

PREPARING FOR EXAMS BY GENERATING TEST QUESTIONS

Most university courses require students to do more than just learn the facts that are presented in lectures and textbooks. Teachers expect that students will think critically about the information so that they can respond to various types of higher-level thinking questions on tests and exams. The best way to prepare for such questions is to generate your own higher-level questions on course material and practice answering them.

FOUR LEVELS OF QUESTIONS*

Factual Questions: To answer these questions, you need to have learned important factual information from your course as presented in lectures and the textbook. Exam questions in this level often include:

- Summaries
- Definitions
- Recall of facts
- What/How/When/Where/Why? (based on factual info in notes or text)

Analytic/Interpretive Questions: To answer these questions, you need to integrate ideas so that you know how they connect or go together. You need to understand the *Big Picture* of course concepts and relationships between ideas. Exam questions in this level often include:

- How are ... and ... similar or different? (Compare)
- What evidence supports this thesis/argument?
- What are the causes/implications/consequences of...?
- What is an example of...? Explain

Hypothetical Questions: To answer these questions, you need to understand the implications of course ideas so that you can predict what will happen in a given situation. Exam questions in this level often include:

- If ... occurs, then what would happen?
- According to this theory, what will happen?

Evaluative Questions: To answer these questions, you need a very good understanding of course ideas. This comes from answering questions at the Factual, Analytical and Hypothetical levels. Exam questions in this level often include:

- Opinion or value judgments: Isgood or bad? Right or wrong. Why?
- How effective/ethical/relevant etc. is...? Why?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of...? Why?
- Which theory best explains...? Why?
- What is the best solution to this problem? Why?

*Based on J. Thorpe. *Method of Inquiry Book for Students and Faculty*.