

IN THE MIDDLE: Understanding the Depth of Knowledge program

By Jasmine Williams

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On April 14, the state of Indiana adopted a new set of educational standards to push students to their utmost abilities. But what are standards? Standards are an outline of what students need to know, understand and be able to do. Standards are not a prescribed or particular curriculum. The curriculum is based on the student. The new educational standards will include basic knowledge of mathematics and English/Language Arts, but also a higher form of thinking on these subjects.

Now that these new standards are in action, the Board of Education is now using a program called "Depth of Knowledge," also known as DOK. The first level of DOK is titled "Recall and Reproduction." Curricular elements in this category involve tasks that require the student to recall or reproduce knowledge/skills. In return, this level is based of working with facts and terms and/or properties of objects. Also, it involves understanding simple procedures.

DOK Level 2 is "Working with Skills and Concepts." Level 2 requires students to be able to compare or contrast people, place, and events, convert information, classify items into categories, explaining issues, patterns, cause and effect, then, lastly, point of view purposes.

DOK Level 3 is "Short Term Strategic Thinking." Items in this category demand a higher-order thinking process. This includes analysis and evaluation, solving real world problems with predictable outcomes. All of these examples need the proper evidence to support their answer.

DOK Level 4 is "Extended Strategic Thinking." This means a higher thinking on reflection, assessment and adjustment of plans over time. Students are to conduct investigations to solve real world problems with unpredictable outcomes. Also,

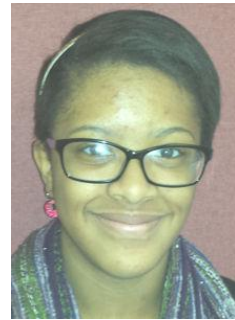
employing and sustaining strategic thinking processes over a longer period of time. All four "Depth of Knowledge" levels help your child to be successful in their educational career.

Now, how can parents or guardians help their child to be successful this school year? The state of Indiana has provided many useful tips for parents. The first step is having clearly defined goals to help your family and teachers work together to make sure the student excels.

Step two is talking to your student's teacher regularly about how your child is doing. However, when you talk to the teacher, don't worry about covering all the standards, just focus on the areas your child can use help in. Therefore, never be afraid to ask questions such as: "Is this piece of work satisfactory?" or "How could it be better?"

At home, set high expectations and support your student in meeting them. A tutor is a great option if your child needs extra help. With your child, you can visit a museum or look for word problems in real life that make learning interesting and fun. For older students, helping them draw evidence and helping them to understand that it's OK to ask questions is very helpful. No question is dumb!

By using these parental tips, you can help your child to succeed in not only school, but in life.



Jasmine Williams is an eighth-grader at Krueger Middle School. In the Middle is a regular column produced by students at MCAS middle schools.