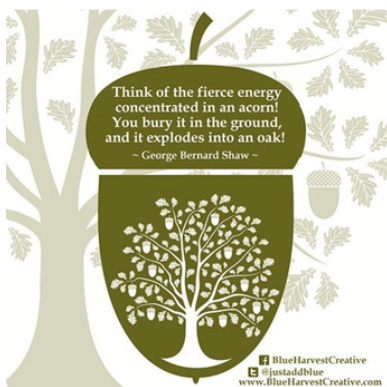


# The Acorn

A Newsletter for CSB/SJU Cooperating Teachers

Volume 6, no. 6--Friday, November 10, 2023



## Growing, Nurturing, and Supporting CSB/SJU Student Teachers

*The Acorn* is a newsletter for the cooperating teachers working with student teachers from the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University. This publication is intended to help our cooperating teachers understand their roles and responsibilities as well as provide them with current research and best practice in working with student teachers. Additional information helpful to mentorship, pedagogy, and current issues in education is often

included.

## A Message from the Director of Student Teaching

### Mentoring and Supporting Student Teachers' Questioning Skills

Recently, an area of note within student teacher observations and conversations has been questioning techniques. Understanding and knowing how to construct quality questioning techniques can be challenging for preservice teachers. Research shows that preservice teachers are able to notice student thinking in various activities; however, "it is not clear that they are sufficiently well-prepared to propose quality responses, largely in the form of questions before entering the classroom" (Walkoe & Levin, 2018, p. 129). This may be attributed to limited classroom experience or practice in various ways to deepen student learning in real classroom settings (p. 138). As student teachers continue to develop their pedagogies in their placements, it is important for us to mentor them in how they attend to responses and extend learning for their students.



We know that questioning techniques serve multiple purposes and are used to achieve well-defined goals:

\*to check preparation and probe for understanding

- \*to arouse interest and increase motivation
  - \*to develop insights and make connections
  - \*to guide upcoming learning
  - \*to stimulate critical thinking
  - \*to solve problems
  - \*to provide an incentive to act or reflect
- (Lewis, n.d., p. 5; Shanmugavelu, et al., 2020, p. 46).

We also know that questioning techniques generally align with the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy on which we teach. With that in mind, it is not surprising that research shows a large majority of the questions we ask exist in the lower levels of knowledge and comprehension (Fries-Gaither, 2008, p. 2; Lewis, n.d., p. 2). These types of questions provide us with information on our students' awareness, knowledge levels, and comprehension; however, they do little to provide us with an understanding of our students' processing and thinking. That is why the upper-level questions are so important.

At this point in the student teaching experience, teacher candidates should be utilizing higher-order thinking questions with their students. This requires planning and practice (Fries-Gaither, 2008, p. 3; Shanmugavelu, et al., 2020; p. 48; Walcoe & Levin, 2018; p. 142). Student teachers should be encouraged to embed higher-level thinking questions into their lesson plans. Follow-up questions that extend responses of the knowledge and comprehension types should be prepared and asked widely. Encouragement and coaching around questioning can be an excellent way for cooperating teachers to support student teachers as they continue to build this part of their pedagogy.

*Ideas for building in more higher-order thinking:*

- \*Script questions in advance; put in lesson plans and/or sticky notes with teacher materials
- \*Answer questions yourself, then ask yourself the follow-up question
- \*Plan the ways to extend questions to other students; prepare the question or follow-up stems
- \*Look to Bloom's Taxonomies for question stems (see link in resources below)
- \*Track your use of higher-order thinking questions to identify where more could be embedded
- \*Ask for a coach or mentor to help, track, or guide your thinking and practice

**References:**

- Fries-Gaither, J. (2008, October). *Questioning techniques: Research-based strategies for teachers*. Beyond Penguins and Polar Bears. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://beyondpenguins.ehe.osu.edu/issue/energy-and-the-polar-environment/questioning-techniques-research-based-strategies-for-teachers>
- Lewis, K. G. (n.d.). *Developing questioning skills - University of Delaware*. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://www1.udel.edu/chem/white/U460/Devel-question-skills-UTx.pdf>
- Shanmugavelu, G., Ariffin, K., Vadivelu, M., Mahayudin, Z., & R K Sundaram, M. A. (2020). Questioning techniques and teachers' role in the classroom. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 45–49. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3260>
- Walkoe, J., & Levin, D. M. (2018, January 1). *Using technology in representing practice to support Preservice Teachers' quality questioning: The roles of noticing in improving practice*. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from <https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/181146/>

**Weeks Eleven and Twelve with Student Teachers**

## **For Candidates in 12- or 16-week placements:**

### ***Weeks 11 & 12--***

- Assist student teacher to address areas needing improvement with continued informal observations and feedback
- Conduct one formal observation to ensure at least three (3) observations are completed by the end of week
- Elementary: Allow the student teacher to teach to 75-80% of the full load, building to full-time teaching for at least two consecutive weeks. These weeks should be done between weeks 11 -15.
- Secondary: Allow the student teacher to teach almost full time (one section less than the teacher's full load) building to full-time teaching for at least two consecutive weeks. These weeks should be done between weeks 11 -15.

## **For Candidates in 8-week placements:**

### ***Week 3 of second placement--***

- Work with the student teacher in planning, preparation of lessons and materials, monitoring student work.
- Review the student teacher's lesson plans
- Co-teach in subjects/classes the student teacher isn't leading
- Conduct one formal observation
- Allow the student teacher to teach at least one section of a course, building to two sections by the end of the week

### ***Week 4 of second placement--***

- Model teaching, learning, and assessment for the student teacher
- Conduct informal observations and provide actionable feedback
- Co-teach in classes/subjects the student teacher is not leading
- Review the student teacher's goals and performance, setting new goals for the remainder of the placement
- Allow the student teacher to teach up to two classes less than a full-time load, if the student teacher is prepared to do so

## **Quick Links**

[CSB/SJU Student Teaching Handbook](#)

### [Student Teaching Observations](#)

This observation/evaluation form should be used to complete observations throughout the placement. Six formal observations of the student teacher are required within the span of student teaching. We ask that you complete 6 for a 16-week placement, 5 in a 12-week placement, 3 in an 8-week placement, and 2 in a 5-week placement. The entire form does not need to be completed for each observation; however, by the end of the placement, each part should be addressed.

### Additional Forms:

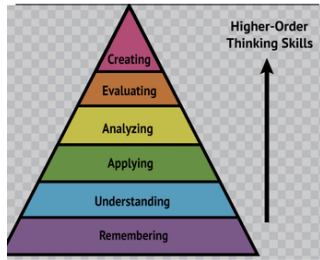
[Cooperating Teacher Information](#) (if not completed in the past three years)

[Feedback](#) (week 2 and as needed after)

[Cooperating Teacher's Final Evaluation of Student Teacher](#)

[Cooperating Teacher's Dispositional Evaluation of Student Teacher](#)

# Great Resources to Build Questioning Techniques



## Questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy

This list provided by Jason Johnson of Higher E-Learning outlines question stems aligned to Bloom's Taxonomy. Check it out [here](#).



## Effective Questioning and Classroom Talk

This resource from Liberty County Schools provides a rich list of teaching and learning opportunities to deepen learning. Download it [here](#).



## Are Questions the Answer?

Edutopia explores this question. Check it out [here](#).

## Coaching Adult Learners and Mentoring Student Teachers Requirements

Effective July 1, 2022, all individuals who serve in the capacity of cooperating teacher or university supervisor for student teachers are required to complete training on coaching strategies for adult learners. To meet this PELSB and State requirement, CSB/SJU provides three options for cooperating teachers and university supervisors:

1. For members of Education Minnesota, complete the training through their professional development platform: <https://meaonline.educationminnesota.org/catalog/courses/1333521>
2. For members of the CSB/SJU student teaching community, complete the training with us using this link: [Coaching Adult Learners training](#)
3. For individuals who have completed training with another placing institution, provide evidence in the form of a CEU certificate or letter from the granting institution to the CSB/SJU Director of Student Teaching via email at [jmeagher001@csbsju.edu](mailto:jmeagher001@csbsju.edu)

This training is required once every five years. A statewide system of reporting completion is in process to ensure all cooperating teachers and university supervisors who serve the state's student teachers have met this requirement. CSB/SJU will be reporting our completers to that entity each semester.

Thank you for your time and attention to this responsibility. The information you will glean from these trainings should be valuable to your role.



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**Jennifer Meagher**

Jennifer is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

