“Why Correct?” and “Why Wrong?”

Critical Thinking Study Guide and Exam Question Formats for Content-Heavy Courses

Examples designed by Dr. Carol A. Gittens

Example #1 - Developmental Psychology

TYPE ONE “Why Correct” Questions: Approximately 80% of the questions will follow this format:
1. you will be asked to circle the letter indicating the correct answer for the question. This will be worth 1 point.
2. you will be asked to give a brief explanation for why the answer you selected is the correct answer. The explanation will be worth 2 points.

“Why Correct” Example Question: According to Piaget, infants between the ages of 4 and 8 months act on the world through
   a. their inborn reflexes.
   b. primary circular reactions.
   c. secondary circular reactions.
   d. a well-developed understanding of object permanence.

   Explain why your selection is correct.
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

TYPE TWO “Why Wrong” Questions: Approximately 20% of the questions will follow this format:
1. you will be asked to circle the letter indicating the correct answer for the question. This will be worth 1 point.
2. you will be asked to give a brief explanation for why the three answers you DID NOT select are INCORRECT answers. Each of the three responses will be worth 2 points.

“Why Wrong” Example Question: The process by which the zygote creates new cells is called?
   a. meiosis.
   b. crossing over.
   c. mitosis.
   d. twinning.

WHY WRONG? ______________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

WHY WRONG? ______________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

WHY WRONG? ______________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

NOTE: An exam to be administered in a 50-minute class session may include about 30 questions total, as it takes longer for students to complete “Why Correct?” and “Why Wrong?” items well.
Example #1 – Psychology of Education

**TYPE ONE “Why Correct” Questions:** Approximately 80% of the questions will follow this format:
1. you will be asked to circle the letter indicating the correct answer for the question. This will be worth 1 point.
2. you will be asked to give a brief explanation for why the answer you selected is the correct answer. The explanation will be worth 2 points.

“Why Correct” Example Question: The "art versus science" issue in teaching is probably best answered by which of the following statements?
  a. Teaching requires the ability to team and apply specific rules.
  b. Teaching requires the use of scientific methods.
  c. Teaching is an art because it requires imagination.
  d. Teaching, like medicine, requires learned skills and creativity.

Explain why your selection is correct.
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

**TYPE TWO “Why Wrong” Questions:** Approximately 20% of the questions will follow this format:
1. you will be asked to circle the letter indicating the correct answer for the question. This will be worth 1 point.
2. you will be asked to give a brief explanation for why the three answers you DID NOT select are INCORRECT answers. Each of the three responses will be worth 2 points.

“Why Wrong” Example Question: Which of the following students is most likely to succeed academically?
  a. Jonathan, a Native-American, who lives in a middle-class suburban house.
  b. Corinne, a Caucasian, who lives in an urban government housing project.
  c. Rosalinda, a Hispanic-American, who lives in an elite community in Beverly Hills.
  d. James, a Puerto-Rican, who lives in a middle-class suburban apartment building.

WHY WRONG? _____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

WHY WRONG? _____________________________________________________________
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WHY WRONG? _____________________________________________________________
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NOTE: An exam to be administered in a 50-minute class session may include about 30 questions total, as it takes longer for students to complete “Why Correct?” and “Why Wrong?” items well.