

Blooming Questions

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Description:

Blooming questions are a designed series of prompts that engage learners through Benjamin Bloom's six hierarchical levels of thought: *knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation*. Each level is dependent upon the preceding levels towards mastery of subject matter.

Uses:

Blooming questions is a strategy used for the development and delivery of a useful structure of questions to engage or assess learners in a holistic process of thinking.

Materials:

Whatever medium is chosen for delivery of prompts and recording of answers. Paper, whiteboard, flip charts, lips, ears, etc...

Instructions:

Design and implement a series of questions using the questions cues given for each successive level of thought (See example).

Levels	Skills Demonstrated	Question Cues
1. <i>Knowledge</i>	Recall of information. Knowledge of dates, events, places, and major ideas.	List, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, what, etc...
2. Comprehension	Understanding meaning and information. Translate knowledge into new context. Interpret facts. Compare, contrast, order, group. Infer causes, predict consequences.	Summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend...
3. Application	Use information, methods, concepts, and theories in new situations. Solve problems using required skill and knowledge.	Apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover.
4. Analysis	Seeing patterns. Organization of parts. Recognition of hidden meanings. Identification of components.	Analyze, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer.
5. Synthesis	Use old ideas to create new ones, generalize from given facts. Relate	Combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what if?, compose, formulate, prepare,

	knowledge from several areas. Predict, draw conclusions.	generalize, rewrite.
6. Evaluation	Compare and discriminate between ideas. Assess value of theories, presentations. Make choices, based on reasoned argument. Verify value of evidence. Recognize subjectivity.	Assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarize.

Example: (Question cues from each level are underlined.)

Knowledge:

What are the six levels of prompts used in *blooming questions*?

Comprehension:

Order and describe each of the six levels that are used.

Application:

Demonstrate how you would use *blooming questions* in your training.

Analysis:

Analyze each of the six levels and classify the levels that you currently use in your teaching.

Synthesis:

Generalize the hierarchic order of Bloom's levels of thought.

Evaluation:

Compare *blooming questions* with *Taba questioning* and assess which strategy would be more effective for given situations.

Tips:

I task you to try *blooming questions* and then incorporate all levels of questioning throughout your instructional design and delivery process. This is a very effective teaching tool. Try it!

Another use is to compare these question cues to those being used by other instructors in their prompts to help evaluate and, moreover, improve their level of teaching effectiveness. It's a simple task to identify these cues in their prompts and then match the cues to the corresponding level. Master teachers will apply *blooming questions* or a similar questioning approach as an overriding strategy whenever prompts are used.

References:

Table from handout of unknown origin that was adapted from:

Bloom, B.S, (Ed.) *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals: Handbook I, Cognitive domain*. New York; Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1956.

Other Reference:

Gailbraith, M.W. *Adult Learning Methods 2nd Ed.*, Florida, Krieger Publishing, 1998.

*As far as I know, I coined the name *Blooming Questions* because it covertly gives deserved credit to Bloom, suggests the notion of the blossoming learner, and because I thought it was clever. You are, of course, entitled to your own opinion.