Preparing for Multiple Choice Tests
Using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking Skills
Creating
Evaluating
Analyzing
Applying
Understanding
Remembering

- **Shallow Learning** = Remembering a definition
- **Deep Learning** = Remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, and evaluating a concept

How does Bloom's help? Bloom's Revised Taxonomy gives students a framework to think about what they are learning in different ways. As Fleet, Goodchild, and Zajchowski (1999) explain, "if course information does not make sense to you, you will not remember it, and, even if you do manage to memorize it, it is unlikely that your memory will be flexible enough to apply the ideas to new situations" (p. 75). They go on to outline a number of effective study practices (pp. 70-75):

> 1. Practice identifying the significance **of main ideas** from the text to the context of the course.
> 2**. Think like a teacher**. What questions would you include on the test?
> 3**. Rehearse material in the same way** that the test is formatted.
> 4. Associate content with a **mental image.**
> 5. Get a sense of how questions might be structured by **looking at past tests** by your teacher.
> 6. Identify **examples** of key ideas. (Include examples that work, as well as ones that do not work, and be able to explain *why* that is the case).

Ways to Make Connections (from Fleet et al., 1999, p. 69):

> 1. Examine "**cause and effect**"
> 2. Identify "**classes and hierarchies**"
> 3. "**Compare and contrast**"
> 4. Understand how a **system** functions (how the parts work together as a whole)
> 5. Develop ideas in a **logical sequence**
> 6. Determine the **threshold** ("a critical point or value at which significant change occurs")

In addition to the suggestions from Fleet et al. (1999), it can also be helpful to try **relating** the information **to your own life** or **prior knowledge.**

Sample multiple choice questions that use Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

(from Nelson Education)

Applying:

- Taking what you already know and using that knowledge in a new situation. **Key Terms**: Modify, demonstrate, solve, and apply.

Example:

"Carlos is often involved in incidents of proactive aggression. His parents and teachers are most likely to reduce the amount of this proactive aggression if they use:
   a) Social-cognitive interventions
   b) Negative reinforcement combined with modelling and coaching
   c) The incompatible-response technique combined with negative reinforcement
   d) The incompatible-response technique combined with the time-out technique"

Analyzing:

- Break down an idea into smaller parts and critically examine those parts to make meaning. **Key Terms**: Distinguish, differentiate, compare/contrast, why, and how.

Example:

"Harry Harlow (1959) found that baby monkeys attached themselves to a monkey doll covered with soft cuddly cloth, even when it fed elsewhere. This result _____ Freud's psychoanalytic theory of attachment.
   a) Contradicted
   b) Was irrelevant to
   c) Mildly supported
   d) Strongly supported"

Evaluating:

- Critically examine content to determine its value and/or draw conclusions. **Key Terms**: Judge, justify, and evaluate.

Example:

"Research exploring the relationship between cognitive development and moral reasoning level has shown:
   a) Formal operational reasoning is necessary for postconventional moral reasoning
   b) Reaching formal operational reasoning assures one of progressing to the postconventional level
   c) Formal operational reasoning is necessary for conventional moral reasoning
   d) Contrary to Kohlberg's predictions, level of cognitive development and level of moral reasoning are not related"

References

Fleet, J., Goodchild, F. & Zajchowski, R.(1999). *Learning for success*, 3rd ed. Scarborough, ON: Thomson Nelson.

Nelson Education. (n.d.). "Test yourself (chapters 11, 14, 16)." Student resources for *developmental psychology: Childhood and adolescence*, 3rd Canadian ed. Retrieved from http://developmentalpsych3e.nelson.com/student/test.html