

Essay Item Writing/Scoring Guidelines (Constructed-response)

Item-Writing Guidelines for Essay Items

1. Convey to students a clear idea regarding the extensiveness of the response desired
2. Construct items so that the student's task is explicitly described.
3. Provide students with the approximate time to be expended on each item as well as the item's value
4. Precursively judge an item's quality by composing, mentally or in writing, a possible response
5. Avoid optionality- Choice can create significantly different assessment content and difficulty.

Guidelines for Scoring

1. Scores items holistically and/or analytically
2. Prepare a tentative scoring key in advance of judging student responses
3. Make decisions regarding the importance of the mechanics of writing prior to scoring.
4. Score all responses to one item before scoring responses to the next item
5. Insofar as possible, evaluate responses anonymously.

Rubrics: Areas of Concern

- **Scales that do not differentiate**

-not enough descriptive language between cells so it is challenging to make a distinction

- **Lack of descriptive rigor**

-language that is too vague or too specific

- **Scales that are too easy or too difficult**

-this is a major concern when developing a rubric that has high stakes implications

Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know (J. Popham)