Framework for Curriculum Design

Understanding by Design (UbD)

Understanding by Design (UbD) is a rigorous model for thinking, organizing learning, and setting priorities for students and teachers. It takes the backward design approach to developing a curriculum or unit that begins with the end in mind and moves toward that end (p. 338). This paradigm includes the following components:

♦ *Big Ideas*: Big ideas are the core concepts, principles, theories, and processes that serve as the focal point of curricula, instruction, and assessment. They are the final destination of an inquiry (pp. 338-339, Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

♦ *Enduring Understandings*: In UbD, enduring understandings are written in full-sentence statements, describing what students should understand about the topic based on big ideas. The stem "Students will understand that…" provides a practical tool for teachers to facilitate students to reach understandings that are enduring and transferable to new situations (p. 342, Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

♦ *Essential Questions*: Essential questions pose as guides that promote inquiry and the uncoverage of a subject. They are the multiple paths that students and teachers can take in order to reach the destination. Essential questions do not yield single straightforward answers but produce different plausible responses. They can be either overarching or topical on the unit level in scope (p. 342, Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

By using the principle of UbD and guided by big ideas, enduring understandings, and essential questions, this Delaware Visual & Performing Arts Statewide Curriculum promotes discovery-based learning and teaching. Together, learners and teachers assume the responsibility of uncovering and connecting pieces of information, knowledge, and skills central to the discipline.

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

The Statewide Recommended Curriculum for Visual & Performing Arts reflects the cognitive levels of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy.

The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives was created by Benjamin Bloom in the 1950s as a means of expressing qualitatively different kinds of thinking. Bloom's Taxonomy has since been adapted for classroom use as a planning tool and continues to be one of the most universally applied models across all levels of schooling and in all areas of study.

During the 1990s, Lorin Anderson (a former student of Benjamin Bloom) led a team of cognitive psychologists in revisiting the taxonomy with the view to examining the relevance of the taxonomy as we enter the 21st century.
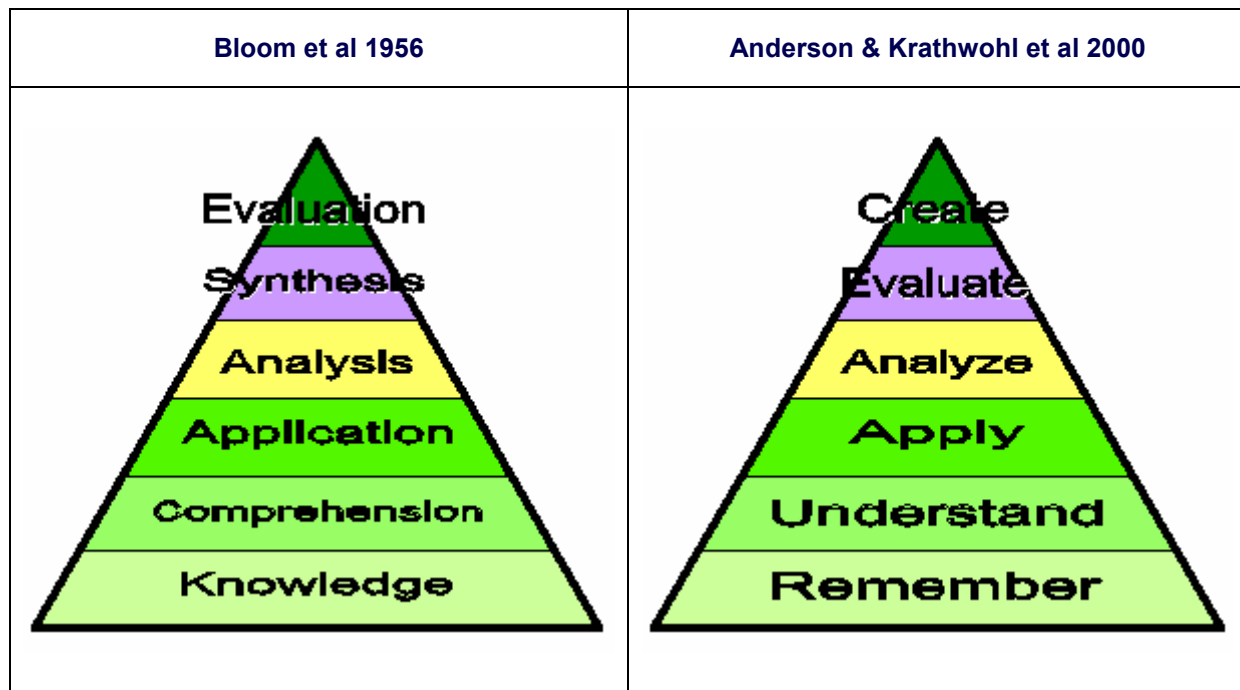
As a result of the investigation a number of significant improvements were made to the existing structure:

1. The names of six major categories were changed from noun to verb forms. The reasoning behind this is that the taxonomy reflects different forms of thinking, and thinking is an active process. Verbs describe actions, not nouns, hence the change.

2. The knowledge category was renamed. Knowledge is an outcome or product of thinking not a form of thinking per se. Consequently, the word knowledge was inappropriate to describe a category of thinking and was replaced with the word remembering instead.

3. Comprehension and synthesis were re-titled to understanding and creating respectively, in order to better reflect the nature of the thinking defined in each category.

4. The major categories were ordered in terms of increased complexity. As a result, the order of synthesis (create) and evaluation (evaluate) have been interchanged. This is in deference to the popularly held notion that if one considers the taxonomy as a hierarchy reflecting increasing complexity, then creative thinking (i.e., *creating* level of the revised taxonomy) is a more complex form of thinking than critical thinking (i.e., *evaluating* level of the new taxonomy). Put quite simply, one can be critical without being creative (i.e., judge an idea and justify choices), but creative production often requires critical thinking (i.e., accepting and rejecting ideas on the path to creating a new idea, product or way of looking at things.)

Michael Pohl - http://eprentice.sdsu.edu/J03OJ/miles/Bloomtaxonomy(revised)1.htm

Visual Comparison of the Two Taxonomies

Bloom et al 1956	Anderson & Krathwohl et al 2000

Leslie Owens Wilson- http://www.uwsp.edu/education/lwilson/curric/newtaxonomy.htm