**STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNING**

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Refer to the *Learning to Learn* overview, including Bloom’s Taxonomy.

**LEVEL 1 REMEMBER: Recall facts and basic concepts**

Note that this category is *remember* and not merely *recognize*.

Strategies:

Mnemonics: Use a song, rhyme, or acronym, or create a sentence using the first letter of each word you need to remember. Did you learn “Roy G. Biv” or an equivalent to remember that red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet are the rainbow colors in order?

Visual representations:

To memorize midwestern states in the US, students often learn about Chef MIMAL. The profile of states along the west bank of the Mississippi River can look like a chef with a tall hat, holding a tray. The chef’s name comes from the first letter of each state: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Kentucky and Tennessee form the tray.

Use a “memory palace,” a building, room, town, or other place you know well. Give each of the items you are striving to remember a specific location in the space and an action they take in that place. Mentally walk through your space, identifying the items and their activities.

Practice: Develop your devices early so you have more time to practice. Make good use of small breaks to practice your recall. Instead of reaching for your phone while waiting for the bus, use or create mnemonics or walk through your memory palace.

Exam tip: You will be asked to differentiate between similar terms or concepts. Make sure you remember by testing yourself or responding to flashcards or other prompts aloud.

**LEVEL 2 UNDERSTAND: Explain ideas or concepts**

Use active learning strategies to move from simply *knowing* to *understanding* what you know.

This might look like the difference between following GPS instructions (knowing) to arrive at a destination and being able to direct someone else (understanding) to the destination.

As you are learning, be curious about

* Why the concept works the way it does, or why the event occurred
* The context in which the theory does/doesn’t work
* How the concept connects to what you already know
* How the process would function in other circumstances
* Where you see this concept in action in your daily life

Challenge yourself by explaining the concept, aloud, to someone else. This ensures that your brain doesn’t let you skip over information that you merely recognize. Even if no one is listening, you can test your understanding by narrating an explanation as you draw/diagram what you are explaining.

**LEVEL 3 APPLY: Use information in new situations**

This stage marks a shift from learning the material to being able to use what you have learned. You will often apply your learning to new situations in class discussion, on assignments and in taking exams. You may even have a course that includes role play activities that place you in a character who must apply concepts in a given situation.

Do yourself the favor of being well prepared for class and contributing to discussions so you can practice applying what you learn even before you need to do so on a graded assignment or exam.

Use feedback well. Training yourself to see mistakes and constructive feedback as opportunities to learn more/do better is a way of being kind to yourself and improving progress on your goals.

* Review exam questions to identify what you understand and what needs more work. If similar questions come up, will you be able to respond correctly?
* Review peer comments on paper drafts and faculty comments on graded papers to understand their meaning; ask questions to be sure you understand. Review these again as you write the next paper so you continue to improve your work.

**LEVEL 4 ANALYZE: Draw connections among ideas**

Starting with individual concepts and details, identify how they interact to form or inform a larger concept or event. Or start with the “big picture” and assess what individual concepts and details impact the bigger idea.

For example, you may have learned the rules and objectives needed to play several individual games. As you play more games, you notice similarities among types of games and strategies for winning. If you now analyze the rules, objectives, and strategies for these games, you will be able to identify groups of games that share these characteristics. Now you are ready to categorize and strategize to win games you’ve never played before.

As you study, notice patterns, events, and interpretations that help you understand and classify information. Apply this analysis to better grasp new concepts and their relationships to previous information.

**LEVEL 5 EVALUATE: Justify a stand or decision**

At this level, you are making more decisions about what you need to know:

* What information is necessary to understand an issue?
* What are the key features of the problem and what is simply “noise?”
* What methods are needed to arrive at an effective interpretation or solution?
* What information is missing…and where will you find it?

To illustrate, consider the steps a physician may take to make a diagnosis: understand all presenting symptoms, determine which symptoms are related to the actual issue, assess environmental factors, determine what tests to order, assess test results, and identify a diagnosis.

You will have opportunities to develop and exercise this skill as you develop research projects, write papers, and craft presentations.

**LEVEL 6 CREATE: Produce new or original work**

This is where you contribute new information or new applications of things previously known. You are a student and a scholar. Your professors will continue to challenge you and will also be learning from the work you produce.

Each major’s capstone course asks students to integrate prior learning into an original work of research, writing, or performance. Work at this level builds off the skills you have developed all along the way, including:

* Managing your time well: start early, work in small “chunks” of the project, set and meet milestones
* Drawing conclusions that are supported by scholarly research
* Engaging with research and viewpoints that don’t support your thesis to determine their value, impact on your thesis, and how you’ll address them in your work
* Being able to communicate your research and argument effectively—in writing, verbally, and visually