Barrett’s Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension

1.0 Literal Comprehension focuses on ideas and information which are explicitly stated in the reading selection.

1.1 Recognition requires the student to locate or identify ideas or information explicitly stated in the reading selection:
   - Recognition of Details
   - Recognition of Main Ideas
   - Recognition of Sequence
   - Recognition of Comparison
   - Recognition of Cause and Effect Relationships
   - Recognition of Character Traits

1.2 Recall requires the student to produce from memory ideas and information explicitly stated in the reading selection:
   - Recall of Details
   - Recall of Main Ideas
   - Recall of Sequence
   - Recall of Comparison
   - Recall of Cause and Effect Relationships
   - Recall of Character Traits

2.0 Reorganization requires the student to analyze, synthesize, and/or organize ideas or information explicitly stated in the reading selection. The student may utilize the statements of the author verbatim, or he/she may paraphrase or translate the author’s statements:
   - Classifying
   - Outlining
   - Summarizing
   - Synthesizing

3.0 Inferential Comprehension is demonstrated by the student when he/she uses the ideas and information explicitly stated in the reading selection, his/her intuition, and his/her personal experiences as a basis for conjectures and hypotheses. The student may infer:
   - Supporting Details
   - Main Ideas
- Sequence
- Comparisons
- Cause and Effect Relationships
- Character Traits
- Predicted Outcomes
- Figurative Language (Meaning Inferred)

4.0 Evaluation requires responses by the student which indicate that an evaluative judgment has been made. The student may compare ideas presented in the reading selection with external criteria provided by the teacher, other authorities, or written sources with internal criteria provided by the student's experiences, knowledge, or values. Evaluative thinking may be demonstrated by asking the student to make the following judgments:

- Reality or Fantasy
- Fact or Opinion
- Adequacy or Validity
- Appropriateness
- Worth, Desirability, and Acceptability

5.0 Appreciation (Affective Domain) involves all the previously cited cognitive dimensions of reading, for it deals with the psychological and aesthetic impact of the selection on the reader. Appreciation calls for the student to be emotionally and aesthetically sensitive to the work and to have a reaction to the worth of its psychological and artistic elements. Appreciation includes both knowledge of and an emotional response to literary techniques, forms, styles, and structures:

- Emotional Response to the Content
- Identification With the Characters or Incidents
- Reaction to the Author's Use of Language
- Imagery

Sample Questions for Barrett's Taxonomy

Following are examples of questions relating to the five comprehensions detailed in Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension:

1.0 Literal Comprehension

1.1 Recognition
• Locate and identify the factors that caused the main character to ________.
• Locate and identify the individuals who caused the disturbance.
• Show me the index (table of contents, chapter headings, etc.).
• Find the page where ________ is described.
• Show me a word which you didn't know. How did you figure it out?

1.2 Recall
• Who is the author?
• What do you know about the author’s background (home, family, etc.)?
• Who is the central character?
• After ________ (an incident), what happened next?
• Tell me what happened first; then ________?

2.0 Reorganization
• Will you summarize for me the main ideas?
• What do you feel the author is trying to tell people?
• Will you describe for me, in your own words, the sequence of events which led to the central problem?
• What ideas are you sure about when you read what the author has written?
• Will you tell me the story?

3.0 Inferential Comprehension
• What is this story mainly about?
• Does this book remind you of any other book?
• Could you describe this book in a couple of words?
• Is there something in this book that isn't actually said?
• Was there anything in this book that was not the same as you've heard before?
• What is the problem of ________ (a character) in this story?
• If ________ (an incident) happened before ________ (another incident), would it make any difference in the story?
• Did you ever have an experience like this?
Can you find the general topic of this story in another book? In any reference books? Texts in other subjects?

4.0 Evaluation

- What kind of book is this?
- Does its setting make a difference?
- Does its time (of year, in history) affect the story?
- Do you think the story is really about _________?
- Is there a lesson to be learned in this story? If so, what?
- Do you think you can believe what it says? Why or why not?
- Do you agree or disagree with this book?
- What is your own opinion about _________ in this book?
- Is this something everyone should read? Why or why not?
- If only a few people should read it, who would you choose?
- Is it right for someone (a writer, the publisher, an organization, etc.) to print only a part of a whole story?
- Can you trust what this author (publisher, newspaper, magazine, etc.) says? Why or why not?
- If you do not know whether this book is true, what could you do to find out more about it?
- Was this a good story?
- If you could talk to the author, what would you tell him/her?
- Do you know anyone like _________ (a character)?
- Who do you know who likes this type of book?

5.0 Appreciation (Affective Domain)

- Do you think it is a happy (sad, frightening) story?
- Do you trust what you read?
- Do you believe everything you read? Why or why not?
- Do you think all of your classmates believe what they read?
- What was the best part of the story to you? Was this part in the beginning, middle, or end of the story? Do you have any idea why that part was where it was?
- What about this story made you happy (sad, scared)?