examinations, questionnaires, inventories, and interviews, checklists and rating scales, personal reports and projective techniques, socio metric methods, and, case studies and cumulative records. The adequacy of each evaluation method should be judged on commonly accepted criteria - validity, reliability, objectivity norms and practicability as these apply to the educational situation and the purposes of the educators. In discussions, the large numbers of specific evaluation techniques, methods and devices have been classified into categories for convenience. While it may be argued that these categories are somewhat arbitrary, any other classification scheme would be equally dependent upon the purposes and logic of an author, the present classification follows closely.

Keywords: modern colleges, pupil growth development, oral and essay examinations, questionnaires, inventories, and interviews

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PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

As a first step, the teacher should study the direction for the administration of the test. This involves more than cursory reading of the directions, particularly when a standardized test is to be administered. Rather, each specific direction given in the test manual should be checked against the test booklet and, if necessary, appropriate notations should be made on a specimen copy of the text booklets.

Prior to the day of testing, the teacher should assemble the materials needed, text booklets, answer sheets, scrap paper, an adequate supply of pencils or crayons, a copy of the test manual a watch or clock, and a sign - "Testing - Do Not Enter". The test should be administered in a comfortable familiar setting. The students' own classroom should be used unless that room is very noisy. If warranted, the arrangements should be made for a shift in rooms prior to the date of testing. If some students in

the group are not to be tested at the scheduled time, provision for their care during the testing period should also be made in advance.

SHORT ANSWER TESTS

Written tests used by the teachers for measuring pupil may be classified as essay examinations or short answer examinations. The latter is often referred as objective or "new-type" tests. The essay examination, which generally asks the pupil to discuss, compare, give reasons and the like, requires the formulation of an extended verbal answer to the question. On the other hand, in short answer tests, the pupil responds by the selection of one or more of several given alternatives, by giving or filling in a word or a phrase, or by some other device which does not call for an extensive written response.

VALUES AND LIMITATIONS OF SHORT ANSWER TESTS

Values:

Short-answer tests, in comparison with essay examinations, possess certain definite advantages. In an essay examination, the process of writing a response is extremely time - consuming. Use of a short - answer test where the response is quickly given, makes it possible for the pupil to answer many more questions in the same amount of time. As a result, short - answer tests generally show much better coverage of total content than essay examinations. Even spotty preparation may result in high grades when a pupil happens to study just that material called for by a few essay questions. Such chance results operate to a far less degree when short - answer tests are employed. In the later situation the teacher may be more certain that the grades the pupil earns is a true measure of his achievement.

TYPES OF SHORT - ANSWER TESTS

Completion items- The completion item requires the pupil to complete the thought of a sentence by finding the word or words that have been omitted, or it directs him to a question by writing his answer in the blank space provided as the pupil needs to decide upon his answer and then write it out. A test composed of completion items takes longer to administer than other forms of objective tests if the test is timed. Moreover, the pupil who writes slowly is handicapped. The scoring of the answers is not fully objective compared to other types of items and alternative correct responses need to be included in the scoring key.

TRUE - FALSE ITEMS

The true - false items require the pupil to express his judgment of a given statement by indicating True or False, Yes or No, or some similar response. It is adapted to the testing of simple facts, ideals, and concepts. Scoring of tests composed of true - false items is easy and objective. Such tests seem simple to construct, but this apparent advantage is not a real one. In practice, considerable care is needed in forming the statements so that the ability to be measured is actually revealed.

True - False questions have been the source of greater irritation to pupils than almost any other type of short - answer question. This - Irritation, too, is generally expressed by the superior student who may see one or more exceptions to a statement which would be acceptable to a somewhat less - informed person.

In constructing true-false items, care should be taken' to avoid several common pitfalls.

- Avoid broad generalizations.
- Avoid testing minutiae.
- Avoid double statements.
- Avoid long, complicated statements.

MULTIPLE - CHOICE ITEMS

The multiple - choice item requires the pupil to recognize which of several suggested responses is the best or the correct way to answer a question to complete a statement. While the completion item requires the pupil to produce the correct response without suggestion, the multiple-choice item calls for recognition only. It is adapted to the testing of complex ideas and interpretations. The scoring of the multiple choice item tends to be more objective and simpler than that of the completion item. The multiple - choice item is superior to the true-false item, which 'resents only two alternatives, in that it reduces the opportunity for guessing the correct answer. The multiple - choice types of question is also relatively free from absolutes in that the best statement is to be selected as the correct answer from the alternatives given. The correct answer therefore is relative to several other given statements rather than to all possible statements, not given as in true - false questions.

Multiple - Choice questions are found in several patterns. Probably, the most common pattern is the use of a "stem" which sets the question followed by several alternative statements, one of which is assumed to be the best answer.

MATCHING ITEMS

The matching exercise consists of two parallel columns of words, phrases or sentences. The pupil is required to match or associate each item of one column with the item which corresponds to it in the other column. Each matched pair is scored separately. Actually however the pairs are inter-dependent because an incorrect response may make an item unavailable for correct pairing. For this reason, one of the two columns should contain more items than the other. Also, it is better to have two short matching exercises than one long one. Some test experts recommend three items in one column and five in the other as being the best number for reliable results. Younger children may be asked to draw lines between the items which match. Older children may be directed to indicate the appropriate letter for matching item.

The matching exercise takes little specimen time on a test, but its usefulness is limited. It is not adapted to the testing of complex ideas or concepts.

ESSAY EXAMINATION

The Essay examination is still popular. The Essay examination calls for a relatively free written response a

problem situation, in which the written answer, when properly analyzed by the scorer reveals information regarding selected aspects of the organization and functioning of the pupil's mental life. The essay examination has survived the continued criticism of experts in educational measurements and remains widely used by class room teachers in achievement testing.

The relative popularity of essay examination is not difficult to understand. The most widely used tests are those which are prepared, administered, scored and interpreted by the room teacher. They are generally constructed for use with those pupils enrolled in the course taught by the teacher who prepares the test. The teacher may have many purposes in mind in administering the test - to motivate his pupil's to determine the success with which he has taught the unit of the subject matter, to encourage additional study. The preparation of valid objective - type testing materials not only requires more time but calls for training and experience which the class room teacher seldom has had an opportunity to obtain. Nearly every teacher, however, looks upon himself as expert enough to construct a suitable essay test in his own subject, and to arrive at a satisfactory grade for a pupil. Technicalities such as adequate sampling of content, test validity and test reliability are often dismissed or ignored.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ESSAY EXAMINATION

- Each question in an essay test should be planned to measure one defined objective of instruction for which no valid or reliable short answer test is available.
- Essay questions should be formulated to require a definite, restricted answer for objective tested.
- Avoid ambiguous questions.
- The pupil should not be allowed to make a choice among several questions. The use of the optional questions makes it almost impossible to arrive at comparable scores for pupils who have answered different questions.
- In grading essay examinations, a standard should be formulated in which a specific number of credits is allotted to each significant point which the pupil is expected to make when there is a limited range of choice among acceptable answers or parts of answers. All or most of such possible choices should be included in the standard answer.

ORAL EXAMINATION

The oral questioning of an individual pupil constitutes an excellent means of following the thought process which he has used in solving certain problems, such as one in mathematics. Used in this manner the oral quiz becomes a valuable tool for the diagnosis of pupil difficulties. Skillful, questioning by the teacher too may help the pupil to apply known scientific information to a new situation or to see implication such as those involved in adopting a given economic policy. The use of this approach should not generally be looked upon as a rod for measuring pupil achievement rather it represents a worthwhile instructional technique.

In some situations an oral examination constitutes the only way in which a measure of pupil attainment can be obtained. When children have not yet mastered the intricacies of reading, an oral examination must be used. The oral examination, used in the course of class room work, does the obvious advantage of saving the time and expense which is involved in reproducing copies of a test. As a result oral administration of teacher - made tests of the short answer type is frequently found in a sense, oral presentation of such teacher - made tests eliminate some of the difficulties which are associated with the administration of printed tests. The relative informality of the oral test situation is far less frightening to a timid child. The pupil need not ponder over an item which he finds difficult, losing so much time that he cannot complete the test. Moreover, the oral examination places a premium upon oral rather than reading comprehension.

There are two requisites for successful test administration. First, the directions given in the test manual for administering the test must be followed without deviation. Even slight modification of the direction destroys the standardized nature of the test situation if for example the pupil asks for the meaning of a word during a test the examiner must avoid a direct answer to the question unless the manual specifically permits help. Without such permission, the teacher should indicate that the information cannot be given and that the pupil should go on to the next item.

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