

THE IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONS

FACILITATING ACTIVE AND INSPIRING DISCUSSIONS

SNHU's curated content supports a focused approach to engagement in the discussion board and an opportunity to spark learning. Students are encouraged to respond to designated topics, promoting a more comprehensive analysis of the topic. From this starting point, there are several opportunities for instructors to connect students with one another, relate the material to real world application, and encourage curiosity and varied perspectives through the use of questions.

Asking questions of students in the discussion board demonstrates your active engagement and interest in their thoughts while compelling them to think meaningfully about a topic. Questions can encourage students to articulate their position and also offers them a focused opportunity to evaluate their thinking.

We can use Bloom's taxonomy of higher order thinking and Davis' question types to craft questions that have the power to positively impact student learning.

While Bloom's taxonomy of learning domains are understood beyond the cognitive domain, the following chart identifies some revised changes by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) that call attention to the cognitive perspective of knowledge acquisition and its connection to the types of questions that encourage students to think critically about their understanding, while compelling them to reach further and apply and synthesize their understanding.

How to use this chart

- 1 Locate your base camp. - Determine student's current level:** Has your student fully addressed the discussion board prompt or other student's post? If not, you may need to ask lower-level questions of your student to guide understanding. If your student has demonstrated factual or conceptual understanding of the prompt, consider which cognitive process level their post exemplifies.
- 2 Acclimate to each higher altitude to avoid sickness. - Progress steadily through each cognitive process level:** While we ideally want students to reach the pinnacle of Bloom's revised taxonomy (the *Create* level), it is important to consider the incremental steps along the way that support student growth and learning. Asking questions that solidify a student's foundation while challenging them one step further supports sustained and lasting learning. Keep in mind that it is ideal to move through all subsequent levels incrementally to avoid creating a cognitive overload for your students.
- 3 Select the appropriate equipment for the next ascent. - Match the question type to your student's next goal:** Review the question type associated with the target level. Create your question, drawing on the actions that are connected to that level of cognition.

Cognitive Process Level

Question Type

Question Example

CREATE

Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. **Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating new meaning or structure.**

Challenge

Student summarizes and synthesizes discussion board concepts, or revises original position. **Climbing:** Ask questions to challenge assumptions, conclusions, or interpretations of ideas, actions, hypotheses, or events.

EVALUATE

Make judgments about the value of ideas or materials. **Determine the most appropriate procedure for a given situation.**

Summary

Student shows evaluation of concepts. **Climbing:** Ask questions to elicit synthesis, summary, reorganization, or revision of original position.

ANALYZE

Separates material or concepts into parts so that their organizational structure may be understood. **Understand component pieces of subject.**

Action

Student displays ability to relate themes. **Climbing:** Ask questions that create a call to action for an interpretation, critique, or defense.

APPLY

Use a concept in a new situation or unprompted use of an abstraction. **Identify how the topic/subject can be implemented in practice.**

Relational

Student provides evidence of deeper analysis. **Climbing:** Ask questions to encourage student to compare and contrast themes, ideas, and issues to tease out relationships between concepts.

UNDERSTAND

Comprehending the meaning, translation, and interpretation of instructions and problems. **State a problem in one's own words.**

Diagnostic

Student shows an understanding of the abstract concept. **Climbing:** Ask questions to foster probing motives or causes, identify the chain of events, or distinguish contributing elements within a problem, digging into the details.

REMEMBER

Recall or retrieve previous learned information. **Probe to ensure clarity of the topic.**

Hypothetical

Student understands the concept in concrete terms. **Climbing:** Ask questions to urge posing a change in the facts & issues to apply the concept to different scenarios.

Cause & Effect

Student exhibits robust understanding of the discussion prompt. **Climbing:** Ask questions that highlight showing relationships, paraphrasing or extending ideas.

Extention

Student demonstrates basic understanding of the larger discussion objective. **Climbing:** Ask questions that encourage providing more to display and articulate more robust comprehension.

Priority

Student understands a topic. **Climbing:** Ask questions to draw out the most significant aspects of the subject that addresses the larger concept.

Exploratory

Student struggles to identify all of the facts and demonstrate basic knowledge. **Climbing:** Ask questions to address basics of the discussion board prompt and elaborate on their position within peer response posts.

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