

Study to Understand

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

As students move from the first lower order thinking skill (LOTS), remembering, to develop their higher order thinking skills (HOTS), their next step is to be able to make sense of relevant information and connect it to what they already know; in other words, understand.

Second Lower Order Thinking Skill: Understanding

- Making sense of and meaning from what you have learned.
- Cognitive processes associated with understanding include interpreting, summarizing, inferring and explaining.
- Task words on assignments and assessments include explain, discuss, describe, summarize, interpret.

Study Strategies for Understanding

- Explain key terms and concepts in your own words. Try thinking about how you would explain things to a relative or friend.
 - Can you summarize the main idea of a story?
 - Can you outline the main argument in a paper?
 - Can you explain what a concept means in your own words? How would you explain it to someone who doesn't know anything about your course?
 - Explain things out loud to a friend or a pet.
- Explain the relevance of information.
 - Why is this important?
- Make connections between specific ideas and overarching concepts or between structures and functions.
 - How does rehabilitation support a social justice framework within the criminal justice system?
- Explain or illustrate a sequence of events in a new way or format.
 - Can you create a timeline or use a flow chart to show the evolution of intelligence testing?
 - Can you explain connections between each event?
- Create and answer questions about the course content (using why).
 - Why is *The Catcher in the Rye* such an influential novel?
 - Why did students in Quebec organize the 2012 strike?

Study Tools for Understanding

- Cue cards or flash cards
 - A question on the front and an answer in your own words on the back.
 - A key term or concept on the front an explanation or summary in your own words on the back.
 - An overarching theme on one side and connections to course material on the back.
 - The criminal justice system: retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation, and restoration.
 - Privilege: race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and class.
- Visual tools
 - Categorize or group information in charts or lists and explain why concepts belong together.
 - Construct maps, charts and diagrams that connect big ideas and concepts.
 - Show how armed conflict connects to culture and the overarching principle of globalization.
- Verbal tools
 - Tell someone what you've learned. Explain ideas aloud, in your own words, to someone else.
 - Write out what you've learned in your own words.

Monitor and Evaluate Your Strategies and Tools

- Identify which strategies and tools are helping you understand information.
 - How well can I verbally explain information from my course in my own words?
 - Can I answer the "why" of any particular question?
 - Can I explain the relevance of course content and make connections?
 - Can I turn course content into practice test questions and answer them?
- When strategies or tools are not helping, try something new.

Development

Moving past memorization toward understanding is a key development for learning. This small step can support improved performance when being tested and improve your ability to explain ideas when working on assignments. As students incorporate more levels of thinking skills into their learning, they work on developing their critical thinking and creative output.

Once you feel confident that you understand what you've learned, try to build on that skill and apply concepts in practice!

Action
Applying
Understanding
Remembering