Abstract - Many college professors create multiple-choice and other types of tests for use in the classroom or for research purposes. However, most have not been exposed to the principles involved with test development. The purpose of this workshop is to provide an introduction to test development including writing test questions, more commonly known as test “items.” Through a combination of both hands-on activities and lecture, participants will be led through the steps of test development starting with an introduction to test specifications, practice with item writing and analysis, and finally ending with a discussion on reliability and validity. This information could prove helpful for those participants who wish to better their own classroom tests as well as for those individuals evaluating or researching educational programs.

Index Terms – Test development, Test reliability and validity, Question writing.

Workshop Description
Testing is an important process used to assess classroom learning, to understand the effects of educational programs, and to evaluate innovative teaching techniques. Although performance or authentic assessment can be utilized to understand outcomes, pencil-and-paper tests are still often the most feasible method for many instructors and researchers studying classroom outcomes. However, in order for paper-and-pencil tests to yield worthwhile results, care should be taken that these tests are both valid (measuring the intended concept) and reliable (accurately measuring the true score of the individual). While many college professors create multiple-choice tests, most have not been exposed to strategies for item, or question, writing and analysis.

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce participants to the test development process, including the creation of test specifications, the process of item writing, and performing item analysis. In addition, issues of reliability and validity will be discussed. The format of the workshop will be a combination of hands-on activities and lecture. Examples of items from a variety of tests and instruments will be provided. Workshop participants will receive a spiral-bound workbook containing much of the materials discussed.

Individuals who wish to use multiple-choice tests in their classroom or who are interested in developing an instrument for research purposes may find this workshop to be beneficial. Although the focus of the workshop will be on developing multiple-choice questions for achievement tests, much of the covered content can be generalized to rating scales or essay questions. While there is no prerequisite background necessary for this workshop, participants may wish to come prepared with their current tests, exams, or course materials to facilitate some of the hands-on activities with item writing.