Testing Your Multiple-Choice Test-Wiseness
(Adapted from Constructing Classroom Tests: Why and How, James Eison, Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, MO, 1985)

DIRECTIONS: The seven multiple-choice questions below cover historical topics that you are not likely to know. See if you are able to determine the correct answer by carefully reading each item. Please circle the correct answer for each item.

1. The Locarno pact:
   a. is an international agreement for the maintenance of peace through the guarantee of national boundaries of France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium.
   b. allowed France to occupy the Ruhr Valley.
   c. provided for the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary.
   d. provided for the protection of Red Cross bases during war times.

2. The disputed Hayes-Tilden election of 1876 was settled by an:
   a. resolution of the House of Representatives.
   b. decision of the United States Supreme Court.
   c. Electoral Commission
   d. joint resolution of Congress.

3. The august character of the work of Pericles in Athens frequently causes his work to be likened to that in Rome of:
   a. Augustus.
   b. Sulla.
   c. Pompey.
   d. Claudius.

4. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was:
   a. adopted by the French National Assembly.
   b. adopted by every Western European legislature.
   c. immediately ratified by every nation in the world.
   d. hailed by every person in England.

5. The Locarno pact:
   a. was an agreement between Greece and Turkey.
   b. gave the Tyrol to Italy.
   c. was a conspiracy to blow up the League of Nations’ building at Locarno.
   d. guaranteed the boundary arrangements in Western Europe.
6. Horace in the 16th Epode emphasizes the:

a. despair of the average man confronted by sweeping social change.
b. elation of the average man confronted by sweeping social change.
c. optimism of the common man about sweeping social change.
d. all of the above.

7. About what fraction of the 1920 population of the United States was foreign-born?

a. less than five percent.
b. between fourteen and twenty-eight percent.
c. twenty-five percent.
d. between thirty and fifty percent.

Some of these items may have been answered correctly even with little or no exposure to the content. All of these “clues” should be avoided when developing items. Many “test-wise” students are able to guess the correct answers to all of the items in the exercise and would make the same guesses if the same items were administered a second time. Thus, the test would be reliable, but the results would not be valid as a measure of achievement of course content. By following the test blueprint and the guidelines offered on the next pages, the chances of achieving valid and reliable test results are increased.

“Designing Multiple-Choice Tests That Foster and Reflect Learning Outcomes,” SACSCOC Annual Meeting 2012, Dr. Teresa L. Flateby, Associate Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA