

Using Bloom's Taxonomy as a Framework for Student-led Discussions

Bloom's Taxonomy, specifically the cognitive framework, is widely known by educators and quite useful. Sharing it with the students can be powerful as well.

No matter the content of the course I teach, I take time early in the course to explain Bloom's Taxonomy to my students as a way to increase their metacognitive abilities. Throughout the course, I refer to Bloom's Taxonomy regularly, asking students to determine at what level they are working when answering questions or completing assignments.

Once students are familiar with the taxonomy, it can provide a great framework for student-led discussions. Simply provide a visual of Bloom's Taxonomy and then prompt the students to discuss course content using the taxonomy as their guide. Encourage students to begin with questions and comments that focus on knowledge and comprehension levels – often referred to as lower-order thinking skills. Once students determine that the topic has been sufficiently discussed at the foundational level, they can then move to the higher-order thinking levels by questioning and commenting in areas of application, analysis and synthesis.

Students find the use of Bloom's Taxonomy as a discussion framework beneficial because it provides direction without being too prescriptive or restrictive. The discussion flows naturally. I've noticed that the discussions are stronger – more comprehensive and insightful. Students develop better and more diverse questions when referencing Bloom's Taxonomy. A final benefit is that this discussion framework is flexible, which allows it to be used over and over again with ease. When used consistently, students know the expectations and the process, allowing for more time-on-task.

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