"Creating" Alternatives to Exams

Let's talk about Bloom's Taxonomy for a moment!

It's a means to classify learning outcomes to determine the depth of student learning and ability-

— which in itself is a guideline to the assessment that educators need to use.

"Evaluating" includes 'experimenting.'

"Applying" includes 'determining.'

"Remembering" might only require 'defining.'

Now, every learning outcome doesn't need to reach the 'creating' level!

But we can certainly aim for that level of student ability.

And that's actually a solution to a concern right now!
We all would like an assessment tool better than an exam. When students’ stress levels are high, they can’t demonstrate what they know, so their exam answers might give us poor insight into their understanding.

And if we minimize the use of exams, we reduce the chances for cheating, too.

And we embrace the ‘creating’ assessment a lot already – that’s the category that many projects often fall into.

But consider the different forms that these projects can take!

If students can’t communicate an idea, they may not know it well. So have them make a video centered around the concept!

Or a video game!

Or a board game!

Or a comic! Lots of options!

And if you want something more traditional – have the students write their own exam problems or ConcepTest questions, and provide full solutions!

There’s a lot more to talk about on the pluses and minuses of exams – but for now, consider Bloom’s Taxonomy. And why not try – being creative!

NOTE: Thanks to Matt Cooper for the idea on this comic! (Among many examples, Margot Vigeant has had her students make videos, and Elif Miskioglu has had her students make board games.)