

Using Williams' Taxonomy as an Instructional Tool

Williams' Taxonomy is an important model to use when teaching creative thinking skills. Creative thinking tends to involve tasks that are spatial, flexible, spontaneous, analogical, and divergent and is "right brain" thinking.

There are eight levels with certain types of student behavior associated with each level. Below is a brief overview of each level in Williams' Taxonomy. There are cue words associated with each level that can be used to trigger student responses to a given creative stimulus or challenge.

FLUENCY

Enables the learner to generate a great many ideas, related answers, or choices in a given situation. Sample cue words: Generating oodles, lots, many ideas

FLEXIBILITY

Lets the learner change everyday objects to generate a variety of categories by taking detours and varying sizes, shapes, quantities, time limits, requirements, objectives, or dimensions in a given situation. Sample cue words: Generating varied, different, alternative ideas

ORIGINALITY

Causes the learner to seek new ideas by suggesting unusual twists to change content or by coming up with clever responses to a given situation. Sample cue words: Generating unusual, unique, new ideas

ELABORATION

Helps the learner stretch by expanding, enlarging, enriching, or embellishing possibilities that build on previous thoughts or ideas. Sample cue words: Generating enriched, embellished, expanded ideas

RISK TAKING

Enables the learner to deal with the unknown by taking chances, experimenting with new ideas, or trying new challenges. Sample cue words: Experimenting with and exploring ideas

COMPLEXITY

Permits the learner to create structure in an unstructured setting or to build a logical order in a given situation. Sample cue words: Improving and explaining ideas

CURIOSITY

Encourages the learner to follow a hunch, question alternatives, ponder outcomes, and wonder about options in a given situation. Sample cue words: Pondering and questioning ideas

IMAGINATION

Allows the learner to visualize possibilities, build images in his or her mind, picture new objects, or reach beyond the limits of the practical. Sample cue words: Visualizing and fantasizing ideas.