



presents

Test Development & Item Writing for Teachers of ELLs

March 31, 2010

Ms. Lauren Kennedy, Director of Test Development, SLTI

Ms. Catherine Casteel, Test Developer and Literacy Specialist, SLTI

If you are having any technical difficulties at this time, please call 1-866-239-3239.

Thank you

NCELA is operated under contract ED-04-CO-0094/0002 from the US Department of Education to The George Washington University. Our mission is to provide technical assistance information to state education agencies, local education agencies, and others regarding the education of English language learners.

Welcome

- Welcome to the webinar on “Test Development and Item Writing for Teachers of ELLs.” Today’s webinar is hosted by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, located at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University, funded through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition.
- NCELA's mission is to provide technical assistance information to state and local educational agencies on issues pertaining to English language learners.
- My name is Kathia Flemens, Ph.D., a Research Associate at NCELA and your Webinar facilitator.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC

NCELA
National Clearinghouse for
English Language Acquisition and
Language Instruction Educational Programs

presents

Today our presenters are:

Ms. Lauren Kennedy, Director of Test Development at Second Language Testing Inc.
and Ms. Catherine Casteel, Test Developer and Literacy Specialist at Second
Language Testing Inc.

Test Design for Teachers



BLUEPRINTS AND ITEM WRITING

Validity



- Degree to which a test and the resulting scores are meaningful for an intended purpose.
- Scores will reflect progress toward learning goals when
 - items/tasks are clear to students.
 - test content matches content standards/objectives.
 - items/tasks are represented in the same proportions as in the standards and objectives.

Content Validity



- Degree to which test reflects the content domain.
- Essential to standards-based assessment.
- Content validity can be evaluated comparing the alignment of test tasks to content standards.
- State assessments are based on content standards; ensuring classroom assessments are based on the same standards provides content validity for classroom tests.

Blueprint

- Organizes and displays the mix of content and tasks
 - Example

Concept	Knowledge level	Application level	Comprehension Level	Synthesis Level	Total	Percent
Student will discriminate the subtraction sign from the addition sign	3				3	15%
Student will discriminate correctly solved subtraction problems from incorrectly solved subtraction problems			3		3	15%
Student will solve correctly single-digit subtraction problems		6			6	30%
Student will solve correctly subtraction problems with double-digit numerators and single-digit denominators		6			6	30%
Student will explain their solution process for a double-digit subtraction problem.				2	2	10%
Total	3	12	3	2	20	
Percent	15%	60%	15%	10%		100%

Testing Vocabulary



- **Item – a test question**
 - Includes stem/prompt and any options
- **Stem – the stimulus (question, sentence)**
 - Open – incomplete statement complete statement or question
 - Closed – complete statement or question
- **Option – choices given to test taker to answer the stem**
 - Distractor – an incorrect answer
 - Key – a correct answer
- **Prompt – item that asks the student to create a constructed response**

Multiple Choice: Good Practices in Writing Test Stems



- Present a single, well defined problem
- Base the item on a standard or objective
- Write the item at the reading level of the students
- Phrase the stem positively, not negatively
- Use language that is clear, simple and precise

Stems: Clear, Precise Language



- **Poor:**
 - In carrying out scientific research, the type of hypothesis which indicates the direction in which the experimenter expects the results to occur once the data has been analyzed is known as a(n) ...
- **Better:**
 - **Closed**
 - ✦ What is a hypothesis that indicates the expected result of a study called?
 - **Open**
 - ✦ A hypothesis that indicates the expected result of a study is called...

What to Avoid in Writing MC Stems



- Questions that are based on the content of another item.
- Frequency adverbs, such as “Always” and “Never”
- Humor
- Trick questions that intentionally mislead students
- Items that can be answered by the content of another item.

Writing Multiple-Choice Options



- Make comparable in content, length, & logic
- Include the central idea in the stem, not the options
- Use parallel language
- Logically or numerically order the options
- Avoid “All of the above” and “None of the above”
- Create plausible distractors
- Vary the location of the correct answer
- Present vertically not horizontally
- Research suggests that 3 options are adequate

MC Options: Avoid Grammatical Clues



- What causes night and day?
 - A. The earth spins on its axis. [correct]
 - B. The earth moved around the sun.
 - C. Clouds have blocked the sun's light.

MC Options: Avoid Association Clues



Who are the “Magnificent Seven?”

- A. a pro basketball team
- B. a group of seven fictional Western figures [correct]
- C. a protest music group popular during the 1960s
- D. a set of nutritional foods

Option B includes the word “seven.”

MC Options: Order Numerically



A book sells for \$9.99. If it is discounted 25%, how much does it cost?

Wrong

- A. \$5.00
- B. \$7.50
- C. \$2.50
- D. \$6.66

Right

- A. \$2.50
- B. \$5.00
- C. \$6.66
- D. \$7.50

MC Options: Order Logically



The speaker's tone in the passage can best be described as which of the following?

Wrong

- A. contemptuous
- B. whimsical
- C. pretentious
- D. satirical

Right

- A. contemptuous
- B. pretentious
- C. satirical
- D. whimsical

Good Practices for Essay Prompt Writing



- Topics should be meaningful, relevant and motivating
- Prompt should be written in language that is clear and precise
- Text prompts, which use reading as a basis for writing, may penalize poor readers regardless of their writing ability

Good Practices for Essay Prompt Writing



- Prompt can be written as a statement or a question
- Specify and define what mental process you want the students to perform
 - Use verbs that define the writing task
- Contextualize the writing
 - Specify audience, purpose, genre, form
- Structure the prompt to minimize subjective interpretations

Good Practices for Essay Prompt Writing



- **Provide complete instructions before the prompt**
 - The criteria for grading
 - Describe where they are to write the essay
 - Describe how long the essay should be, or how long a student has to write
 - Include advice on organizing ideas and proofing the essay

Things to Avoid in Essay Prompt Writing



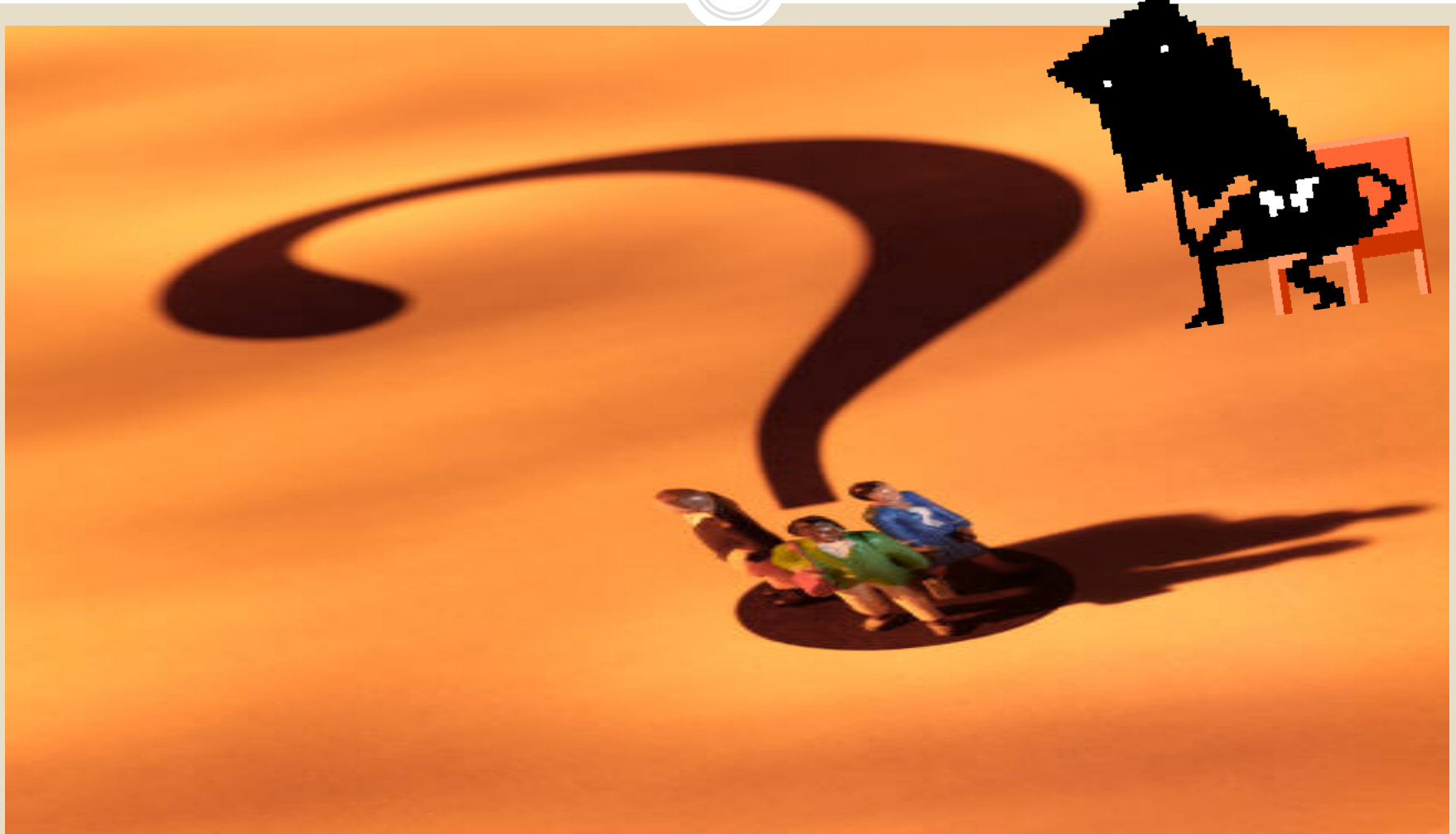
- Prompts that inadequately specify the task
 - Example: Capital punishment. Discuss.
- Prompts that rely on factual knowledge
- Vague, ambiguous, or non-specific verbs
- Providing a choice of essay questions
 - Students may waste time deciding on an option.
 - Students may start-over, or mis-understand and write to all.
 - Some questions are likely to be harder to answer than others.

Improving a Test



- **Review – before administration**
 - Review a copy of the test. Evaluate it from a student perspective.
 - Check for spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization.
 - Review the standards/objectives covered.
 - Ask a knowledgeable colleague to critically review the test.
 - Revise the test based on feedback.
 - Have revised version reviewed by someone else.
 - Revise & finalize.
- **Review – after administration**
 - Examine student responses
 - ✦ Identify problematic questions—is the problem due to content or wording of the item or prompt?
 - ✦ If due to content, that material needs to be re-taught.
 - ✦ If due to construction, the item stem, prompt, or options need to be revised.

Questions?



NCELA

National Clearinghouse for
English Language Acquisition and
Language Instruction Educational Programs

Thank you

Thank you for having participated in today's webinar on "Test Development & Item Writing for Teachers of ELLs" presented by Ms. Lauren Kennedy and Ms. Catherine Casteel; hosted by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, located at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University.

- For more information or if you have additional questions regarding today's webinar topic contact:

Ms. Lauren Kennedy at lkennedy@2lti.com

Ms. Catherine Casteel at ccasteel@2lti.com

or

- If you have additional questions regarding the webinar contact:

Kathia Flemens at kflemens@gwu.edu.

This webinar will be archived on NCELA's website. To view archived webinars, please visit <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/webinars/>

Thank you