

A critique of paper-and-pencil secondary one mathematics semestral assessment papers

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Assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process. Since assessment plays such a significant part in the educational process, it is imperative that we examine closely the individual questions that make up the assessment paper. This paper is based on a preliminary investigation into about 30 sets of secondary one semestral examination papers. In this paper only a sample of problematic short-ended and structured / long-answer questions have been highlighted and discussed. From this sample, it could be seen that short-ended and structured / long-answer questions are challenging and demanding to design. The questions were scrutinized based on the following criteria involved in the designing of test/examination questions: (1) Questions with incorrect Mathematical Concept, (2) Questions which test trivial facts, (3) Questions with ambiguous verbal communication, (4) Questions with inconsistent symbols and notations, (5) Questions with misleading diagrams, (6) Questions with impracticality of scenarios, and (7) Questions with imbalanced learning objectives.