

Charlotte Tadych  
Lakeland College  
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Student Teaching Portfolio

***Standard Twelve:*** *The teacher understands the central ingredients of critical thinking and uses rational, evidence-based arguments in the presentation of classroom materials.*

Being a critical thinker is most important achievement in our education. As teachers, we work daily to move our students up the ladder of Bloom's Taxonomy to make sure they can take the information we have taught them and use it to critically think. We complete the steps of this ladder by providing our students with rational, evidenced-based arguments in the presentation of our classroom materials everyday.

In order to make sure the students can become critical thinkers, there are many steps that are put together in order to have this happen. The student must use prior knowledge, personal experiences, and the content learned in order to synthesize to create new understandings. Then, the teacher must provide the student's with the basic knowledge. The students must then be able to recall the information presented. Once students have mastered the knowledge level, one must then check their understanding of that knowledge. The student must be able to explain or paraphrase the information. By doing this, the student is demonstrating that they understood the material presented. After the student has mastered the knowledge and understanding of a concept, it is then that the student must be able to apply that information. Students can demonstrate this by applying the information in terms of writing or even creating a project of some sort. The final stages the students will be able to complete are analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These steps cannot be completed unless the teacher has built a foundation for the students to grow from. After the students have masters the lower levels of thinking, the teacher

must provide opportunities as well as resources for the students to move into the upper levels of thinking. As teachers, we want the students to be able to take a stand or create an opinion about a debate, or create a new product or point of view on a topic as well.

We as teachers must provide an abundance of classroom materials in order to get students to achieve higher levels of thinking. These materials should be rational as well as evidenced based. Examples of these materials would be scholarly articles, documentaries, and textbooks.

**Disposition:**

In order to successfully meet Standard Twelve, there are many dispositions in which teachers must display. Teachers must have a strong belief that Bloom's Taxonomy is important to the overall learning process. Each stage of Bloom's is important to engage students in critical thinking. Teachers must believe that the student should master each stage of Bloom's Taxonomy before moving on to the next level.

Teachers must have a positive disposition as well to keep students challenged and engaged with their learning. By having positive understandings of Bloom's Taxonomy, as a teacher one can challenge students to become independent learners and take ownership for their own learning and critical thinking skills. Positive attitudes are essential for the confidence in students to become critical thinkers.

Teachers also believe that like educators, students should also engage in self-reflection in order to become more successful students. It is a teacher's duty to encourage students to evaluate the work they have done to move through Bloom's Taxonomy to reflect back on the learning process. By reflecting back, the student will be able to find areas of weaknesses to work on and become a better student and critical thinker.

**Performance:**

During my student teaching, I have incorporated Standard Twelve on a daily basis. While at my high school and middle school placements, learning units built around Bloom's Taxonomy was incorporated everyday. Each unit I ensured that daily lesson plans began with knowledge and recall and then moved the student's to the next level. By the final lesson of the unit the students were able to be critical thinkers and create rational, evidence-based responses to the questions posed at the beginning of the unit.

While at both placements, learning units were designed by developing essential questions and critical thinking questions that the students should be able to master by the end of each unit. The essential questions were the questions that would lead students to master the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. After the students had demonstrated they were able to answer those questions accurately, we moved the students onto more critical thinking based activities. These activities included completing document based questions, in order for the students to find evidence to support their answer, reading scholarly articles to develop opinions, and also completing GRASP activities. The GRASP activities puts the students in the position to be a teacher and teach the subject to another audience that does not know the topic in which they are teaching. It was a great way to assess if students had mastered the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy as well as for the students to demonstrate they could master the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy as well.

**Artifact:**

The artifact I have chosen for this standard is a Great Depression unit I completed with the high school students. At Plymouth High School, while working with the sophomore U.S.

History class, we completed a unit on the Great Depression. We started the unit by presenting the students with essentials questions that they would be able to answer by the end of the unit. With those essential questions we also posed a critical thinking question for the students to answer on the final assessment. By the end of the unit with everything the students have gathered for information, they should have been able to master the critical thinking questions. We set the students up for success by mastering each level of Bloom's Taxonomy prior to giving them the critical thinking question.

For this artifact I have chosen to only include the final assessment that was used for the Great Depression unit. The students were responsible for stating the causes and effects of the Great Depression to the Great Recession, as well as state similarities. After the students completed this chart they were responsible for using their critical thinking skills to predict a possible economic crisis that could occur in the future. They had to use their knowledge and understanding of what causes a depression or a recession, analyze the possible industries that could be involved in a depression or recession, and then create a solution for their possible economic crisis. While students really struggled with this question at first, once they had time to process the question and allow themselves time to think about it, they created excellent and creative answers.

**Reflection:**

As I reflect on my student teaching experiences, I find that I was using Standard Twelve in every lesson that was created. Using Bloom's Taxonomy challenged students and myself to use higher levels of thinking. I realized that by using the model of Bloom's Taxonomy I was able to creating engaging and creative lessons to keep students engaged. When we can create

lessons that keep students engaged, we set up the opportunities for students to want to continue learning. By challenging students, we can help them to become life-long learners as well as educated citizens when they become adults.

I also learned during the time of student teaching that each student does learn at a different pace, and it takes students longer than others to achieve different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. I created many student centered learning activities to promote students to learn at their own pace and work at their own speed to become critical thinkers. As a teacher we cannot expect our whole class to master each stage of Bloom's Taxonomy at the same time. Every student learns differently and by promoting learning opportunities where they can learn at their own pace, they become active and engaged learners.