



Bloom's Taxonomy

An Overview

Asking students to think at higher levels, beyond simple recall, is an excellent way to stimulate students' thought processes. Different types of questions require us to use different kinds or levels of thinking. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, human thinking skills can be broken down into the following six categories.

1. **KNOWLEDGE:** remembering or recalling appropriate, previously learned information to draw out factual (usually right or wrong) answers. Use words and phrases such as: how many, when, where, list, define, tell, describe, identify, etc., to draw out factual answers, testing students' recall and recognition.
2. **COMPREHENSION:** grasping or understanding the meaning of informational materials. Use words such as: describe, explain, estimate, predict, identify, differentiate, etc., to encourage students to translate, interpret, and extrapolate.
3. **APPLICATION:** applying previously learned information (or knowledge) to new and unfamiliar situations. Use words such as: demonstrate, apply, illustrate, show, solve, examine, classify, experiment, etc., to encourage students to apply knowledge to situations that are new and unfamiliar.
4. **ANALYSIS:** breaking down information into parts, or examining (and trying to understand the organizational structure of) information. Use words and phrases such as: what are the differences, analyze, explain, compare, separate, classify, arrange, etc., to encourage students to break information down into parts.
5. **SYNTHESIS:** applying prior knowledge and skills to combine elements into a pattern not clearly there before. Use words and phrases such as: combine, rearrange, substitute, create, design, invent, what if, etc., to encourage students to combine elements into a pattern that's new.
6. **EVALUATION:** judging or deciding according to some set of criteria, without real right or wrong answers. Use words such as: assess, decide, measure, select, explain, conclude, compare, summarize, etc., to encourage students to make judgments according to a set of criteria.