Exam Preparation: Think Like a Professor

The Learning Center at UNC-CH

Overview

Effective exam preparation involves more than strategizing for particular test formats, such as multiple-choice or essay.

Commonly referred to as "Bloom's Taxonomy," the framework outlined at right has remained popular with teachers and students alike since the publication of Taxonomy of Educational Objectives *in 1956 and its revision in 2001 as* A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment.

Objectives

Use the table as a guide to assess your comprehension of readings, lecture notes, and other course materials. By creating and answering questions from a variety of categories, you can better anticipate and prepare for all types of exam questions.

Question Category	Purpose	Study Methods
Remember	For recall of foundational or factual information: names, dates, formulas, definitions, components, or methods.	➢ Make flashcards ➢ Draw diagrams
Understand	To demonstrate knowledge at a deeper level; typically this requires a significant investment of time, thought, or a varied approach to a subject.	➢ Discuss content with a partner ➢ Consider the underlying objectives of homework, not just the answers ➢ Focus on "why" questions
Apply	To recognize or use concepts in real-world situations. To address when, where, or how to employ methods and ideas.	➢ Seek concrete examples of abstract ideas ➢ Work practice problems and exercises
Analyze	To break a topic or idea into components or examine a subject from different perspectives. To shift from "whole" to "parts."	➢ Generate a list of contributing factors ➢ Take alternate approaches
Synthesize	To consider individual elements together for the purpose of drawing conclusions, identifying themes, or determining common elements. To shift from "parts" to "whole."	➢ Generalize information from lectures and readings ➢ Condense and re-state content in one or two sentences ➢ Compare and contrast
Evaluate	To form an opinion, assign value, develop an argument, or judge merit. Often there is not a clear or correct answer to this type of question. What do *you* think and how do you *support* your position?	➢ Make note of your reactions as you read and study ➢ Decide if you like, dislike, agree, or disagree with an author or a decision ➢ Consider what you would do if asked to make a choice
Create	To design, invent, offer alternative solutions, or combine elements into a new pattern.	➢ Build a model ➢ Design an experiment

Practice

Classify each test question below by the type of question described in the table. Assume that lectures and course materials didn't supply direct answers to questions 1-6. Answers are on the left side of this page.

_____ 1. Explain the effects of inflation, political instability, and recession on the price of gold.
_____ 2. Do you consider the protagonist a hero? Defend your answer.
_____ 3. Using natural selection theory, explain why we might not see any new Puriri trees in the future.
_____ 4. Outline an alternative system to the electoral college. Your proposal must be original.
_____ 5. Why does the federal government collect taxes rather than print money as needed?
_____ 6. What do stage theories have in common?
_____ 7. What is an oligopoly?

Answers: 1. analyzing, 2. evaluating, 3. applying, 4. creating, 5. understanding, 6. synthesizing, 7. remembering

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