



APPENDIX

Depth of Knowledge Interview With Dr. Norman Webb

Dr. Norman Webb provided information about Depth of Knowledge (DOK) in a personal interview on February 29, 2016. Eileen Depka's questions and Webb's responses follow.

What was the motivation for the development of Depth of Knowledge?

It was part of a monogram written on the alignment of curriculum, standards, and assessment. The motivation to come up with Depth of Knowledge was to develop criteria that could be used for the alignment of curriculum, standards, and assessment.

Are there specific ways you suggest teachers use DOK in classrooms?

It was primarily developed as a tool to align standards and was not developed with instruction in mind. The application to instruction has been an evolution with DOK. It has been interesting to see how people are interested in using it. One of the ways that I've heard it is used is as a communication system. DOK is a language system; therefore, it is helpful for teachers to understand in more detail what is meant by curriculum standards and also by assessment. Another way that teachers have used it is to evaluate the questions they ask and to determine whether the questions asked are aligned

to the expected outcomes that they look for within their curriculum standards. Another way is to use it as a tool when deconstructing standards, like with the Common Core [State Standards], which are quite complex. DOK helps with the deconstruction. It is an important way to break the standards into smaller steps that teachers can then analyze. They look at each part and relate it to content complexity. They review how the parts are related to the larger standard. I think more sophisticated teachers plan for content complexity. They can think about how they want to approach their curriculum standards at the level of content complexity called for within each of the standards.

Is there a balance that you suggest between the levels of DOK?

Balance depends on some of the other factors. It depends on where the students are with regard to the curriculum. I stay away from suggesting any particular balance. I have been asked if using DOK one and two is poor instruction, and I couldn't understand that. A good education system will have learning and what students know will include all of the levels of complexity. Students will be able to do some things at Level 1, some things at Level 2, at Level 3, and will also be able to engage in some things at Level 4. How you balance them really depends upon the standards. I do think that all of the levels are important.

What do you want to make sure that teachers and administrators understand when they are using DOK?

It is a system of complexity. I hope people will understand it as a living document and that they will engage in it and have conversations rather than trying to individually understand complexity. I think that there are so many factors that make up a more complex and a less complex system that you really need to engage in it and make it a socializing process. I would hope that a school or district would have teachers engage in it, using the definitions of DOK that are available but feel free to add to it and supplement it.

Because there are many misconceptions about DOK, consider Webb's words and intentions when employing the Depth of Knowledge. They clarify what DOK is and what it is not.