

Building Recurring, Pervasive Essential Questions for Integrated Navi and Literature  
Using Higher-level techniques in Benjamin's Bloom Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain

I. Knowledge – Learners achieve “knowledge” about a roughly 100 year period in the history of the Jewish people, and the literature composed during that time. They meet and learn the biographies of more than 50 historical figures (a dozen of whom's existence has also been confirmed by the archeological record).

II. Comprehension – Learners demonstrate “comprehension” of the Hebrew Biblical text and its narratives by summarizing it in their own word, and explaining why events in the text happen. Considering the causes and effects, or Pros and Cons, of the various actions undertaken in the narratives indicates comprehension of those underlying events.

III. Application – After learning about each of nineteen different literary techniques and six different Biblical genres through direct instruction, Learners are asked to apply these techniques, both by identifying them in future texts, and by writing poetry of their own using these techniques and genres.

IV. Analysis – The bulk of each class is devoted to the analysis of literature. In virtually each class, a prophetic poem is analyzed, and Learners infer the major idea or theme of the poem, and make inferences and find textual support to determine what the central message and function of the prophecy is. Learners also adduce evidence for their interpretations by examining the historical events of the time that the poem may have been designed to respond to.

V. Synthesis – Over a unit of classes, Learners take the analyses of the pieces of literature, and synthesize them to make even larger statements about either the historical period (by comparing multiple literary works from one period to determine how literature reflects the history), or the work (by considering the various recurring themes across the work of literature).

VI. Evaluation – Learners evaluate the series of choices made by the human actors throughout the course of the year, and determine whether those choices are myopic or self-serving in nature, or if they reflect the best overall value. Uziyahu's decision to act as a priest (lessons 6-8), Achaz's decision to bribe (lessons 17-20), Shevna's decision to revolt (lessons 29-32), Chizkiyahu's decisions to refrain from thanking G-d (lessons 34-36), then later to change the calendar (lessons 37-38), and then later still not to have children (lessons 41-44) are all choices that are evaluated through the help of the prophetic poetic reflections on those events.

Learners also evaluate the series of choices made by the authors throughout the course of the year, and determine which choices reflect deep, intentional thinking – and which seem to serve no greater purpose. Students evaluate why the author chose to use a particular genre or voice, whether the narrator is reliable or biased (lessons 9-10), engaged or distant (lessons 24-25), whether the use of literary techniques makes the text more beautiful or even does more by triggering within the reader the emotion described in the text (lessons 11, 54)

*Further illustration of the kinds of high level and recurring questions we ask appears in the attached documents.*