

Example of lecture text with embedded check-for-understanding questions

Below, you'll find an example of lecture provided in a narrative text format, as it would appear in a Sakai Lessons page. Check-for-understanding questions are interspersed throughout the lecture text. As the students read the lecture text in Sakai, they are able to answer these questions. Upon submitting their response, each student will receive immediate feedback as to if they chose the correct or incorrect response. This provides feedback to students as they read, signaling the level of comprehension the student has achieved. Based on this feedback, the student can make an informed decision to move on or review the information again.

If you'd like assistance designing and creating Sakai Lessons pages with embedded check-for-understanding questions, contact Instructional Design & Technology at (856) 225-6090 or idt@camden.rutgers.edu to set up a consultation.

Note: the example below demonstrates what lecture text with embedded check-for-understanding questions would look like on a Sakai Lessons page. The questions do not function here, but would be interactive features in Sakai.

Designing online discussions

Structure

response post deadline date (Sunday, 11:59pm)

M	T	W	R	F	Sa	Su
Start of week's unit						End of week's unit

original post deadline (Wednesday, 11:59pm)

If possible, your online discussions should take place during the same time periods each week (for example, weekly discussions could begin Monday mornings and end each following Sunday night). To encourage a back-and-forth discussion, students should be given two due dates. They should be required to post their original response to the discussion question by the first due date (e.g., using the prior discussion window example, Wednesday by 11:59pm could be the first deadline) and be required to substantially respond to one or two classmates by the end of the discussion. A "substantial response" would require that the student responds with more than "I disagree" or "Good point," but you may want to further break down requirements.

Students should be given clear expectations regarding how their participation in online discussions will be graded. A rubric should be provided on the syllabus for students to reference, and should be used to grade student discussions.

How many deadlines (due dates) should a student be given for each weekly discussion?

- One
- Two
- Three

Submit Answer

(continued on next page)

Crafting “discussable” questions

Not all questions are equal! Many questions cannot truly be “discussed.” For example, if you asked the discussion question, “Who was president of the United States during World War II?” or even something a bit more complicated, such as “Explain the process of mitosis,” most of your student answers would look the same, or very similar, to one another. Students would not be bringing up different points, and thus would have little to nothing to converse with their classmates about.

However, if you were to ask a question such as, “Do you believe the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima was the correct one? Explain.” or “Based on what you have learned so far, how do you think climate change will impact future generations?”, students are forced to support a point in a way that other students may view differently. These questions, which force students to analyze a situation and draw (perhaps differing) conclusions, can foster a back-and-forth discussion between classmates as they review each other’s perspectives.



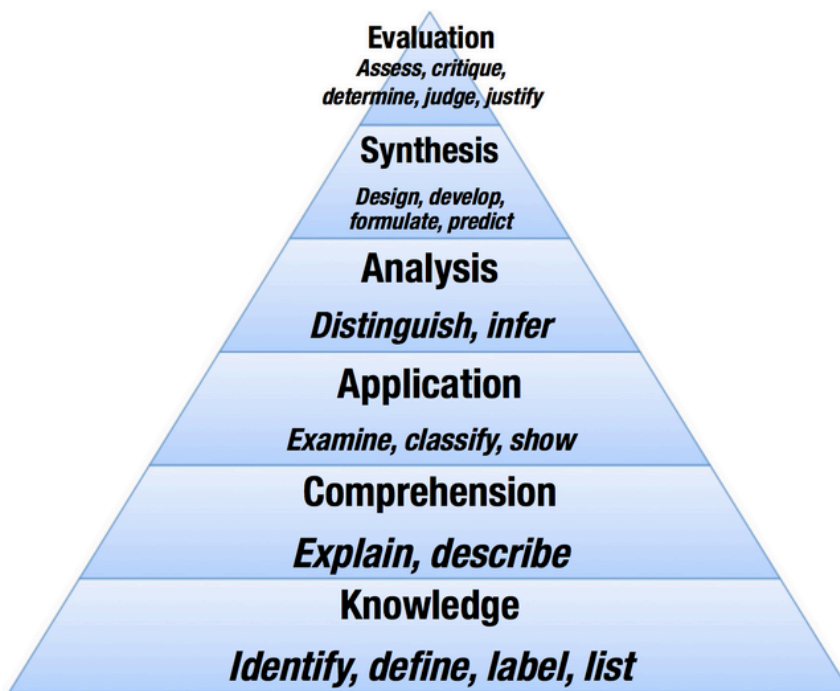
Based on what you've learned so far, choose the most "discussable" question from this list. (Remember to keep in mind: will the answers of each student be mostly the same, or can they bring significantly different perspectives to the response?)

- Compare the natural resources of Pennsylvania and Texas.
- What was the cause of World War I?
- What is the most efficient source of energy? Defend your response by evaluating the pros and cons of varying sources.
- Explain the process of mitosis.

Submit Answer

Using Bloom's Taxonomy to write discussion questions

Bloom's Taxonomy, developed in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, helps us define and distinguish between different levels of thinking and understanding. Using Bloom's Taxonomy can help you develop higher-order thinking questions that can lead to conversation in your online course.



Well-written discussion questions ask students to utilize higher-order thinking skills, which are demonstrated in the uppermost tiers of Bloom's Taxonomy: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Which of the following levels foster higher-order thinking discussion questions?

- Knowledge, comprehension, and application
- Comprehension, application and analysis
- Analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

Submit Answer

Sources:

Armstrong, Patricia. (2014). *Bloom's Taxonomy*. Retrieved 1 October 2014, from <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>

Williams, Vicki. (2014). *Types of Questions for On-Line Discussion*. Retrieved 1 October 2014, from http://ets.tit.psu.edu/learningdesign/crafting_question/quest_types