

Modeling self-questioning on Bloom's Taxonomy

Most educators are well familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, first established in 1956, which argued that teachers need to prompt more complex thinking from their students. Often the taxonomy is employed to help teachers ask better and deeper questions.

Bloom's Taxonomy was updated by Anderson and Krathwohl in 2001 (see diagram below). The revised version presents an excellent framework for guiding comprehension instruction as students read and learn during classroom lessons.

Step 1: Walk students through the different levels of thinking in the revised taxonomy... *remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating*. Model as a think-aloud how these different levels of thinking influence your comprehension.

For example, a think-aloud based on an article on the Great Wall of China: *Hmmm . . . What does this author want me to understand about the Great Wall? Large sections are being eroded by sandstorms. Why does the author argue this is happening? Let's see . . . farming practices that have drained underwater reservoirs have led to ecological change, leading to sandstorms, which cause the wall to crumble.*

Step 2: Relate each level of thinking to a comprehension statement (see middle column in Self-Questioning Chart). For example, *evaluating* asks a reader to view a text through a critical lens:

Step 3: Align a focusing question to each statement of the taxonomy (see third column in Self-Questioning Chart below). Emphasize that proficient readers constantly check their comprehension through self-questioning.

Step 4: As students become practiced with eliciting focusing questions on their own, they can be provided with additional examples. *Analyzing* could also include questions like: "How does the author support these ideas?"

Advantages

Teaching students focusing questions that cue them into increasingly more complex thinking helps them become more sophisticated readers and learners.

- Students begin to assume responsibility as readers for asking relevant questions of written texts.
- Students gain practice beyond a mere (and often mindless) attention to factual detail, to the exclusion of understanding.
- Students begin to customize questions that draw them deeper into texts as a habit of mind.

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Taxonomy Self-Questioning Chart

Level of Thinking	Comprehension Statement	Focusing Question
Creating	I have created new knowledge.	How has this author changed what I understand?
Evaluating	I can critically examine this author's message.	How has the author's perspective influenced what he/she tells me?
Analyzing	I can take my understanding to a deeper level.	How is this similar to (or different from) other material I've read?
Applying	I can use my understanding in some meaningful way.	How can I connect what this author is telling me to understand something better?
Understanding	I can understand what the author is telling me.	What does this author want me to understand?
Remembering	I can recall specific details, information, and ideas from this text.	What do I need to remember to make sense of this text?

Doug Buehl (2007)

The "Revised" Bloom's Taxonomy

Anderson & Krathwohl (2001)

