

Workshop Words Worth Recall

"TEACHING THE TEACHERS:" A WORKSHOP ON TEACHING SKILLS FOR LIBRARIANS

The University of North Carolina at Asheville
(May 29-30, 1980)

Constructing And Interpreting Valid Tests

In order to develop a well-constructed valid test, the instructor must understand the essential purpose of any testing: to establish a basis of comparing individuals on a common dimension. For the instructor of library resources, testing provides an indication of the mastery level a student has attained so that a grade may be assigned, but testing also serves as feedback to the instructor on areas which may need more or less emphasis. These objectives are not achievable unless you have a well-constructed, valid test.

A test is said to be valid if the items contained within the test are relevant to the material covered in the course. Familiarity with the content of a course in library resources is usually sufficient to insure the test's validity. The more difficult task is in developing a test. Three stages are involved; the first is planning. Instructional objectives can typically be categorized into facts, concepts, interpretations, and applications. by listing these categories horizontally while vertically the content areas of a library resources course, the instructor can develop a two-way specification table in which test terms can be developed (See Anatasia, *Psychological Testing*, 1978). The second phase of test development, construction of the items, involves determining item form, objective or essay questions, and item clarity. The single most common error in test construction is ambiguous, unclear test items. Asking colleagues to review items is often an excellent method of establishing clarity.

The final stage of test development is interpretation. On the surface this task seems inherently straightforward. Add up the number of correct items and divide by the total number of items. However, several important questions must be considered before you can feel comfortable with this percentage passing method. If the items are too difficult, most students will not fare well. If the items are too easy, everyone appears to have mastered the use of library resources. Two methods are available for determining item difficulty. See: Aiken, *Psychological Testing and Assessment*, 1979). The item easiness index shows the relative ease with which an item was answered correctly while the item discrimination index measures the effectiveness of the item in differentiating between excellent students and marginal students.

In developing a test for library resources, three questions should be considered:

1. What information should everyone know?
2. What does the average student know?
3. What should the most capable student know?

Course tests can be extremely useful instruments, but only if you have carefully developed a valid, well constructed set of items.

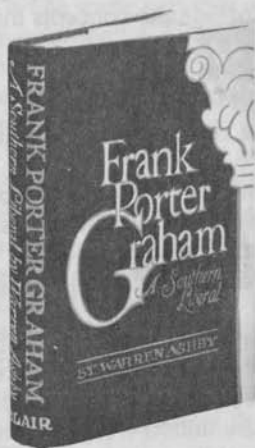
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How To Prepare And Evaluate A One-Hour Lecture: A Summary

The lecture introduction should provide a transition from everyday concerns to the subject under discussion and should present objectives of the lecture. The body of the lecture needs an organized structure that students can follow, smooth transitions, repetition and summary, and a vital and interesting presentation. The lecture should end with a summary that ties all major points together and provides a challenge for future learning.

Meaningful learning enables students to consolidate information so it will move from short-term to long-term memory. Learning will decrease if too much information or information that is not organized around a few major points is presented. Active methods of learning such as question and answer sessions, small group discussion, buzz sessions, exercises following the lecture and other problem-solving techniques can be used effectively with the lecture to promote meaningful learning.

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