A Taxonomy of Educational Categories and Practice

This handout identifies common educational categories and practices. The chart flows from the bottom to top in terms of focus from broad to narrow. The bottom two categories are "foundations" (upon which educational systems and practices build) and the others fall under the category of "pedagogy." You can use this chart to (1) clarify understanding about educational practices, (2) use educational terms more accurately, (3) design or assess educational enterprises with more integrity (e.g., one's choices of methods and approaches should be congruent with one's stated educational theory and philosophy).

CATEGORY	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
Technique	A particular *way* of executing a method, or a subset of a method in the actual act of teaching-learning.	Question and answer, Behavior Desist, Presenting an objective, Advanced organizers, Induction (opening, transition, closing), stimulus variation
Method	A particular pedagogy or form of procedure for accomplishing the desired learning objectives.	Small group, Lecture, Reading source materials, Testing, Dialogue, Research, Socratic
Procedure	An established or formal way of doing something, a series of actions conducted *in a certain order* or manner. Procedures tend to be linear and logical. Certain models, processes, and methods contain *de rigor* procedurals that ensure effectiveness.	Procedure for writing a term paper: 1. Choose a subject 2. Find sources of materials 3. Gathering research notes 4. Outline the paper 5. Write the first draft 6. Edit the paper 7. Submit the paper.
Process	A series of *interrelated* actions or steps taken to achieve a particular end, though not necessarily a specific outcome. Processes tend to be open-ended and cyclical.	Project development process: Planning, Preparation, Implementation, Review, Evaluation, Planning, etc.
Format	A particular arrangement of the structure of the educational enterprise. Applies for several levels (programmatic, course, lesson, unit, etc.).	A course of study can take may formats, e.g. traditional classroom, online, seminar, independent study, tutorial
Structure	The arrangement of and relations between the parts or element of the educational Approach or educational Model.	Centralized, Open, Sequential, Cyclical, Narrative (The simplest structure for any curriculum, unit, or lesson is: beginning, middle, end.)
Model	A specific interpretive application of an educational approach. While models have broad application they tend to focus on particular ends (outcomes), contexts, disciplines, and populations	Models tend to plot on a grid matrix with emphases on the extent to which a model is: Teacher-focused to Student-centered; Teaching-focused to Learning-focused; Cognitive-focused to Affective-focused; Cognitive-focused to Skills-focused; Heuristic to Outcomes; etc.
Approach	An informed and particular way of going about the educational enterprise congruent with one's philosophical stance and informed by a particular educational theory.	Instruction, Interpretation, Dialogical Learning, Training, Praxis-Reflection, Mentoring, Sponsorship, Cohort, Apprenticeship, Communal Direction and Spiritual Friendships, Transactive Intergenerational, Field work, Discovery learning
Educational Theory	A particular, systematic and bounded interpretation of teaching and learning	Constructivism, Waldorf, Montessori, Andragogy, Behaviorist, Cognitivist, Humanist, Social, contextual, Feminist
Philosophy	A particular system of thought that holds a systematic position of basic concepts such as truth, existence, reality, causality, the nature of things and persons, and freedom.	Neo-thomism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Perennialism