

FACT SHEET

About CCSSO

The Council of Chief State School Officers (**CCSSO**) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

About SCASS

CCSSO created the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (**SCASS**) in 1991 to encourage and assist states in working collaboratively on assessment design and development across the curriculum.

About HEAP

The Health Education Assessment Project (**HEAP**) is a project of CCSSO~SCASS. The HEAP works to develop resources to help members align curriculum, instruction, and assessment in health education to improve student health literacy.

Your Guide to the CCSSO~SCASS HEAP Terms

CCSSO

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses the views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

SCASS

The State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) is one of CCSSO's largest endeavors. CCSSO created the SCASS programs in 1991 to encourage and assist states in working together on assessment design and development across the curriculum. SCASS projects typically develop a variety of materials, such as large pools, or banks, of assessment items; teachers' guides for developing student portfolios; and other resources to enhance professional development in assessment. Assessment design and components vary based on academic subject.

HEAP

CCSSO~SCASS created the Health Education Assessment Project (HEAP) in 1993 to help member states develop a variety of materials to assess student performance, specifically in health education. The HEAP is a consortium of education agencies working together to develop effective health education assessment resources through a collaborative process, and to increase members' capacity to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to improve student health literacy through improved health education instruction.

Assessment Framework

The HEAP developed the *Assessment Framework* as a blueprint for item writers to create health education assessment items that are based on content and skills. The framework provides the scaffolding to link core concepts (content) and skills. It also captures the importance and priority of the intersection between specific skills and concepts for assessment purposes.



SCASS



7/12/04

HEAP Mission Statement

The mission of the project is to develop effective health education assessment resources through a collaborative process, and to increase members' capacity to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to improve student health literacy through improved health education instruction.

**For more information,
contact the HEAP
Project Coordinator at
(202) 336-7008.**

The National Health Education Standards (NHES), which emphasize skills, serve as the cornerstone for the document's foundation. The framework also is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Adolescent Risk Behaviors and the Traditional Content areas for school health education. Together, these three components provide an infrastructure that is flexible enough to meet a variety of needs, yet robust enough to base assessments on current health and educational research.

Descriptors

Descriptors provide the basic scaffolding for the *Assessment Framework*. They are organized at three levels: elementary, middle school, and high school. Descriptors are broad statements within a content area that identify the important health concepts for assessment. For example, a descriptor for the content area of Personal and Consumer Health is Preventing Disease and Infection. Another descriptor for the same content area is Personal Health Care. Equally important, each descriptor also links the identified concept to a specific health skill or skills for assessment purposes. For example, the skill that is linked to Preventing Disease and Infection is Self Management. The skills that are linked to Personal Health Care are Self Management and Accessing Information.

Sub-descriptors

Sub-descriptors provide more detail about the health concepts identified in the descriptors. They provide guidance for writing items regarding specific content *and* developmental appropriateness. For example, in the content area of Personal Health Care, the sub-descriptors for Preventing Disease and Infection at the high school level address prevention strategies associated with primary care, such as breast self-exam, testicular self-exam, and PAP smear, which are not addressed at the elementary level.

The sub-descriptors in the 1998 *Assessment Framework* were not designed to be comprehensive, but were intended to be illustrative.

Items/Prompts/Assessment Questions

These terms refer to the same thing. The HEAP most often uses the term *assessment item*. An assessment item is a question or task that elicits a student response which demonstrates health knowledge and skills.

The HEAP has developed three kinds of assessment items: selected response, constructed response (short answer and extended response), and performance tasks.

Stem

Stem refers to the part of an assessment item that poses a question. The term *stem* is usually used with selected response, or multiple-choice, items. The term *prompt* is most often used with open-ended assessment items (short answer, extended response, or performance tasks).



About CCSSO

The Council of Chief State School Officers (**CCSSO**) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

About SCASS

CCSSO created the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (**SCASS**) in 1991 to encourage and assist states in working collaboratively on assessment design and development across the curriculum.

About HEAP

The Health Education Assessment Project (**HEAP**) is a project of CCSSO~SCASS. The HEAP works to develop resources to help members align curriculum, instruction, and assessment in health education to improve student health literacy.



SCASS



F A C T S H E E T

Selected Response

Commonly called multiple-choice questions, these assessment items can be scored by machines. These items are also known by the acronym SR.

Foils/Distracters

Foils, also known as distracters, are incorrect, but plausible, options for the answer to a multiple-choice question. (The correct answer to a multiple-choice question is referred to as the key.)

Short Constructed Response

Also known as short answer (SA) response, the assessment question requires the student to write a short answer, usually about a paragraph in length. Short answer items are performance-based assessments.

Extended Constructed Response

The assessment question requires a longer written response, usually an essay. Also written as an acronym, ER, for Extended Response, these are performance-based assessments.

Performance Tasks

Performance tasks are projects that allow students to demonstrate proficiency in health knowledge and skills. These projects result in a product or performance that can be assessed for health concepts and skills. A performance task is an activity that may be completed in or outside of class and over time. Performance tasks should be embedded in the curriculum. That is, they should be organized and spaced so they are part of regular classroom activities. They should not be “extra” or “isolated” tasks for the teacher or students. Examples of performance tasks are photo essays, skits, infomercials, public service announcements, and letters to the editor.

Modules

Modules are an assessment unit. Each module consists of eight selected-response and three constructed-response (two short-answer and one extended response) items. The HEAP developed each module around one of the descriptors in the *Assessment Framework*.

Rubrics

Rubrics are a set of guidelines for scoring performance-based student work. The HEAP has developed four-point scales for scoring for both content and skills.

Developmental Progression

Developmental progression refers to a trajectory of growth (cognitive, motor, etc.,) that occurs along a fairly predictable path or course of progression. As a result, health content should be developmentally appropriate for a particular age, which usually corresponds to a grade level. Similarly, expectations about the cognitive level of students' responses should be appropriate for a particular age.

Cognitive Complexity

In assessment, cognitive complexity typically refers to the thinking skills a student is expected to use to answer a question. Three models commonly used are Bloom's Taxonomy (and revised), Webb's Depth of Knowledge, and Wiggin's & McTighe's Understanding by Design.

HEAP Mission Statement

The mission of the project is to develop effective health education assessment resources through a collaborative process, and to increase members' capacity to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to improve student health literacy through improved health education instruction.

**For more information,
contact the HEAP
Project Coordinator at
(202) 336-7008.**

