

CHECKLISTS FOR CREATING TESTS THAT ASSESS MASTERY

Short-Answer Items

- Can the items be answered with a number, symbol, word, or brief phrase?
- Has textbook language been avoided?
- Have the items been stated so that only one response is correct?
- Are the answer blanks equal in length (for fill-in responses)?
- Are the answer blanks (preferably one per item) at the end of the items, preferably after a question?
- Are the items free of clues (such as *a* or *an*)?
- Has the degree of precision been indicated for numerical answers?
- Have the units been indicated when numerical answers are expressed in units?

Binary (True–False) and Multiple-Binary Items

- Can each statement be clearly judged true or false with only one concept per statement?
- Have specific determiners (e.g., *usually*, *always*) been avoided?
- Have trivial statements been avoided?
- Have negative statements (especially double negatives) been avoided?
- Does a superficial analysis suggest a wrong answer?
- Are opinion statements attributed to some source?
- Are the true and false items approximately equal in length?
- Is there approximately an equal number of true and false items?
- Has a detectable pattern of answers (e.g., *T, F, T, F*) been avoided?

Matching Items

- Is the material for the two lists homogeneous?
- Is the list of responses longer or shorter than the list of premises?
- Are the responses brief and on the right-hand side?
- Have the responses been placed in alphabetical or numerical order?
- Do the directions indicate the basis for matching?
- Do the directions indicate how many times each response may be used?
- Are all of the matching items on the same page?

Multiple-Choice Items

- Does each item stem present a meaningful problem?
- Is there too much information in the stem?
- Are the item stems free of irrelevant material?
- Are the item stems stated in positive terms (if possible)?
- If used, has negative wording been given special emphasis (e.g., capitalized)?
- Are the distractors brief and free of unnecessary words?
- Are the distractors similar in length and form to the answer?
- Is there only one correct or clearly best answer?
- Are the distractors based on specific misconceptions?
- Are the items free of clues that point to the answer?
- Are the distractors and answer presented in sensible (e.g., alphabetical, numerical) order?
- Has *all of the above* been avoided and *none of the above* used judiciously?
- If a stimulus is used, is it necessary for answering the item?
- If a stimulus is used, does it require use of skills sought to be assessed?

Source: Adapted from Linn, R. L., & Gronlund, N. E. (2000). *Measurement and assessment in teaching* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall. Used with permission.