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# Adapted Education in the EFL Classroom

Reviewing Textbook Activities Through Bloom's  
Revised Taxonomy

Bachelor's project in LGU53002 Pedagogikk og Elevkunnskap 4  
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**Abstract**

In the Norwegian Education Act, it is stated that “education shall be adapted to the pupils’ abilities and assumptions” (Opplæringsloven, 1998, § 1-3, *my translation*). Håstein & Werner (2014) claim that the actual subject can be a source for adapted teaching, *provided that* the teaching instructions are varied. Seeing how several studies have shown that Norwegian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers rely heavily on textbooks, knowledge about what these resources can provide in terms of variety is arguably essential. As long as EFL teachers familiarise themselves with the particular strengths and weaknesses of a given book, the textbook should be regarded as a useful supplement in catering for adapted education. As an attempt to provide a constructive view on EFL textbooks, this thesis reviews interactive speaking activities (ISAs) in the three textbooks *Stages* (Areklett, Pettersen, Røkaas, & Tørnby, 2014a), *Enter* (Diskin & Winsvold, 2016) and *Connect* (Haegi, Madsen, & Mohammad-Roe, 2017). By classifying the activities using Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy, and analysing the results in light of sociocultural theory, I hope to provide EFL teachers with guidelines as to how these textbooks can be used to mediate adapted education.

## Table of Content

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Theory .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Adapted teaching .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Sociocultural theory.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Technology as scaffolding tools .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Blooms Revised Taxonomy .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Definition of interaction.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Previous research.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>Method.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Selection of material .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>The Taxonomy Table .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>My objectivity as the writer.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>Results .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Clarification of the results.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>The Taxonomy Table .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Diagrams .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Textbook 1: Stages .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>Variation.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Development.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Modifying an activity: Apply – Factual Knowledge .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Textbook 2: Enter .....</i>	<i>15</i>
<b>Variation.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Development.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Modifying an activity: Apply – Factual knowledge .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Textbook 3: Connect.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<b>Variety.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Development.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Modifying an activity: Understand – Conceptual knowledge.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix A.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix B.....</b>	<b>24</b>

## Introduction

As an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher, there are numerous challenges to deal with in the classroom. Many of these challenges may come as a consequence of the individual differences of learners. The principle of *tilpasset opplæring*, which from now on will be referred to as *adapted education*, is authorised in the Norwegian Education Act, where it is stated that “education shall be adapted to the pupils’ abilities and assumptions” (Opplæringslova, 1998, § 1-3, *my translation*). The teacher is, in other words, required by law to adapt teaching in order to take account of individual learner differences. According to Ellis & Shintani (2014), teachers can cater to learners’ variation by adopting a flexible teaching approach, involving a range of different instructional activities (p. 26). This requires a creative strategy, where teachers have to build a wide repertoire of activities to match the individual differences of learners.

Creative teaching is seldom viewed as something that is achieved through the use of textbooks. In fact, several researchers claim that textbooks create a “dependency culture” (Hall, 2018, p. 235). In a study profiling Norwegian EFL teachers in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Ibsen & Hellekjær (2003) concluded that 98.5% of the participants heavily relied on textbooks. These numbers could be interpreted as somewhat alarming. On the other hand, the extensive use of textbooks could also indicate that teachers either *need* them, or view them as beneficial. This is supported by Hall (2018), who argues that “textbooks reduce the amount of time teachers require for preparation, and can provide a sense of security” (p. 235). Nevertheless, as McGrath (2013) states, teachers should select and modify the content to be more appropriate for the target learners (p. 127). From this point of view, textbooks do not have to be discarded completely, as long as they are used critically. In order to adapt a textbook, however, the teacher needs to be familiar with it. In other words: a newly educated teacher might not be able to change, omit or add instructions accordingly until he/she has worked with the textbook for some time. During my time in teacher training, I have become convinced that every newly educated or student teacher should have an overview and grasp of Norwegian EFL textbooks. By classifying interactive speaking activities (ISAs) using Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy, this thesis provides a review of three of the most recently published textbooks aimed at Norwegian EFL learners in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In an attempt to provide a more nuanced view on textbook utilisation, I will analyse the results in relation to sociocultural theory. This thesis aims to ascertain whether or not *Stages* (Areklett, Pettersen, Røkaas, & Tørnby, 2014a), *Enter* (Diskin & Winsvold, 2016) and *Connect* (Haegi, Madsen, & Mohammad-Roe, 2017) offer a

wide repertoire of ISAs, and how they could potentially be improved in order to mediate adapted education.

## **Theory**

### **Adapted teaching**

Engen (2010) defines adapted education as following: “Adapted education involves all measures taken on an individual -, organisational – or cultural level, helping learners to optimally realise their learning and developmental potential; both when it comes to instrumental competence and personal development” (p. 52, *my translation*). Adapted education is often discussed from two perspectives: one narrow and one wider understanding of the concept (Bachmann & Haug, 2006). The narrow understanding indicates measures, methods and ways of organizing in order to adapt the education in the classroom, while the wider understanding reflects a more overall principle in relation to the entire school system. As this thesis reviews textbook activities, the focus will be on the narrow understanding of adapted education. Engen’s definition will be central when discussing the results of the classification, as it points out the learners’ developmental potential. However, his definition fails to explain more specific examples of adaptation. In order to make the concept more manageable, Håstein & Werner (2014) have formulated a set of values that clarify how adapted education could be approached. One of these values is *variation*, which they claim is one of the most fundamental topics on the subject of pedagogy. They state that “in order to implement the principle of adapted education, one must offer a broad register of working methods and teaching methods” (Håstein & Werner, 2014, p. 53, *my translation*). Furthermore, they claim that the actual subject, in this case EFL, is a source for adapted education, and that variation can be attained through the critical and conscious choice of teaching material. As this thesis reviews if and how textbook activities mediate adapted education, the focus of discussion will be on *learners’ developmental potential* suggested in Engen’s definition, as well as the level of *variation* used in relation to Håstein & Werner’s theory.

### **Sociocultural theory**

Lerner’s developmental potential is a theme that is at the very core of sociocultural theory. This draws on the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky who argued that all teaching should aim towards the learner’s zone of proximal development (ZPD) to enable and support learning. Vygotsky (1978) defines the ZPD as “the difference between the child’s developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in



collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 85). The metaphor *scaffolding* is commonly used in pedagogical literature when describing the support the “expert” provides the “novice” in the ZPD (Moen, 2013, p. 259). Although Vygotsky was mainly concerned with the interaction between the expert and the novice, current sociocultural theorists have proposed that ZPDs do not require the assistance of an expert; they can arise in interaction between learners (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 15). In relation to adapted education, this arguably indicates that EFL learners should be able to support each other in learning. Wells (1999) supports this by stating that “whenever people collaborate in activity, each can assist the others, and each can learn from contributions of the others” (p. 333). This implies that interaction between learners is essential in EFL learning and, by extension, adapted education. The view is echoed by Engen (2007) who argues that social interaction and co-operation is among “the main components constituting adapted education” (p. 74). Textbook activities that enable interaction between learners are, in light of these statements, fundamental to adapted education.

### **Technology as scaffolding tools**

In the book *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000), it is claimed that new technologies can be used to provide scaffolds and tools to enhance learning. “Like training wheels, computer scaffolding enables learners to do more advanced activities and to engage in more advanced thinking and problem solving than they could without such help” (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 214). The book also argues that the interactivity of the technology environments is a very important feature for learning. The use of technology as a mediating tool in the EFL classroom can, from this perspective, help learners develop in their ZPDs. Considering that The Norwegian Curriculum implements digital skills as one of the five basic skills that are deemed important for students to be able to progress in school, it is not only fruitful, but necessary to use technology in the EFL classroom (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013). However, as the book emphasises, technology can only enhance student achievement if used properly: “inappropriate uses of technology can hinder learning” (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 206). In order for textbook activities to cater for adapted education by the help of technology, they need to provide coherent and expedient instructions.

### **Blooms Revised Taxonomy**

According to Vygotsky, interaction with the surrounding environment is a medium in which the individual develops cognitive processes (Moen, 2013, p. 252). Vygotsky viewed cognition as a social product, and was specifically concerned with the importance of language as a *mediating tool* when developing the ability to think, reason and solve problems. With regard

to this, textbook activities could be considered as mediating tools that can initiate scaffolding by challenging learners to develop cognitive processes. A question that naturally follows is whether textbook activities offer instructions that enable learners to access their ZPDs. To answer this question, I have utilised Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, which is a scheme for classifying educational goals, activities and standards (Krathwohl, 2002). The framework was conceived by Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl (1956) as *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. As a means to incorporate new knowledge and thought into the framework, Anderson & Krathwohl published a revision of the taxonomy in 2001. In contrast to the single dimension of the original taxonomy, the revised framework is two-dimensional. It emphasises what learners *know* (the knowledge dimension) and *how they think* (the cognitive processes dimension), and their interrelationship is known as *The Taxonomy Table* (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy is applicable when reviewing a textbook's potential for adapted education, as it represents a move away from passive views of learning toward more cognitive and constructivist perspectives (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 38). Anderson & Krathwohl argue that problem solving initiates constructive and cognitive processes within the learner, and call this *meaningful learning*. This contrasts with the more passive *rote learning*, where students simply seek to add new information to their memories, without necessarily understanding how it can be used (2001, pp. 64–65). The two expressions *transfer* and *retention* are connected to these two types of learning. Retention is the ability to remember material at some later time in much the same way it was presented during instruction, while transfer is the ability to use what was learned to solve new problems, answer new questions, or to facilitate learning new subject matters (2001, p. 63). As the two dimensions lie along a continuum of gradually increasing complexity, it is possible to review the activities' ability to cater for development. If the textbook offers a range of activities that meets the standards of both knowledge types and cognitive processes, they are well equipped for adapted education. Looking at textbooks through the lens of The Taxonomy Table, it is also possible to understand the design of, and relationships between, the activities. As noted by Krathwohl (2002), using the table to classify activities provides a clear, concise visual representation of a particular course or unit (p. 218). In this way, rows, columns and cells that have numerous entries become evident, as do those that have no entries at all. This information can further be used to discuss how a textbook needs to be modified in order to cater for adapted education.

**Definition of interaction**

Because *interaction* is a keyword throughout this thesis, it is useful to clarify its definition in this context. Ellis (1999) distinguishes between two different, but related, meanings of interaction, which are connected to Vygotsky's theory of cognition as a social product acquired through interaction. Firstly, interaction can be viewed as the social behaviour that occurs when one person communicates with another. Interaction in this sense is *interpersonal*. It can occur face-to-face, in which case it is usually oral, or it can take place as displaced activity, in which case it is generally written. Secondly, Ellis (1999) argues that interaction can occur "inside our minds, both when we engage in the kind of 'private speech' discussed by Vygotsky (1978), and more covertly, when different modules of the mind interact to construct an understanding of, or a response to, some phenomenon" (p. 1). Even though these two types of interactions can be understood as parts of the same process, this assignment will concern itself mainly with the oral interaction of the interpersonal kind. When used in this text, the key word *interaction* is understood as oral communication between two or more participants.

**Previous research**

To my understanding, there has not been much research into the relationship between textbooks and adapted teaching. However, some research has been done on adapted education in EFL that has resulted in conclusions concerning the extensive use of textbooks. Ibsen & Hellekjær (2003) directed a quantitative survey that profiled Norwegian EFL teachers in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. As mentioned in the introduction, they concluded that 98.5% of the participants heavily relied on textbooks. Flemmen (2006) has a similar conclusion in her qualitative study, observing teaching of EFL in primary school. She states that a lot of unused potentials were recognised in the lessons, concluding that teachers are too dependent on their textbooks (2006, p. 179). As one of her research questions was how EFL teachers mirror adapted education, she draws on the components' variation, flexibility and creativity, when discussing success within adapted education. Another study by Skjelbred, Solstad & Aamotsbakken (2005) mapped learning materials and resource practices in Norwegian primary school. This research resulted in findings saying that teachers who rely mainly on textbooks tend to emphasise a more traditional pedagogy, meaning an emphasis on teacher-based lessons and individual learner activity, and subsequently very little group work. In terms of how teachers used textbooks, they discovered that engaging learners with "individual work with tasks" scored the highest (2005, p. 73).

As the above mentioned studies show, the discussion about the use of textbooks seems to be centred around the pros and cons of using them. Beyond this, there is limited research concerning the nuances of textbook use. By reviewing the three textbooks *Stages*, *Enter* and *Connect*, I hope to contribute to this discussion, and to offer a constructive view on Norwegian textbooks for 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. By classifying a selection of activities in one unit of each textbook, it should be possible to say something about how these textbooks can cater for adapted education: what they provide and what needs to be modified.

## Method

Because the aim of this thesis is to examine adapted education's possibilities in written resources, I have chosen to perform a qualitative document analysis. This method comprises a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, requiring data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). It is an iterative process that combines elements of content analysis and thematic analysis. According to Bowen, "content analysis is the process of organizing information into categories related to the central questions of the research" (2009, p. 32). In relation to this thesis, the content analysis is the classifying of activities within the Taxonomy Table. Furthermore, the thematic analysis involves a closer look at the selected data in order to uncover prevailing themes and characteristics. This thesis will implement a thematic analysis of each book, based on the results of the classification. The discussion is divided accordingly into three parts, with one part devoted to each book, where I discuss the results from the content analysis in light of sociocultural theory. In order to elicit a better understanding of how textbooks can be used in catering for adapted education, I will also take a closer look at one activity from each textbook. I have chosen to focus on these activities because they are clearly over-represented in the Taxonomy Table. By viewing them from a sociocultural perspective, it is possible to develop the activities into more challenging instructions that can both enable learners to access their ZPDs and allow a bigger range of variety of activities. For example, if one textbook has an over-representation of activities in the intersection of *Remember* and *Factual knowledge*, and a subsequent lack of activities in *Evaluate* and *Conceptual knowledge*, any activity can be changed in order to fulfil the demands of the latter two. To summarise, the content analysis will provide information about whether textbooks offer a wide repertoire of ISAs. The thematic analysis will be elaborated on in the discussion, when examining how textbooks mediate adapted teaching.

### **Selection of material**

The textbooks chosen for this document analysis are *Stages* (Areklett et al., 2014a), *Enter* (Diskin & Winsvold, 2016) and *Connect* (Haegi et al., 2017). All textbooks are written and designed according to the competence aims in the Norwegian Curriculum, which are specified in each of the books. In the interest of narrowing the field of reference, I decided to focus on textbooks intended for secondary school. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade was chosen for no other reason than that it is the middle grade in this level of education, and as such constitutes the closest thing to a cross section of this three year period. The specific text books were selected because they are the three most recent published text books aimed at Norwegian EFL learners in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

It goes without saying that classifying all activities across every book would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, I have selected the one unit from each book that I deem to be most relevant to my analysis. The specific units were chosen due to their similarity in topic: *Stars and Stripes* in *Stages* (Areklett et al., 2014a, pp. 198–247), *Australia and New Zealand* in *Enter* (Diskin & Winsvold, 2016, pp. 152–199), and *Living in America* in *Connect* (Haegi et al., 2017, pp. 44–87). All three units correspond to the competence aims in the Norwegian Curriculum, connected to *culture, society and literature* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013). Furthermore, I have classified activities that focus on interactive speaking. According to Vygotsky, interaction between learners works as a mediating tool in developing cognitive processes (Moen, 2013, p. 252). In relation to this, the interactive speaking activities have great potential in catering for learner’s development. Thus, ISAs are relevant when examining possibilities in which textbooks can scaffold learners and mediate adapted education.

All of the three chosen textbooks have instructions that clearly specify which activities focus on spoken interaction – *Stages: Speaking spot*, *Enter: Speaking* and *Connect: Talking*. The teacher book connected to *Stages* indicates that the activity category *Viewpoints* can also be executed through speaking interaction (Areklett, Pettersen, Røkaas, & Tørnby, 2014b). However, the majority of these activity descriptions contain the verb “discuss”, which makes the *Viewpoint* activities rather unvaried, and thus superfluous contributions to the classification. To conclude, the selected activities for this qualitative document analysis are interactive speaking activities (ISAs) from the units *Stars and Stripes* in *Stages*, *Australia and New Zealand* in *Enter* and *Living in America* in *Connect*.

Considering that the classification of the activities found in the three units of these three books comprises only a small part of a much bigger picture, this thesis cannot make broad claims about how Norwegian EFL textbooks cater for adapted teaching in general.

However, all textbooks have units that have an internally similar design, which makes one unit from one book relatively representable for the rest of the units from the same book. Seeing how these textbooks are the three most up-to-date resources of their kind, the analysis will be able to say *something* about how ISAs enable adapted learning in Norwegian EFL textbooks for 9<sup>th</sup> grade learners.

### **The Taxonomy Table**

As previously mentioned, the two dimensions in the Taxonomy Table are *cognitive process* and *knowledge*. The cognitive process dimension consists of six categories: *Remember*, *Understand*, *Apply*, *Analyse*, *Evaluate* and *Create*. The continuum underlying the cognitive process dimension is assumed to be cognitive complexity; that is, *Understand* is believed to be more cognitively complex than *Remember*, *Apply* is believed to be more cognitively complex than *Understand*, and so on (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 5). There are 19 cognitive processes that fit within the six categories. These 19 specific cognitive processes are intended to be mutually exclusive; together they delineate the breadth and boundaries of the six categories (2001, p. 66). In this thesis, these 19 cognitive processes are not added to the table showing the results from the classification, but can be found in Appendix A. The knowledge dimension contains four categories: *Factual*, *Conceptual*, *Procedural* and *Metacognitive*. These categories are assumed to lie along a continuum from concrete knowledge (Factual) to abstract knowledge (Metacognitive). The knowledge dimension also has subcategories, which are attached in Appendix B. As a means to demonstrate how The Taxonomy Table is utilised in this thesis, the following activity retrieved from *Stages* is analysed as an example: *Give a three-minute presentation on either Thanksgiving or President Abraham Lincoln* (Areklett et al., 2014a, p. 229). The noun “presentation” provides clues as to the desired cognitive process. As can be seen in Appendix A, “presentation” is associated with the cognitive category *Apply*. The noun phrase “Thanksgiving or President Abraham Lincoln” gives clues as to the desired type of knowledge. Information about a tradition and/or a president is knowledge about a specific element, which signifies *Factual knowledge*. In terms of the Taxonomy Table, this activity corresponds to the intersection of *Apply* and *Factual knowledge*.

### **Problems with the Taxonomy Table**

Even though a document analysis offers a range of benefits, such as efficiency and stability, there are a number of notions to be aware of. Bowen (2009) states that “researchers should look at documents with a critical eye and be cautious in using documents in their studies” (p. 33). He also argues that texts should not necessarily be treated as precise or accurate. This

raises a number of problems relating to reliability when categorizing activities in the Taxonomy Table. As explained above, the method used in this thesis is to categorise sentences into verbs and noun phrases, in order to place them in the Taxonomy Table. However, a piece of text can be interpreted in different ways, depending on who is reading it. Additionally, as Anderson & Krathwohl (2001) state, verbs may be ambiguous in terms of the intended cognitive processes, or nouns may be ambiguous in their intended knowledge (p. 33). Their suggestion is to use multiple sources of information when classifying activities. In an attempt to adhere to that principle, I utilised the teacher books associated to each textbook. However, as these contributed to limited and, in some cases, almost no additional information about how to interpret the activities, they were of little help. As a means to apply as critical an approach as possible, I decided to classify the activities from a problem solving perspective, and ask myself: what is the easiest way of “solving” this activity? An example of this approach is the understanding of the following example from Stages: “Read, sing or act out “America” in class. Find a version of it on the internet if you need inspiration” (Areklett et al., 2014a, p. 202). If learners chose to *act out* the song from the musical *West Side Story*, the activity would require them to use *Procedural knowledge* in the sense that they need *subject-specific techniques* (see Appendix A) to perform a musical. However, the easiest way of solving this problem is to *read* the text, which only requires *Factual knowledge*. In order to execute this activity, the learners *can* use *Procedural knowledge*, but the activity does not *require* it. Require is in this sense a keyword, both in the classification of activities, and in the discussion of the results. As activities can be interpreted in different ways depending on who is decoding them, and in which context they are to be used, the results of the classification should be viewed as a suggested analysis rather than an objective truth.

### **My objectivity as the writer**

Before I proceed to the results, it is necessary to mention something about transparency and my role as the writer. In order to convey objectivity, I have chosen to approach this assignment with an explicit writer’s voice. In addition to using the pronoun “I”, my presence as the writer will be perceptible throughout the text. This choice is based on the case that Nygaard (2008) argues in her book *Writing for Scholar*: “science isn’t just about facts; it’s about ideas – and thus very much about perception” (p. 45). The results of this analysis will be influenced by my choice of method and theoretical framework, as well as previous experiences and beliefs. According to Nygaard (2008) “objectivity is not related to whether or not you have exercised judgment, but rather to what you have based that judgement on” (p.

47). In the light of this, I have used my writer's voice to make my choices, justifications and interpretations as overt and transparent as possible throughout this thesis.

## Results

### Clarification of the results

The numbers shown in the Taxonomy Table (below) represents the ISAs from the units in the three textbooks. Each book has a specific colour, which is clarified below. The numbers signify the position of the ISA within the unit. Number one is the first ISA in the unit, and so on. By sorting the activities accordingly, it is possible to ascertain whether or not the ISAs lie along a continuum from lower cognitive processes to higher cognitive processes, or from *Factual knowledge* to *Metacognitive knowledge*. Activities that have subtasks have been marked with letters. This can uncover information about the variety or the development within an activity. For instance, the first part of activity number 10 in *Enter*, activity 10a, corresponds to the intersection of *Understand* and *Metacognitive knowledge*. The second part is consistent with the intersection of *Understand* and *Conceptual knowledge*. Therefore, the activity does not require the learners to use a more complex cognitive process as the ISA unfolds; however, the learner gets to use two different knowledge types when completing the whole activity.

The results of the classification are additionally represented in two different diagrams. The x-axis signifies the cognitive process dimension and the knowledge dimension, while the y-axis represents the percentage of activities corresponding to each category. When discussing the results, the percentage will be used as measurements, while the quantity will be parenthesised. As the polls for each book are presented in the same diagram, the results can display a somewhat decisive representation. It might appear as if *Stages* had more ISAs corresponding to *Create* than *Enter* has, because the poll belonging to *Stages* is higher. However, this is not the case when taking into account that *Stages* has one activity corresponding to *Create*, whereas *Enter* has two. Because *Stages* only has ten ISAs in total, the percentage of each activity becomes larger in relation to the other books. The purpose of the diagrams is not to compare the results from the textbooks, but to present an overview of how much variety they offer in ISAs. Ideally, the polls would be approximately similar in each category of each diagram. Big differences in polls signify a low range of variety, in the same way more balanced polls represent a wide variety.



**The Taxonomy Table**

Stages: Green

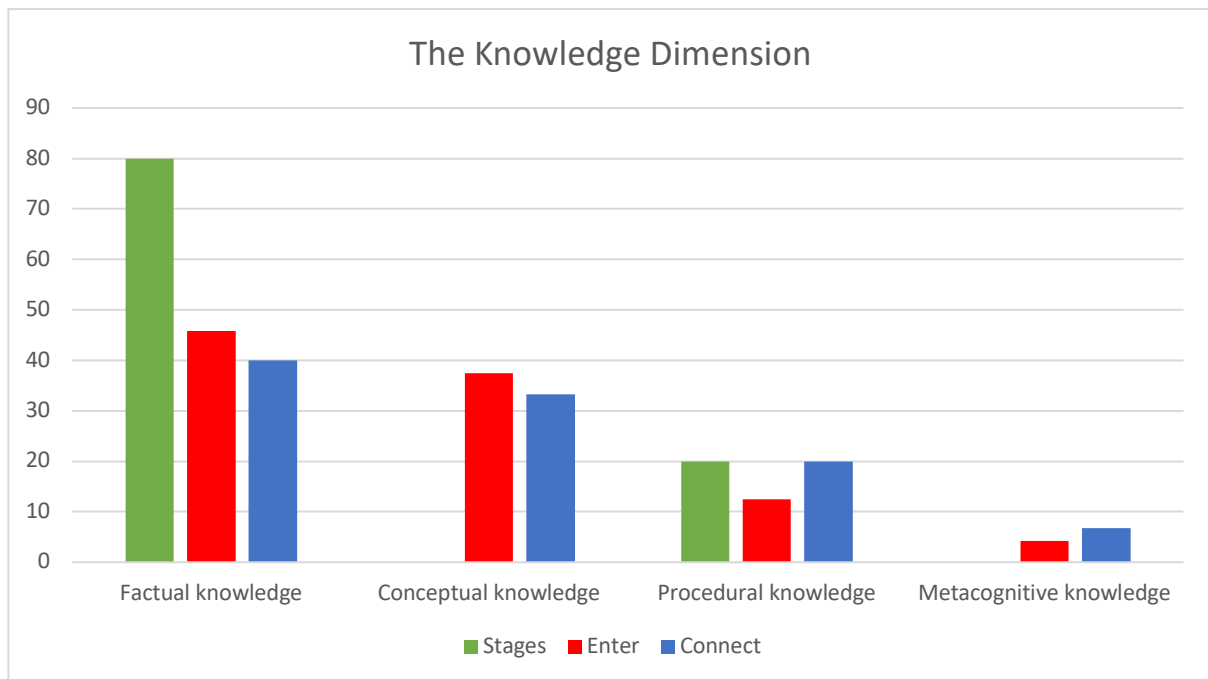
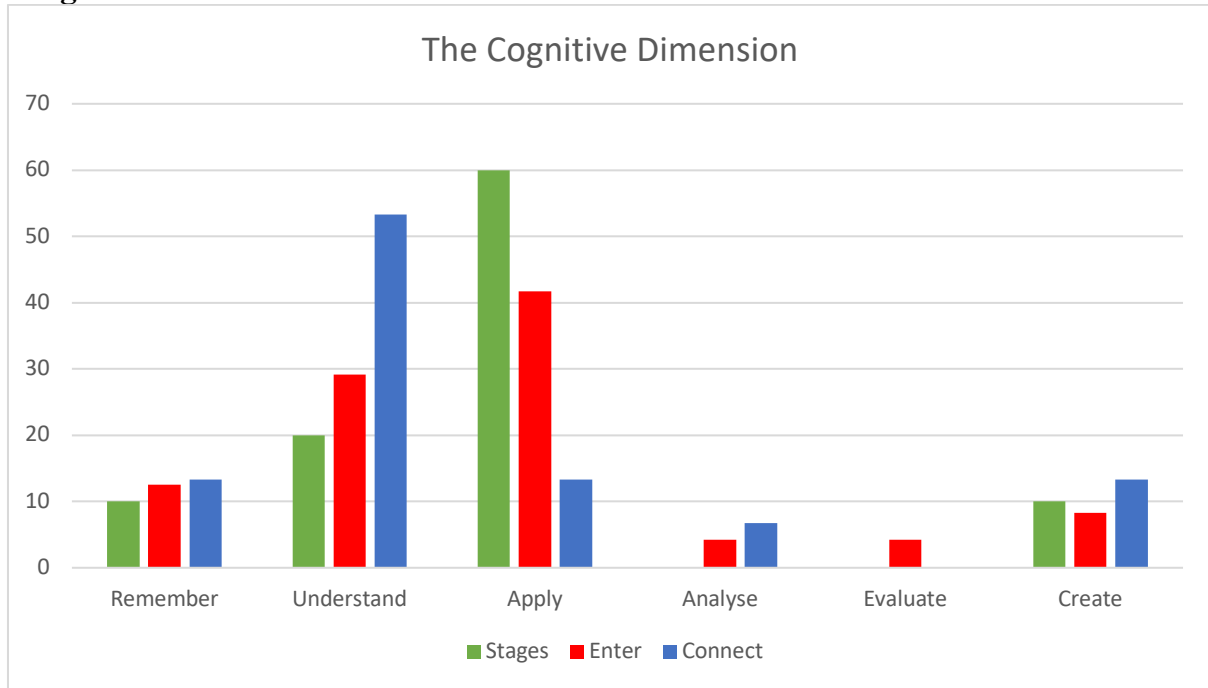
Enter: Red

Connect: Blue

THE KNOWLEDGE DIMENSION	THE COGNITIVE PROCESS DIMENSION					
	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyse	5. Evaluate	6. Create
<b>A. Factual Knowledge</b>	9 3, 15 1, 2a	3, 5 5, 7a, 7b 2b, 2c, 4a	1, 2a, 2b, 4, 7 2, 6, 7c, 11, 12, 16 2d			
<b>B. Conceptual Knowledge</b>	8a	9a, 9b, 10b 3a, 3b, 6b, 6c	4, 14, 17	15 7	13	
<b>C. Procedural Knowledge</b>			6 1 5			8 8b, 13 6a, 8
<b>D. Metacognitive Knowledge</b>		10a 4b				

(Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

**Diagrams**



## Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss the results of the classification in relation to each textbook, in three different sections. Every section is divided into three parts. The first two parts argue how the books cater for adapted teaching by degree of *variation* and *development*, in light of relevant theory. The last part discusses how an overrepresented activity can be further developed, with the purpose of fostering more complex cognitive processes and knowledge types.

### Textbook 1: Stages

#### Variation

As can clearly be seen in both diagrams, the ISAs in the unit *Stars and Stripes* in *Stages* display a low degree of variation. As much as 80% (8) of the ISAs correspond to *Factual knowledge*. When it comes to the cognitive domain, 60% (6) of *Stage's* activities focus on *Apply*. The unit covers four out of six cognitive dimensions, and two out of four knowledge types. Out of 24 cells in total, 50% (5) of the activities correspond to the intersection of *Apply* and *Factual knowledge*. Considering that this unit has rather few ISAs, it is for obvious reasons impossible to cover all the cells. The unit covers five cells with its total of 10 activities. In terms of Håstein & Werner's (2014) theory concerning the subject as a source for adapted teaching, *Stars and Stripes* does not offer enough variation in ISAs to implement the principle. It is my opinion that EFL teachers who utilise *Stages* should consider adding ISAs focusing on *Conceptual knowledge* and *Metacognitive knowledge*, as well as in the higher cognitive categories *Analyse*, *Evaluate* and *Create*.

#### Development

As *Stars and Stripes* offers a lot of ISAs that correspond to *Factual knowledge*, it is essential to determine how this kind of knowledge can help learners develop in their ZPDs. According to Anderson & Krathwohl (2001), *Factual knowledge* is defined in terms of isolated bits of information (p. 41). They argue that many learners do not make the important connections between and among the facts they learn in the classroom and the larger systems of ideas. "Although developing expertise in an academic discipline and disciplinary ways of thinking is certainly an important goal of education, students often do not even learn to transfer or apply the facts and ideas they learn in classrooms to understanding their experience in the everyday world" (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 42). This implies that ISAs that correspond to *Factual knowledge* do not accommodate transfer, and consequently they fail to provide learners with meaningful learning. Anderson & Krathwohl claim that the more complex *Conceptual knowledge* gives learners a deeper understanding, and can help individuals as they

attempt to transfer what they have learned to new situations. Since *Factual Knowledge* is limited to bits of information, one could argue that most of the ISAs in *Stars and Stripes* struggle to challenge learners to develop in their ZPDs. Activities corresponding to *Factual knowledge* simply require learners to do independent problem solving, which only stimulates cognitive processes that are atomised, according to Vygotsky (Moen, 2013, p. 257).

However, in combination with a complex cognitive category, ISAs focusing on *Factual knowledge* might be able to give learners access to their ZPDs. Since the intersection of *Factual knowledge* and *Apply* contains 50% (5) of the ISAs in *Stages*, it is necessary to examine what this cognitive process offers in terms of development. As can be seen in Appendix A, *Apply* consists of two cognitive processes: *executing* (when a task is a familiar exercise) and *implementing* (when a task is an unfamiliar challenge). This draws on Vygotsky's theory about the ZPD, as learners generally need help in solving an unfamiliar task. Unfortunately, the ISAs in *Stars and Stripes* only require learners to *execute* the problem. Learners are instructed to either read a text out loud, sing a text, or give a presentation about a text from the textbook. Considering that the activities are designed for 9th grade learners, they should be seen as familiar tasks. This implies that learners do not require help from the teacher or a peer, nor the support from technological scaffolding tools, to accomplish these activities. According to Moen (2013), "good teaching", from a sociocultural perspective, is characterised by the initiation of numerous processes in the learners' ZPDs (p. 258). It is my conclusion that this unit neither provides a varied range of ISAs, nor enables learners to access their ZPDs. Therefore, in order to cater for adapted education, teachers who use *Stages* should consider adding or developing the activities into ISAs that require learners to use more complex cognitive processes. In the following section, I will present and discuss suggestions as to how this can be accomplished..

### **Modifying an activity: Apply – Factual Knowledge**

*Give a three-minute presentation on either Thanksgiving or president Abraham Lincoln.*

(Areklett et al., 2014a, p. 229)

When learners are instructed to prepare a presentation, the easiest way to solve the problem is to find extracts or isolated sentences from the associated text. In order to develop this activity to require higher cognitive processes, it needs to correspond to *Evaluate*, *Analyse* and *Create*. For an activity to meet the standards of the cognitive process *Evaluate*, it must demand that learners "make judgements based on criteria and standards" (Anderson &

Krathwohl, 2001, p. 83). One way of pushing learners to make judgements is to make them video record a presentation, and then impose a time constraint on the length of the presentation. An alternative approach is to simply instruct learners to record a five-minute presentation on a given topic. A sub activity can then be added, instructing learners to shorten their presentations by two minutes, without sacrificing any essential components. By obliging learners to abridge their own work, they have to either 1. make a new shorter one, which requires them to reformulate the sentences and thus transferring the knowledge, or 2. edit the interview, which requires them to evaluate which parts to discard. The latter suggestion permits the development of *Procedural knowledge*, by enabling subject-specific skills in editing recordings (see Appendix B). Furthermore, by instructing learners to present both the original and the reworked versions to each other, the activity enables evaluation and discussion about the difference between a video that is edited and one that is not.

The use of technology also gives the learners opportunities to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the English language. The learners can watch recordings of their own performances, while looking out for grammar mistakes and pronunciation errors – a powerful and uniquely modern self-assessment strategy.. This process corresponds to self-knowledge, and belongs to the knowledge type *Metacognitive knowledge* (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 59). The use of technology does not only enable learners to self-assess and develop English skills, it also permits learners to interact and collaborate with the purpose of solving a problem. Recording a presentation together is therefore an activity that can enable learners to scaffold each other. As Wells (1999) states: “whenever people collaborate in activity, each can assist the others, and each can learn from contributions of the other” (p. 333). By adding limitations to the instructions, and letting learners use technology to accomplish it, numerous possibilities present themselves with regard to catering for learners’ developmental potential.

## **Textbook 2: Enter Variation**

The unit *Australia and New Zealand* in *Enter* has ISAs that cover all of the cognitive processes, as well as all of the knowledge dimensions. *Enter* therefore offers “a range of different instructional activities”, which, according to Ellis & Shintani (2014), is a strategy that can be used to cater for adapted teaching. The unit has a total of 24 ISAs, including sub activities, covering 11 of the 24 cells in the Taxonomy Table. Even though the unit offers activities that correspond to all the cognitive dimensions, there is an over-representation of activities in both *Understand*, with 29.1% (7) of the ISAs, and in *Apply*, with 41.7% (10).

Considering that the unit only has 4.2% (1) focusing on the higher cognitive process *Analyse*, and 4.2% (1) focusing on *Evaluate*, it can be argued that the range of activities is somewhat unbalanced. In terms of the knowledge dimension, 45.8% (11) of the ISAs focuses on *Factual knowledge*, while 37.5% (9) focuses on *Conceptual knowledge*. If an EFL teacher wants to make sure their instructions incorporate a sufficient degree of variation, they should consider omitting some activities in the lower thinking processes *Understand* and *Apply*, and/or to develop them into ISAs that require higher cognitive processes.

### **Development**

Because *Stars and Stripes* contains 45.8% (11) of the ISAs that focus on *Factual knowledge*, the discussion made in relation to *Stages* is also applicable to *Enter*. However, seeing how *Enter* has a number of activities corresponding to *Conceptual knowledge*, 37.5% (9), the unit additionally offers ISAs that “can help individuals as they attempt to transfer what they have learned to new situations” (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 42). By offering numerous ISAs that enable learners to practice meaningful learning, the unit has the potential to advance learners from their current zone of development to the ZPD.

*Enter* has a rather balanced range of ISAs corresponding to the different cognitive processes. As Anderson & Krathwohl (2001) clarifies, all the cognitive processes above *Remember* have great potential to foster for retention, and consequently, meaningful learning. Furthermore, the variety offered in the unit has prerequisites to help learners realise their developmental potential, which according to Engen (2010) is essential in the definition of adapted education. By offering activities that can induce cognitive processes of various kinds, learners are able to understand that there are different ways of approaching EFL learning. When encountering several approaches to accomplishing activities, learners can build an awareness of their own learning process. This can be an opportunity for learners to gain valuable knowledge about which cognitive processes are most useful in scaffolding their individual development. The wide variety of ISAs can therefore help learners realise their learning and developmental potential.

### **Modifying an activity: Apply – Factual knowledge**

*Act out a conversation between a tourist and a tourist guide in Australia or New Zealand. Ask and answer questions about what to see and where to go.*

(Diskin & Winsvold, 2016, p. 78)

This activity is the penultimate activity in the unit. It could therefore be understood as an ISA that endeavours to make learners summarise what they have learned about *Australia and New Zealand*. However, the activity does not require learners to translate information from the text into their own words. The easiest way for learners to accomplish this activity is to look through the texts, find pieces of information, and complete the activity accordingly. If the instructions were more specified, the activity could, however, be developed into an activity that required the learners to access *Procedural knowledge*. By changing the concept “tourist” into “a tourist with a specific interest”, the activity forces learners to collect a specific kind of information. By making one learner choose a special interest – for example extreme sports, indigenous history or nature life – another learner can be instructed to find information about this specific topic. The guide can, in extension, plan a whole trip for the tourist, requiring the learner to evaluate which places and activities might be of interest to the tourist. Planning a trip corresponds to *Procedural knowledge* – as it requires a series of sequences and steps – as well as to the cognitive process *Create*.

Furthermore, a planning activity could encourage learners to utilise internet research. The use of search engines might give them additional ideas, and scaffold them in the planning process. Through searching for information on the internet, cognitive processes like *checking* and *critiquing* have the potential to develop, which meets the criteria of *Evaluating*. By letting the learners choose a specific field of interest, the expansion of this activity allows learners to bring personal interests into the classroom. Håstein & Werner (2014) claim that personal experience is an important component when approaching adapted education. It is also possible to develop the activity into a more group based project, where a group of guides collaborate to plan a trip for a number of different tourists. This makes the activity more focused on social interaction, which according to Engen (2007) is one of the main components constituting adapted education.

### **Textbook 3: Connect**

#### **Variety**

The unit *Living in America* offers ISAs that correspond to five out of six cognitive processes. When it comes to the knowledge dimension, this unit has ISAs consistent with all columns. *Connect* thus offers a rather superior range of activities. Even though the unit does not have any ISAs corresponding to *Evaluate*, it contains 13.3% (2) of activities that match the criteria for *Create*, which is the most demanding cognitive process. The most represented cognitive process is *Understand*, with 53.3% (8) of the ISAs corresponding to it. In terms of the knowledge dimension, the unit has a relatively even spreading. ISAs corresponding to *Factual*

*knowledge* are 40% (6), followed by *Procedural knowledge* with 33.3% (5). However, there is only one activity corresponding to *Metacognitive knowledge*. *Living in America* covers eight of the 24 cells in the table, with its total of 15 ISAs. The intersection that is most represented is *Understand – Conceptual knowledge*, with four out of its sixteen ISAs matching *Metacognitive knowledge*. Considering *Conceptual knowledge* offers “complex, organised knowledge forms” (see Appendix B), this unit has the potential to foster development and enhance meaningful learning. However, in order to cater for adapted education through a broad register of working methods, teachers who use *Connect* should consider modifying it to achieve the cognitive processes *Analyse* and *Evaluate*, and add ISAs that require learners to use *Metacognitive knowledge*.

### **Development**

As can be seen in the Taxonomy Table, the ISAs in *Connect* are designed roughly along the continuum of the cognitive dimension. The first and second activities correspond to *Remember*, followed by activities focusing on *Understand*. Activities that focus on cognitive processes connected to *Remember* require learners to retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory. These are therefore adequate activities to offer in the beginning of a unit, as they can help learners activate schemata about a given topic. As the ISAs in *Connect* follow the complexity of the Taxonomy Table, the design of the unit could be seen as a scaffold on account of its structure. By offering activities from lower to higher thinking skills, the textbook arguably serves as a mediating tool that gradually challenges learners to use increasingly complex cognitive processes. The design of the unit *Living in America* is an example of how the subject in itself, as Håstein & Werner (2014) explain it, can serve as a source for adapted education.

The last activity in the unit corresponds to the intersection *Create – Procedural knowledge*, by requiring the learners to plan and present a fictional road trip. This activity provides extensive information about how the planning should be done and how to prepare for the presentation, as well as guidelines regarding the performance of the presentation. The guidelines are written in bullet points, and provide explicit information about how long the presentation should be, which digital tools that are appropriate to use, etc. These clear instructions give learners a precise framework for understanding how the activity should be implemented. As such, the activity in itself arguably scaffolds the learners and imparts guidelines they can lean on. The learners are, in other words, able to develop in the ZPDs with the help from the instructions. Because this ISA is a group-work activity, the learners are able to assist each other when solving problems connected to the activity. By offering such an



extensive activity in the end of the chapter, this unit offers opportunities for learners to practice meaningful learning and develop in their ZPDs.

### **Modifying an activity: Understand – Conceptual knowledge**

*Work with a partner.*

- a. *Read the definition of American society as a “melting pot”. Some people claim that American society is a “salad bowl” and not a “melting pot”. Discuss what these metaphors say about how people interact with each other.*

*Picture the content of a salad bowl and compare it to the image of a melting pot.*

- b. *Would you say that Norwegian society is a melting pot or a salad bowl? Discuss and give reasons for your opinion.*

(Haegi et al., 2017, p. 59)

This activity corresponds to *Conceptual knowledge*, as it instructs learners to compare two abstract concepts with real-world situations. In requiring the learners to become aware and responsible for their own knowledge and opinions, this ISA can be developed into a *Metacognitive knowledge* activity. According to Anderson & Krathwohl (2001) *Metacognitive knowledge* is “knowledge of cognition and about oneself in relation to various subject matters” (p. 44). As such, this activity has the potential to engage learners in a process that requires them to understand their own thinking patterns in relation to others’. When adding a sub activity that instruct the learners to engage in a debate, they get to critique each other’s arguments and gain new perspectives on their own opinions. By letting one learner/party argue that Norwegian society is a “melting pot”, while the other argues that it is a “salad bowl”, they can act out a debate in pairs or in groups. Additionally, it is possible to add a final instruction making the learners reflect on how they used the language in this activity. As debates can get heated, participants are likely to fumble for words, thereby uncovering holes or weaknesses in their English proficiency. Inversely, by experiencing and analysing moments of near fluency, such an activity can bring about a valuable awareness of one’s strengths. An activity like this helps learners become aware of their own thoughts and linguistic competence, which makes it correspond to *Metacognitive knowledge*.

Another advantage of engaging learners in a debate is that it pushes them to interact with each other. In a debate, participants are forced to communicate in a rapid and rather

unfiltered manner. By modifying the ISA into a group activity with parties debating each other, learners can scaffold each other if they get stuck searching for words or need help articulating their meaning.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has reviewed and analysed the classification of interactive speaking activities (ISAs) in *Stars*, *Enter* and *Connect* in the context of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. When viewed from this perspective, it becomes apparent that the ISAs in all three textbooks tend to focus on the lower cognitive processes *Understand* and *Apply*. Furthermore, there is an obvious emphasis on *Factual Knowledge* in the textbooks. The overemphasis on certain cognitive processes, and especially one knowledge type, should be considered when using the textbooks in the EFL classroom. Although the different textbooks provide various opportunities for adapted education, they will need to be modified according to which ISAs they offer and which they lack if they are to encompass the full range of the dimensions laid out in the Taxonomy Table. As a general conclusion regarding all the books, teachers should consider adding ISAs that focus on higher cognitive processes.

Because this thesis has analysed textbook activities in theory only, referencing documents rather than practical experience, it does not say anything about how ISAs are actually used in the EFL classroom. In order to gain an applied view on the use of textbooks, it would be beneficial to conduct observations of textbook utilisation. Furthermore, it would be of great value to examine all activities in the textbooks, as opposed to only the ISAs. A complete classification of all activities might prove that the textbooks fulfil a broader spectre of the Taxonomy Table. This thesis has discerned some tendencies within a selection of activities inside one unit from each textbook. These tendencies reveal that the textbooks have the potential to help learners develop in their ZPDs through interactive speaking activities. However, if an EFL teacher wanted to cater for adapted education using a range of different instructional activities intended to foster development, the interactive speaking activities in *Enter*, *Stages* and *Connect* would need to be modified according to suggestions given in this thesis. However, even in their current versions, these textbooks can be of great value when catering for adapted teaching, as long as they are used in combination with knowledge about their weaknesses and strengths. The teacher's purpose is not, as Hall (2018) states, to teach materials, "the purpose is to teach the learners, and the materials are there to serve that purpose" (p. 236).

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## Appendix A

### The Cognitive Process Dimension

**1. Remember** – Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory

*1.1 Recognizing*

*1.2 Recalling*

**2. Understand** – Construct meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication

*2.1 Interpreting*

*2.2 Exemplifying*

*2.3 Classifying*

*2.4. Summarizing*

*2.5 Inferring*

*2.6 Comparing*

*2.7 Explaining*

**3. Apply** – Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation

*3.1 Executing*

*3.2 Implementing*

**4. Analyse** – Break material into its constituent parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose.

*4.1 Differentiating*

*4.2 Organizing*

*4.3 Attributing*

**5. Evaluate** – Make judgements based on criteria and standards

*5.1 Checking*

*5.2 Critiquing*

**6. Create** – Put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganize elements into new pattern or structure

*6.1 Generating*

*6.2 Planning*

*6.3 Producing*

## **Appendix B**

### **The Knowledge Dimension**

#### **A. Factual Knowledge**

*Aa. Knowledge of Terminology*

*Ab. Knowledge of specific details and elements*

#### **B. Conceptual Knowledge**

*Ba. Knowledge of classifications and categories*

*Bb. Knowledge of principles and generalizations*

*Bc. Knowledge of theories, models, and structures*

#### **C. Procedural Knowledge**

*Ca. Knowledge of subject- specific skills and algorithms*

*Cb. Knowledge of subject-specific techniques and methods*

*Cc. Knowledge of criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures*

#### **D. Metacognitive Knowledge**

*Da. Strategic knowledge.*

*Db. Knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge.*

*Dc. Self-knowledge*

