

# Using the New Bloom's Taxonomy to Design Meaningful Learning Assessments

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YAAWYNNN. Oh no, that dreaded signal that students give to let you know they aren't engaged in the learning that you have planned. To reduce disengagement, teachers move beyond lecture in search of new ways to engage students in the learning process. Engaging students requires mechanisms that increase class participation and facilitate higher-order learning. The purpose of this segment is to provide teachers with some tools for promoting higher-order learning. Developing higher-order thinking skills in students is not an easy task. Historically, teachers have looked to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) for assistance. Bloom's model divided thinking skills into lower-order and higher-order knowledge. The early taxonomy began with knowledge, understanding, and application as lower level skills and cast higher level skills as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

### **Bloom's Taxonomy Revisited**

Although Bloom's Taxonomy proved useful to teachers and students alike, recent decades gave rise to numerous criticisms, implying that the model was out of date. These criticisms included concerns with setting applicability, contemporary language, and process conceptualization. More recently, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) have adapted Bloom's model to fit the needs of today's classroom by employing more outcome-oriented language, workable objectives, and changing nouns to active verbs (see "stairs" below). Most notably, *knowledge* has been converted to *remember*. In addition, the highest level of development is *create* rather than *evaluate*.

### **Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy**

Please see [http://www.apa.org/ed/new\\_blooms.html#%23](http://www.apa.org/ed/new_blooms.html#%23)

Source: Anderson, L.W., & Krathwohl, D.R. (Eds.) (2001).

A taxonomy of learning, teaching, and assessment:

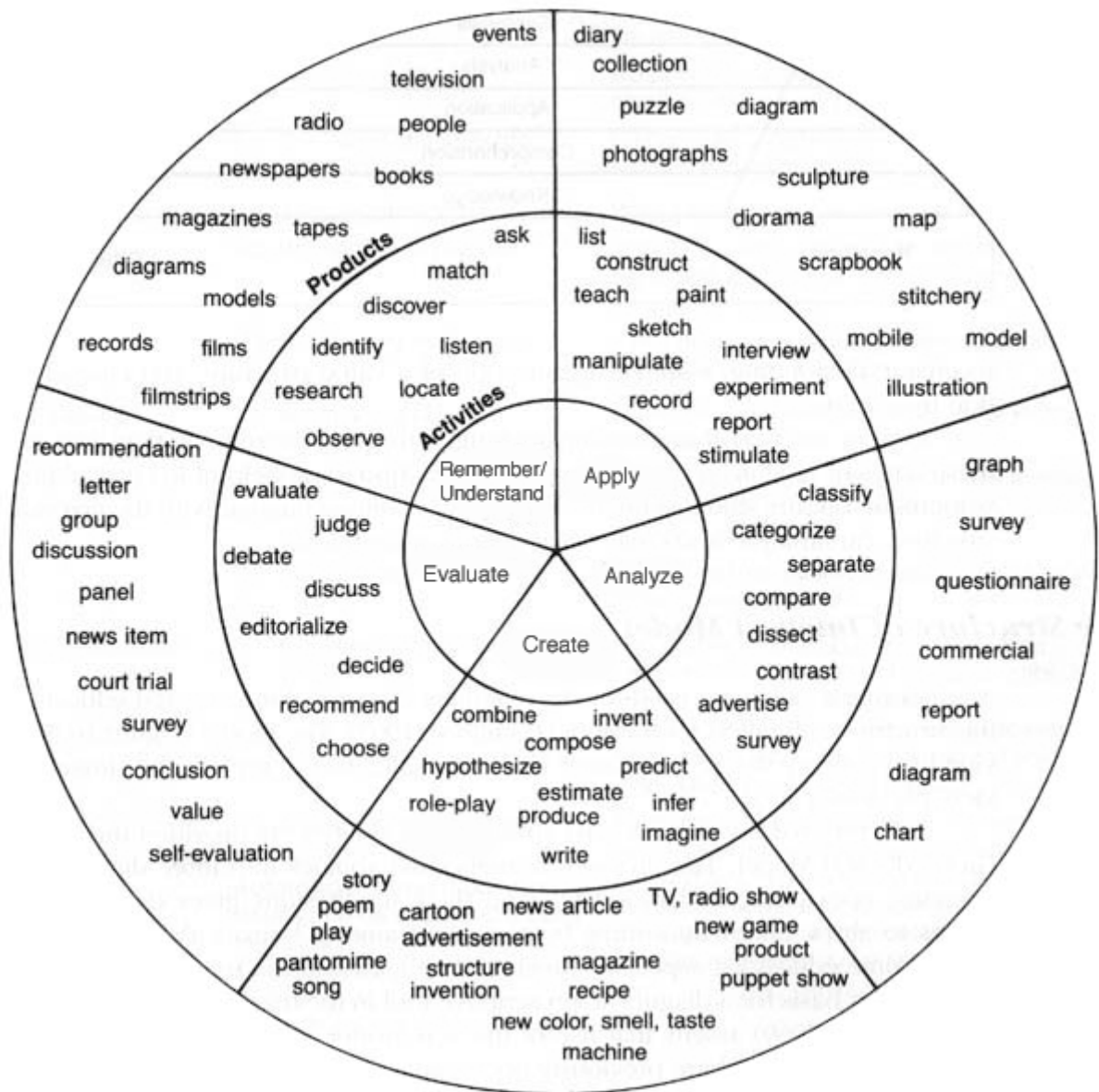
A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. New York: Longman.

### **How the Taxonomy Promotes Active Learning**

Clark (2002) provided an adaptation of Bloom's work to facilitate active learning. Although originally the tool was developed by a class of teachers for use in curriculum building in the high school level, the suggestions would work for college level classes as well. The inner ring contains the original levels of Bloom's taxonomy. The middle ring offers synonyms for the various academic

processes that comprise that taxonomic level. The outer ring links process to product. For example, if you wanted to increase application skills, you might ask students to construct diagrams of the key concepts involved in the content of the class. If you wish to improve evaluation skills, you might ask students to produce an editorial for the student newspaper in which they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a particular side of a controversial issue. We have modernized the language of the original circle to reflect the latest version of Bloom's Taxonomy.

### Cognitive Taxonomy Circle



Based on: Clark, B. (2002). Growing up gifted:  
Developing the potential of children at home and at school.  
Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.