

TEACHING THAT TRANSFORMS



THE MARKS OF GOOD QUESTIONS

PLANNING FOR INTENTIONAL DISCUSSIONS

Types of Questions (Richard Osmer)

FACTUAL

- Asking for information
- The narrowest of questions
- Have a single right answer
- Not as difficult or threatening as offering opinions or insights

EXAMPLES

- Who was Jesus' mother?
- Where was Jesus born?

ANALYTICAL

- Asks people to analyze information and draw conclusions about it
- Moves beyond simple recall
- Teachers have an answer or range of answers in mind
- Builds on factual questions
- Takes more time than factual questions to be prepared for longer pauses

EXAMPLES:

- What is the role of "the poor" in Luke's Gospel?
- What are some theological differences between infant baptism and believer's baptism?

PRODUCTIVE

- Open-ended and does not seek a correct answer

- Based on learner’s creativity
- No one right answer
- Often deals with issues of application and transference
- The student “produces” answers that are genuinely his/her own.

EXAMPLES

- What are some different ways people come to know Christ?
- How did you come to know Christ?
- How is the church today like the church in 1-2 Corinthians?

EVALUATIVE

- Asks learners to make a value judgment or stake a claim
- No one right answer
- Broad and open-ended
- Takes more thinking time
- Help people become aware of the standards they apply when responding to an evaluative question.

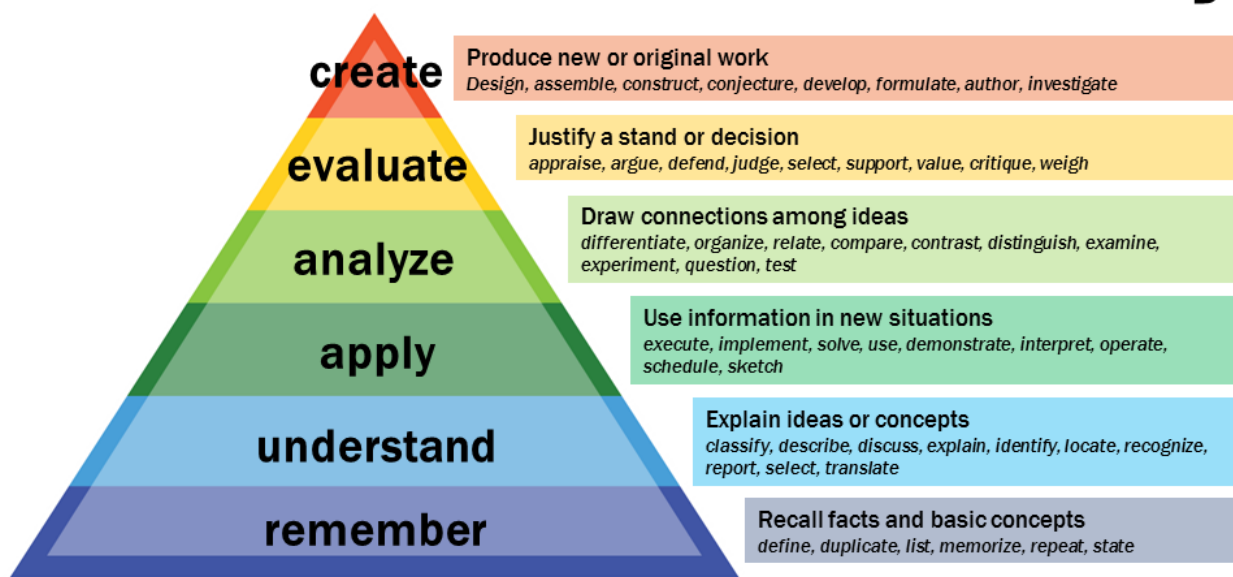
EXAMPLES

- What are the **most important** teachings of the Bible?
- What are the **five key** characteristics that make for a **good** minister?
- What was your **most significant** moment in your faith journey?

Beyond Application

We sometimes think that application is the highest, best form of question. But learning theorists tell us there are more above this.

Bloom’s Taxonomy



ANALYZE

compare, distinguish, categorize, critique

EVALUATE

appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value

CREATE

assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write

Examples: Sermon on the Mount

- Remember: List what Jesus said about loving enemies.
- Understand: Describe the general character of the teachings.
- Apply: How can you employ the teachings tomorrow?
- Analyze: Compare Jesus' teachings with the Mosaic Law.
- Evaluate: Decide which wins: love neighbor or love enemy.
- Create: Write down rules of engagement based on the Sermon on the Mount.

Tips for Good Questions

BANK

- Write a question bank.
 - All at once
 - Spaced out at appropriate places in lesson.
 - Will cover structure and elements in a later session.
 - Write more than you need.

SEQUENCE

(Galindo, p. 50)

- Ask
 - One at a time
 - Do not repeat
 - Don't needlessly reword
- Pause
- Acknowledge
 - Thank you
 - Say more...
- Ask next question

Selected Resources

Richard Robert Osmer, *Teaching for Faith: A Guide for Teachers of Adult Classes*. ISBN: 978-0664252175.

Includes information about question categories.

Israel Galindo, *Mastering the Art of Instruction: The 9 Essential Instructional Skills Every Teacher Needs to Master*. ISBN: 978-1514645109.

An easy-to-read manual that is helpful to give teachers as they improve their skills. Includes information about how to ask discussion questions.