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Beat the Heat! :Thematic Programming 101

## Workshop Agenda:



Welcome & Icebreaker



Components of Thematic Learning



Theory: Bloom's Taxonomy



Theory: Gardner's Multiple Intelligences



Youth Voice & Choice



Community & Family Partnerships



Putting it All Together: Plan a Theme!

## Workshop Goals:



Participants will gain information and knowledge about: youth voice and choice, multiple intelligences, Bloom's Taxonomy, community and family partnerships, and how these connect with each other in thematic learning.



Participants will be able to brainstorm and invent age-appropriate creative themes that are well-rounded and engaging.



Participants will have opportunities to connect with other youth development professionals to share ideas, resources, and strategies to take back to their programs!

# Icebreaker!



Once you have found your group, please sit down together at a table. Introduce yourself, the program you represent, and how long you have been working with youth. Then, as a group talk about what you think a summer program should FEEL like.

# What is thematic learning?

- \*the focus on a particular theme or topic (i.e. “holidays”)
- \* Includes a specific time frame such as a week or month
- \*cross curricular & interdisciplinary

# What this might LOOK like...

Choose one umbrella theme for the whole summer and schedule mini-themes for each week.

Example: “Great Games” broken into weeks by topics within the theme:

Week 1: Good Sportsmanship & Teambuilding

Week 2: Physical Games

Week 3: Mental Games

Week 4: Cultural Games

Week 5: Create Your Own Games!

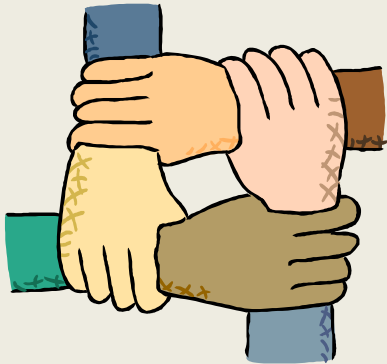
# Why thematic learning?

- \*incorporates multiple learning styles and intelligences
- \*encourages critical thinking and skill building through scaffolded learning opportunities.
- \*a holistic approach to learning that incorporates a diversity of activities, partnerships, and opportunities for discovery.

# What the research says...

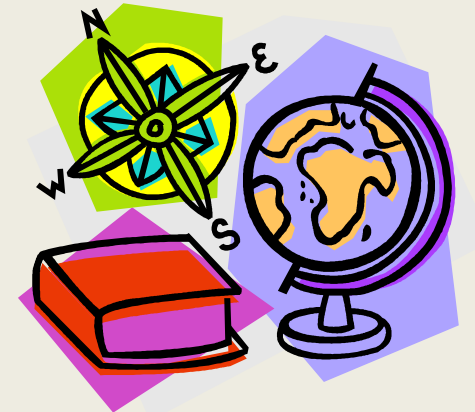
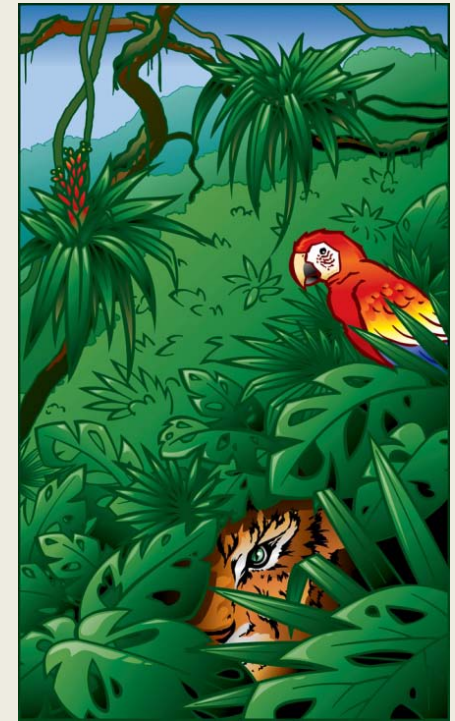
Cognitive research shows that educational programs should challenge students to link, connect, and integrate ideas and to learn in authentic contexts, taking into account their perception of real-world problems. (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; diSessa, 2000; Linn & Hsi, 2000).

Themes are a way of understanding new concepts. They provide mental organizing schemes for students to approach new ideas (Caine & Caine, 1997; Kovalik, 1994).



# Sample Themes:

The Rainforest  
Games & Sports  
Out of this World  
Music & Dance  
Explorers  
Diversity & Tolerance



# Activity (Group)

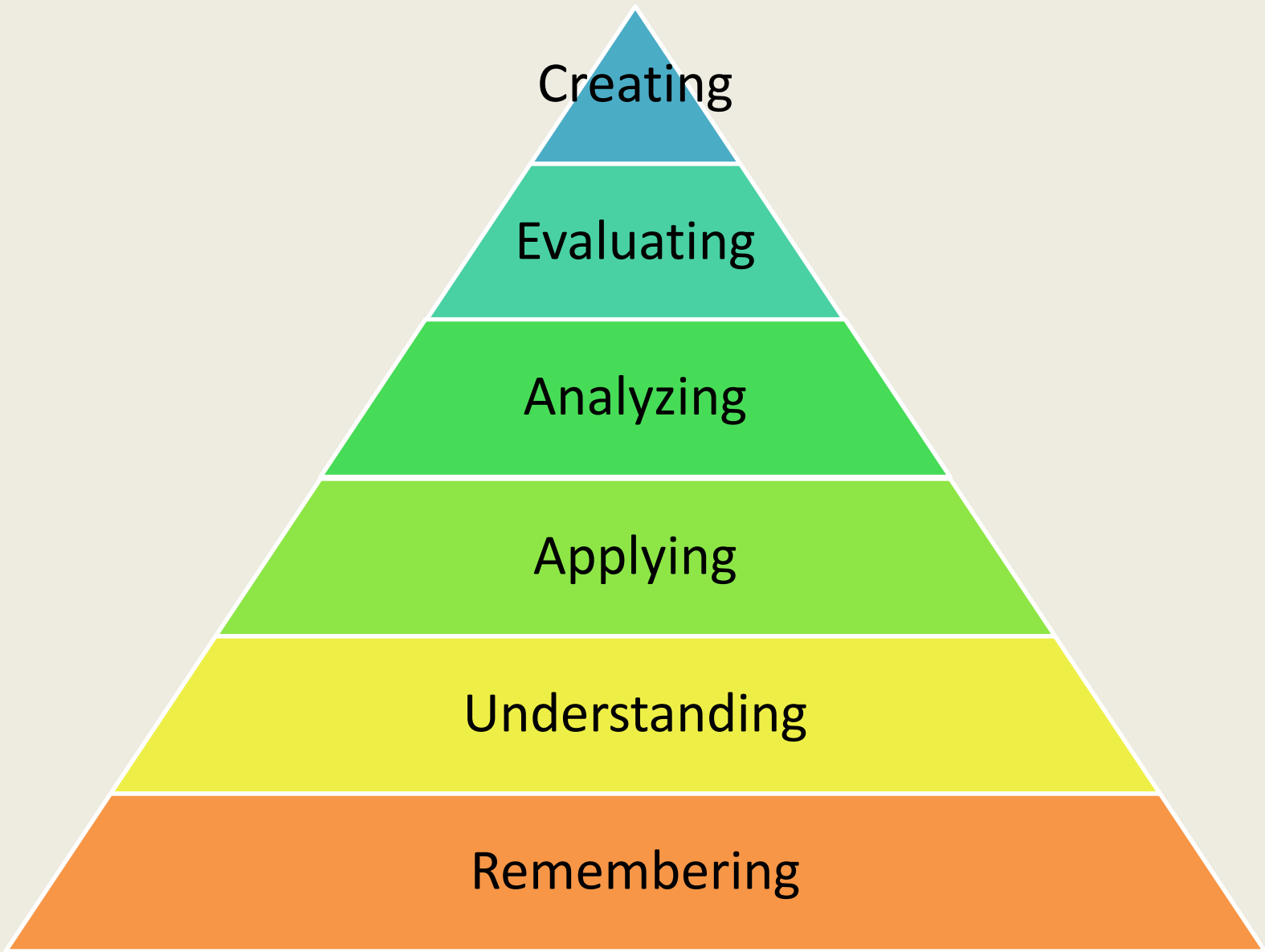
## Theme-a-Thon!

Right now, how many different themes can you think of for a summer program?

Work with people at your table to create a list of as many themes as you can brainstorm!

# What makes a really great super awesome well-rounded thematic unit?

- Providing opportunities to build critical thinking skills
- Offering a variety of activities that embrace & nurture multiple intelligences
- Incorporating youth voice & choice
- Partnering with community and families to create enriching and diverse programming



Theory: Bloom's Taxonomy

# Theory: Multiple Intelligences



- **Kinesthetic (body smart) - athletic**
- **Logical (number smart) – mathematics and numbers**
- **Intrapersonal (myself smart) – knowing yourself**
- **Visual/Spatial (picture smart) – artistic, likes map reading and graphs**
- **Linguistic (word smart) – reading, writing, talking**
- **Interpersonal (people smart) - social**
- **Musical (music smart) – enjoys music**
- **Naturalistic (nature smart) – likes plants and animals**

# New addition!

Existential (Philosophical smarts)-  
Sensitivity and capacity to tackle  
deep questions about human  
existence

What are your  
intelligences?



# Activity (Partners)

## Think-Pair-Share:

What is the value of incorporating these learning theories into your activities?

How can YOU use this information to help youth be more successful?

# Youth Voice & Choice

**VOICE: Opportunities and experiences that encourage youth input into the program.**



*What are some ways that you can capture youth voice?*



**CHOICE: Opportunities and experiences that emphasize youth choosing their offerings, activities, schedules, and options.**

*What are some ways that you can provide choice to the youth in your program?*



# Community & Family Partnerships

University/College Organizations & Depts  
Corporations & Businesses

Non-Profits

Social Service Agencies

Service Learning Opportunities

Neighborhood Organizations & Businesses

City Departments of Education, Health, etc.

Museums, Theaters & Other Exploration Opps

Family & Parent Programs and Events



# Activity (Individual):

What partnerships are available in  
your community?

Brainstorm!

Need ideas: discuss with table mates

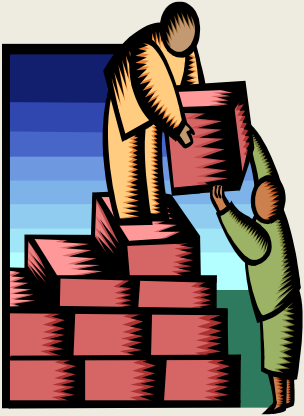
# What the research says...

Classrooms free of threat, students engaged in immersive learning experiences, and curriculum that connects to the community and the students' lives are all aspects of brain-compatible teaching (Caine & Caine, 1991, 1994, 1997a, b).

Students learn through different modes, styles and multiple intelligences. Teachers should access and integrate these modes for increasing opportunities for students to access and retain new knowledge (Gardner, 1993).

Student choice invokes critical thinking, decision-making, and reflection. When students are asked to select from alternatives, they are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning process (Beane, 1997; Caine & Caine, 1994).

# Ingredients for Success!!



Learning is a building block process. Adults help facilitate and scaffold learning to build critical thinking skills.

There are different ways to be “smart” and it is important to incorporate this diversity into youth programming.

Opportunities for youth voice & choice on what activities, topics and issues they are interested in will create a sense of ownership and increased engagement.

Seek out and utilize Community & Family Partnerships to support and enrich your youth programs and build connections with family.

# Putting it all together...

## Culminating Activity: Plan a theme!

Your theme should include the following:

- \*Theme Name
- \*Examples of lessons or activities that incorporate Bloom's & MIs
  - \*Opportunities for youth voice & choice
  - \*Community partnerships & field trip opps
  - \*Examples of family events and activities
  - \*Culminating Event/Celebration Ideas

# Thank You for participating!

For more information, please contact:

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