SOLO Taxonomy

SOLO stands for Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome. The taxonomy is a useful way to characterize different levels of questions in exams and the corresponding responses expected from students. It originates from Biggs and Collis (reference below).

Pre-structural	• students are acquiring pieces of unconnected information • no organisation • no overall sense
Unistructural	• students make simple and obvious connections • the significance of the connections is not demonstrated
Multistructural	• students make a number of connections • the significance of the relationship between connections is not demonstrated
Relational level	• students demonstrate the relationship between connections • students demonstrate the relationship between connections and the whole
Extended abstract level	• students make connections beyond the immediate subject area • students generalise and transfer the principles from the specific to the abstract

Examples of how to use SOLO taxonomy include:

- Australian National University, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology Department of Computer Science, (comp2110-01-01.html)
- ON CONSTRUCTIVE ALIGNMENT Background notes to support a seminar given by Professor John Biggs (OnConstructiveAlignment_John_Biggs.rtf)
- PBL and SOLO (methpap7.pdf)
- University of Queensland, TEDI: http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/Assess/Assessment/solotax.html
- In written work and essays: http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcs/geog/line/repo1/solo.html

Biggs, J., 1995, Assessing for learning: some dimensions underlying new approaches to educational assessment. The Alberta Journal of Educational Research , 41 (1), 1 - 17.

Biggs, J.B., and Collis, K.F. (1982) Evaluating the Quality of Learning-the SOLO Taxonomy (1st ed) New York: Academic Press.