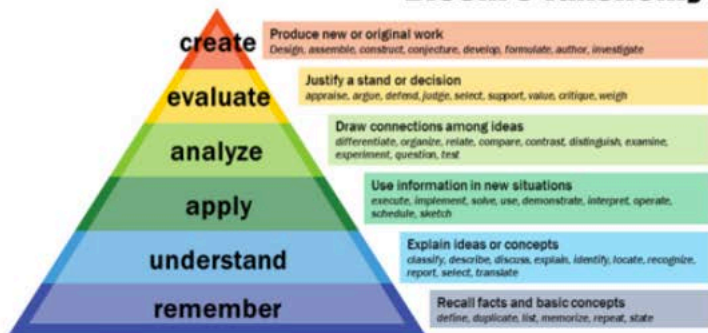




USING BLOOM'S TAXONOMY TO IMPROVE YOUR LESSONS

Hebe Hewitt (continue.... from last issue)

Bloom's Taxonomy



Perhaps some children will make it to the top of the pyramid over the course of the topic of teaching, for instance, using what they've learnt to design a plant which could survive in different conditions, while others only reach the apply stage. The key point is that each child is progressing and being challenged. If these tasks are planned in advance and communicated to the class, children can progress through them at their own speed, independently, and you are free to help when and where needed.

Another way to use Bloom's Taxonomy is to improve your questioning. Put simply, questioning is the teacher posing thoughtful questions to their students. While we might be tempted to asked closed questions (questions with set responses like 'yes' or 'no') to check children's understanding, these rarely illuminate their understanding of a topic, nor give an opportunity for further learning or exploration. Bloom's Taxonomy can be used to create questions to check children's understanding at

different levels. When questioning the class as a whole, it is important to plan your questions in advance, and to direct them at appropriate children – if a student has reached the evaluate level, a question at the remember level will not develop or demonstrate their understanding. This question might be better asked of a child who has reached the apply or remember level. Directing your questions in this way prevents a situation where a few children answer everything whilst the rest of the class is passive, and gives each child a chance to feel successful and grow in confidence. Alternatively, these questions could be a part of the tasks you have planned into

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Motivating Students

1. Give positive reinforcement
2. Convey enthusiasm
3. Create awareness of value
4. Cultivate personal responsibility
5. Foster supportive friendships
6. Link personal self-interest to the topic
7. Structure real-world experiences



your lesson. Most easily, the task for each level could be to answer the question. Alternatively children could complete a practical or investigative task, and then answer a question in summary. Here are just a few examples of questions which could be used at each level, there are many more which can be found on Google:

Advanced Create: How could you create/improve the facts?

What would it be like if ...? Can you elaborate on the reason ...? What would happen if ...?

Evaluate: Do you agree or disagree with the facts?

Would it be better if ...? Why do you think that ...? What would you recommend ...?

Analyze: What is the relationship between the facts?

Why do you think ...? What motive is there ...? What can you conclude ...?

Apply: How do the facts affect you?

How would you solve ...? What would result if ...? How would you use ...?

Understand: What do you know about the facts?

Can you explain ...? Describe what ...? What does it mean ...? Give an example ...?

Remember: What are the facts?

Who? What? Where? When? How?

Basic

In summary, Bloom's Taxonomy is a simple and easy tool you can use to improve your teaching. In just 5 minutes before a lesson, you can plan a range of questions for your students to answer. It can help you to ensure you challenge children of all abilities, and help you to assess their level of understanding. Perhaps most importantly, it will help you to design vibrant and varied lessons, with creative tasks and thought-provoking questions, which your children will enjoy actively participating in.

ACTIVE LISTENING Thomas Gordon

Time Required: At least 10 minutes. Try to make time for this practice at least once per week.

How to Do It: Find a quiet place where you can talk with a conversation partner without interruption or distraction. Invite him or her to share what's on his or her mind. As he or she does so, try to follow the steps below. You don't need to cover every step, but the more you do cover, the more effective this practice is likely to be.

1. **Paraphrase.** Once the other person has finished expressing a thought, paraphrase what he or she said to make sure you understand and to show that you are paying attention. Helpful ways to paraphrase include "What I hear you saying is..." "It sounds like..." and "If I understand you right..."

2. **Ask questions.** When appropriate, ask questions to encourage the other person to elaborate on his or her thoughts and feelings. Avoid jumping to conclusions about what the other person means. Instead, ask questions to clarify his or her meaning, such as, "When you say _____, do you mean _____?"

3. **Express empathy.** If the other person voices negative feelings, strive to validate these feelings rather than questioning or defending against them. For example, if the speaker expresses frustration, try to consider why he or she feels that way, regardless of whether you think that feeling is justified or whether you would feel that way yourself were you in his or her position. You might respond, "I can sense that you're feeling frustrated," and even "I can understand how that situation could cause frustration."

4. **Use engaged body language.** Show that you are engaged and interested by making eye contact, nodding, facing the other person, and maintaining an open and relaxed body posture. Avoid attending to distractions in your environment or checking your phone. Be mindful of your facial expressions: Avoid expressions that might communicate disapproval or disgust.

5. **Avoid judgment.** Your goal is to understand the other person's perspective and accept it for what it is, even if you disagree with it. Try not to interrupt with counter-arguments or mentally prepare a rebuttal while the other person is speaking.



6. **Avoid giving advice.** Problem-solving is likely to be more effective after both conversation partners understand one another's perspective and feel heard. Moving too quickly into advice-giving can be counterproductive.

7. **Take turns.** After the other person has had a chance to speak and you have engaged in the active listening steps above, ask if it's okay for you to share your perspective. When sharing your perspective, express yourself as clearly as possible using "I" statements (e.g., "I feel overwhelmed when you don't help out around the house"). It may also be helpful, when relevant, to express empathy for the other person's perspective (e.g., "I know you've been very busy lately and don't mean to leave me hanging...").

15 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS Skills for Modern Teachers

Janelle Cox



When schools are looking to hire a teacher, there are a few basic requirements that they are looking for: A College degree, experience working with children, and, of course, patience. Teachers need a variety of professional development skills along with knowledge of their subject matter and experience in order to be an effective teacher. Likewise, as the rapid developments in technology infuse into our lives, they affect the way students learn and the way teachers teach. Modern teachers need to be competent in notably basic skills, but new skill sets. Here are 15 of the many 21st-century professional development skills, or as we like to call it, "Modern skills" that today's teachers should possess.

1. **Professional Development:** Adaptability: In this modern, digital age, teachers need to be

flexible and be able to adapt to whatever is thrown their way. New technologies are developed every day that can change the way students learn, and the way teachers teach. Likewise, administrators are changing and updating expectations and learning standards. Being able to adapt is a skill that every modern teacher must have. If it's being able to adapt to the way students learn, the behavior their classroom exhibits, or their lesson plans, it is a definitely a trait that is a must-have.

2. **Confidence:** Every teacher needs to have confidence, not only in themselves but in their students and their colleagues. A confident person inspires others to be confident, and a teacher's confidence can help influence others to be a better person.

3. **Communication:** Being able to communicate with not only your students but with parents and staff is an essential skill. Think about it: Almost all of a teacher's day is spent communicating with students and colleagues so it is crucial to be able to talk clear and concise in order to get your point across.

4. **Team Player:** Part of being a teacher is being able to work together as part of a team or a group. When you work together as a team, it provides students with a better chance to learn and have fun. Networking with other teachers (even virtually) and solving problems together will only lead to success. Doing so fosters a sense of community not only in your own classroom, but school-wide as well.

5. **Continuous Learner:** Teaching is a lifelong learning process. There is always something to learn when you are teacher. The world is always changing, along with the curriculum and educational technology, so it's up to you, the teacher, to keep up with it. A teacher who is always willing to go that extra to learn will always be an effective, successful teacher.

6. **Imaginative:** The most effective tool a teacher can use is their imagination. Teachers need to be creative and think of unique ways to keep their students engaged in learning, especially now that many states have implemented the Common Core Learning Standards into their curriculum. Many teachers are saying that these standards are taking all of the creativity and fun out of learning, so teachers are finding imaginative ways to make learning fun again.

7. **Leadership:** An effective teacher is a mentor and knows how to guide her students in the right direction. She leads by example and is a good role model. She encourages students and leads them to a place of success.



8. Organization: Modern teachers have the ability to organize and prepare for the unknown. They are always ready for anything that is thrown their way. Need to go home sick? No problem, they have a substitute folder all ready to go. Studies show that organized teachers lead more effective learning environments. So it is even more imperative to be organized if you want higher-achieving students.

9. Innovative: A modern teacher is willing to try new things, from new educational apps to teaching skills and electronic devices. Being innovative means not only trying new things, but questioning your students, making real-world connections and cultivating a creative mindset. It's getting your students to take risks and having students learn to collaborate.

10. Commitment: While being committed to your job is a traditional teaching skill, it is also a modern one. A modern teacher needs to always be engaged in their profession. The students need to see that their teacher is present and dedicated to being there for them.

11. Ability to Manage Online Reputation: This 21st-century, modern teaching skill is definitely a new one. In this digital age most, if not all, teachers are online, which means they have an "Online reputation." Modern teachers need to know how to manage their online reputation and which social networks are OK for them to be on. LinkedIn is a professional social network to connect with colleagues, but Snapchat or any other social networking site where students visit, is probably not a good idea.

12. Ability to Engage: Modern teachers know how to find engaging resources. In this digital age, it is essential to find materials and resources for students that will keep them interested. This means keeping up to date on new learning technologies and apps, and browsing the web and connecting to fellow teachers. Anyway that you can engage students and keep things interesting is a must.

13. Understanding of Technology: Technology is growing at a rapid pace. In the past five years alone we have seen huge advancements and we will continue to see it grow. While it may be hard to keep up with it, it is something that all modern teachers need to do. Not only do you just need to understand the latest in technology, but you must also know which digital tools is right for your students. It's a process that may take time but will be greatly influential in the success of your students.

14. Know When to Unplug: Modern teachers know when it's time to unplug from social media and just relax. They also understand that the teacher burnout rate is high, so it's even more critical for them to take the time to slow down and take a moment for themselves. They also know when it's time to tell their students to unplug and slow down. They give their students time each day for a brain break and let them kick their heels up and unwind.

15. Ability to Empower: Teachers inspire, that's just one of the qualities that come along with the title. Modern educators have the ability to empower students to think critically, be innovative, creative, adaptable, passionate, and flexible. They empower them to be able to solve problems, self-direct, self-reflect, and lead. They give them the tools both digital and knowledgeable to succeed, not only in school but in life.

