

Answers to Exercise 3.3

Review Questions

1. *What are some of the flaws of the 100-point scale?*

One major flaw of the 100-point scale is the subjectivity in assigning points. Some teachers give more weight to items representing the simpler content, while others give more weight to items that address the more complex content (content not directly addressed in class). As a result, each teacher may grade the same assessment differently. In effect, this is like changing the length of an inch from one measurement to the next. A second flaw of the 100-point scale is that there are no criteria for answers that are partially correct. One teacher might give almost full credit for a partially correct answer, while another might give almost none.

2. *Describe the basic process for writing a scale.*

Writing a scale begins with identifying a specific target learning goal. A target learning goal is the level of knowledge or skill the entire class will ideally achieve. To complete the scale, a goal defining more complex content and a goal defining simpler content than the target goal are written. The target learning goal represents score 3.0 content. The more complex content represents score 4.0 content, and the simpler content represents score 2.0. Scale scores 1.0 and 0.0 do not represent new content.

3. *Why is it important for students to rewrite scales in their own words?*

One of the major advantages of defining clear learning goals and scales is that students will have a firm grasp of what they are expected to know or be able to do. It is much more likely that students have really considered and come to understand the goals when teachers give the class the opportunity to rewrite the scale(s) in their own words. Additionally, if students have access to scales written in language familiar to them, they can more easily propose student-generated assessments when they feel confident they can move up to a higher level of the scale.

4. *Describe how teachers can make use of preexisting assessments.*

Using preexisting assessments is simply a matter of equating the items on the assessment to the scale scores. The simpler items would be equated to score 2.0, and the items that address the target learning goal would be equated to score 3.0 items. Items equivalent to score 4.0 may or may not appear on the assessment, and if they do not, teachers should modify the assessment to suit their purposes.