



Blooming Questions

Adapted from Bloom et. al., 1956, by Deborah Bambino, 2005.

Since we all profess a commitment to critical thinking examining the questions we ask seems like a natural winner. This is an easy way to get everyone to bring an example of their work, or current work from their school, to the table. If you repeated this process periodically and documented your findings, you could track changes over time.

Part I

- Invite all members of your group to bring a written copy of a current question(s) they have posed to their students. *Administrators or external coaches might collect questions as they visit classrooms.*
- Chart, or pass the questions around and examine them with the following prompts in mind:
 - What do you see? (Describe w/o evaluation.)
 - What questions does your review of this sampling raise for you?
 - What are the implications for your focus on higher order questioning?

Part II

- Select a question and “tune” it with a partner. Offer at least two ways the question could be phrased to take students to a higher level of thinking.
- Debrief the process and content of this experience.
 - *Will this help you with your questioning strategies?*
 - *How will you share this experience with your colleagues, students...?*
 - *What else can we do to develop “rich” questions?*

Extension: Have students keep track of the questions they have been asked and then go through the process with them. Have students examine the kinds of questions they are asking in class and then have them practice tuning their own questions.



Blooming Questions Appendix I Bloom's Taxonomy: Sample Questions

From Bloom, et al., 1956

As teachers we tend to ask questions in the “knowledge” category 80% to 90% of the time. These questions are not bad, but using them all the time is. Try to utilize higher order level of questions. These questions require much more “brain power” and a more extensive and elaborate answer. Below are the six question categories as defined by Bloom.

Knowledge

- remembering;
- memorizing;
- recognizing;
- recalling identification and recall of information
 - Who, what, when, where, how ...?
 - Describe

Comprehension

- interpreting;
- translating from one medium to another;
- describing in one's own words;
- organization and selection of facts and ideas
 - Retell...

Application

- problem solving;
- applying information to produce some result;
- use of facts, rules and principles
 - How is...an example of...?
 - How is...related to...?
 - Why is...significant?

Analysis

- subdividing something to show how it is put together;
- finding the underlying structure of a communication;
- identifying motives;
- separation of a whole into component parts
 - What are the parts or features of...?
 - Classify...according to...
 - Outline/diagram...
 - How does...compare/contrast with...?
 - What evidence can you list for...?

Synthesis

- creating a unique, original product that may be in verbal form or may be a physical object;
- combination of ideas to form a new whole
 - What would you predict/infer from...?
 - What ideas can you add to...?
 - How would you create/design a new...?
 - What might happen if you combined...?
 - What solutions would you suggest for...?

Evaluation

- making value decisions about issues;
- resolving controversies or differences of opinion;
- development of opinions, judgements or decisions
 - Do you agree...?
 - What do you think about...?
 - What is the most important...?
 - Place the following in order of priority...
 - How would you decide about...?
 - What criteria would you use to assess...?



Blooming Questions Appendix II

Procedure

For any assigned reading selection, develop questions that reflect the progression of thinking and responding from the literal level to the evaluative. Not all levels need to be developed for every selection. Consider a range that will lead the student to the greater purpose of reading.

Each level of Bloom’s original taxonomy has been restated for clarity and simplification. Examples of appropriate questions or directives are given to illustrate each level. The story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears was used for general understanding.

Knowledge	<p><i>the recall of specific information</i></p> <p>Who was Goldilocks? Where did she live? With whom? What did her mother tell her not to do?</p>
Comprehension	<p><i>an understanding of what was read</i></p> <p>This story was about _____. (Topic) The story tells us _____. (Main Idea) Why didn’t her mother want her to go to the forest? What did Goldilocks look like? What kind of girl was she?</p>
Application	<p><i>the converting of abstract content to concrete situations</i></p> <p>How were the bears like real people? Why did Goldilocks go into the little house? Write a sign that should be placed near the edge of the forest. Draw a picture of what the bear’s house looked like. Draw a map showing Goldilock’s house, the path in the forest, the bear’s house, etc. Show through action how Goldilocks sat in the chairs, ate the porridge, etc.</p>

<p>Analysis</p>	<p><i>the comparison and contrast of the content to personal experiences</i></p> <p>How did each bear react to what Goldilocks did? How would you react?</p> <p>Compare Goldilocks to any friend.</p> <p>Do you know any animals (pets) that act human? When did Goldilocks leave her real world for fantasy? How do you know?</p>
<p>Synthesis</p>	<p><i>the organization of thoughts, ideas, and information from the content</i></p> <p>List the events of the story in sequence.</p> <p>Point out the importance of time sequence words by asking: What happened after Goldilocks ate the Baby Bear's porridge? What happened before Goldilocks went into the forest? What is the first thing she did when she went into the house?</p> <p>Draw a cartoon or stories about bears. Do they all act like humans?</p> <p>Do you know any other stories about little girls or boys who escaped from danger?</p> <p>Make a puppet out of one of the characters. Using the puppet, act out his/her part in the story.</p> <p>Make a diorama of the bear's house and the forest.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p><i>the judgment and evaluation of characters, actions, outcome, etc., for personal reflection and understanding</i></p> <p>Why were the bear's angry with Goldilocks? Why was Goldilocks happy to get home? What do you think she learned by going into that house? Do you think she will listen to her mothers's warnings in the future? Why? Do parents have more experience and background than their children? Would you have gone in the bear's house? Why or why not? Do you think this really happened to Goldilocks? Why? Why would a grown-up write this story for children to read? Why has the story of Goldilocks been told to children for many, many years?</p>