of memory structure and learning processes. He proposed **cognitive structure** as the learner's *overall memorial structure or integrated body of knowledge.* This cognitive structure is made up of sets of ideas that are organized hierarchically and by theme. Moreover, within any given hierarchy, the most inclusive ideas are the strongest and most stable. Except for its emphasis on a hierarchy of ideas, this structure is similar to those proposed by the propositional model of memory that was discussed in the previous chapter.

For an example of cognitive structure, consider what you know about cooking that might be relevant if you were learning how to make mayonnaise. You know that cooking involves mixing together ingredients that might be known by heart or listed in a recipe. Generally, the ingredients must be mixed in a particular order, and certain types of mixing might be used, such as "stir until moistened," "beat until firm," and "whip until smooth." Mixing might also require different types of implements, such as a spoon, fork, whisk, or electric mixer. Figure 4.1 displays a partial hierarchy that might represent this knowledge about cooking. According to Ausubel, the general ideas high in the hierarchy (e.g., "cooking involves preparation") would be more stable and therefore more easily remembered than specific ideas low in the hierarchy (such as the type of implement best used for beating).

The cognitive structure provides an overall framework into which new knowledge will be incorporated, but to describe how specific linkages occur, Ausubel proposed the notion of anchoring ideas. **Anchoring ideas** are the *specific, relevant ideas in the learner's cognitive structure that provide the entry points for new information to be connected.* They are what enable the learner to construct meaning from new information and experiences that are only potentially meaningful.

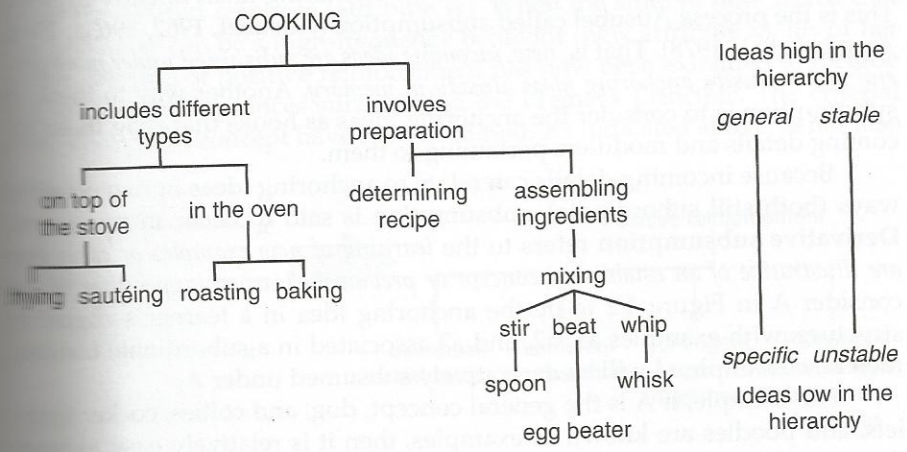

FIGURE 4.1 *A Partial Hierarchy of Knowledge about Cooking*