

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

The levels in the cognitive domain represent increasingly complex ways of thinking and processing knowledge. Educators at all levels utilize the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy in designing assignments and assessments to ensure that students develop critical thinking skills. This includes many professors at PLU. If you have a solid foundation in Bloom's Taxonomy, you will be able to better understand assignments, paper prompts, homework problems, and the questions you are likely to encounter on exams.

As you read through the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, think about their specific application to the material you are learning currently.

The Levels

Remember

This is about rote memory, being able to repeat what you learned in the form that you learned it. It does not necessarily require understanding.

Learning cues and prompts at the Remembering level include things like match, label, list, and define (if it is a memorized definition). A great deal of necessary learning takes place at this level, so it should not be dismissed as unimportant. But by itself, it won't carry a student very far toward graduation.

Understand

This is about a student's ability to explain something to somebody else, clearly and correctly, in their own words.

Learning cues and prompts at the Understanding level include things like *define, explain, discuss, summarize, infer, provide an example.*

Apply

This about making use of skills and information in new situations and contexts. If you learn a new mathematical formula and then use it to solve different problems, you are *applying* that formula. If you learn a new concept in any class and use it to understand and answer new questions, you are *applying* that knowledge.

Learning cues and prompts at the Applying level include things like *use/utilize, solve, demonstrate, operate, or implement.*

Analyze

The ability to analyze is valued highly by faculty. Analysis is the process of breaking something down into relevant pieces and examining the relationships among the pieces to develop insights about the whole. We analyze chemical solutions, novels, psyches, historic periods, artistic performances -- anything we want to understand more deeply. This is about drilling down.

Learning cues and prompts at this level include things like *compare/contrast*, *sort/categorize*, *examine*, *analyze*, *study*, and *distinguish*.

Evaluate

Evaluating is the process of making a value judgment, based on specific criteria, and supported with evidence. Like analyzing, the ability to evaluate effectively matters deeply to faculty and should be regarded as an essential life skill. This is the point of decision, whether you are buying a car, choosing a graduate school program, making an investment, voting on a referendum, or hiring a job candidate. In the academic realm, students are called upon to make and support claims, prioritize actions, defend arguments, or judge other students' work.

Learning cues and prompts at the Evaluating level include things like *judge*, *appraise*, *decide*, *choose*, *evaluate*, *agree/disagree*, *conclude*, and *critique*.

Review Bloom's Taxonomy to this point. To evaluate something, you need to remember the facts involved, understand relevant concepts, apply knowledge to the questions that have to be addressed, and look at the relationships among the pieces. Take as an example the assignment to evaluate or critique a film (fiction). What criteria will you choose to base your evaluation on? Thematic choices? Acting? Use of cinematography? Character development? These criteria make up the elements of your analysis, the relevant pieces you choose to study. As you analyze the film, you will take careful notes of specific examples that support the conclusions you draw about the film.

Create

This is the most complex level of Bloom's Taxonomy. This is about creating something new from known pieces. It might be using what you know about music theory to compose a unique new piece. It might be designing a system to solve a problem. It might be conducting original research to add to the great body of human knowledge. Bloom originally labeled this level *Synthesis*. It requires active use of all other levels of the taxonomy.

Learning cues and prompts at the Creating level include things like *design*, *create*, *construct*, *develop*, *author*, and *compose*.