

# Write a better test: the art and science of writing MCQs.

Presented by Jim Sturgiss



## Anatomy of a test item

Koalas feed of the leaves of eucalyptus trees.

In its ecosystem, the koala acts as a

- producer
- consumer
- decomposer

Make a better test: Learn how to write effective MCQs from a professional test designer.

Format: Face to Face

Audience: Science teachers K-12

## Description

Why Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)?

MCQs have a greater engagement by students than free response items.

MCQs provide more reliable data than free response items.

MCQs can be designed to pinpoint misconceptions.

MCQs are easily mounted on learning management systems such as Edmodo and moodle.

## Additional notes about this format

Blended delivery, products will be shared on forums. Online quizzes support the development of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) excellence.

## Occurrences

There are no occurrences of this format in Australia (NT) at this time.

## Sessions

### **SOLO taxonomy: differentiation of student responses**

#### **30 minutes**

Participants will learn how SOLO taxonomy (the Structure Of Learning Outcomes) can be used to differentiate student responses

### **Why multiple choice?**

#### **30 minutes**

Presentation and interactive online quizzes -  
Anatomy of a multiple choice item  
Syllabus validity, distractor analysis and misconceptions  
Do's and Don'ts

### **Collaborative writing task**

#### **2 hours**

Working in pairs:  
Using the stimulus brought to the session participants construct 8 - 12 test items.  
Item will be located in the syllabus and the SOLO taxonomy will inform the construction of the options.  
Share on forum

### **Panel**

#### **1 hour**

Participants will review item sets and appraise for:  
range of syllabus dot points addressed- syllabus validity  
viability of options - use of SOLO  
Succinctness of stimulus  
Each panel will suggest improvements to test items and add further items for each stimulus.

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## About the presenter



## Jim Sturgiss

### Creator

Improving outcomes through aligned teaching practice synergies.

Jim is an educational researcher and independent educational consultant. A recipient of the NSW PTC Distinguished Service Award for leadership in delivering targeted professional learning to teachers, he works with schools to align assessment, reporting and learning practice. He has been a DoE Senior Assessment Advisor where he developed many statewide assessments, (ESSA, SNAP, ELLA, BST) and as Coordinator: Analytics where he developed reports to schools for statewide assessments and NAPLAN.

Selected NSW Department of Education and Communities appointments

2015 Analytics, Systems and Development Coordinator

2012 - 2013 School Assessment Design and Development Acting Coordinator (ESSA)

2007 - 2010 Head Teacher Science, Newtown High School of Performing Arts

2004 - 2005 Senior Assessment Officer, Computer Skills Assessment (CSA6)

2004 Test Development Officer, Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP)

2000 - 2004 Head Teacher Science, Concord High School

1998 - 2000 Senior Assessment Officer, English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA)

Teaching Qualifications

1993 - 1997 M.Ed. (Hons) University of New England (Thesis: Literacy & learning in Science)

1979 Dip. Ed. University of Wollongong

1976 - 1978 B.Sc. University of Wollongong (Majors in Chemistry and Bioenergetics)



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Product: Write a better test: the art and science of writing MCQs.

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