

ELA Program of Studies 10-12

Metacognition

Prepared for Edmonton Regional Consortium

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INTRODUCTION

In this session, you are invited to explore metacognition—a major theme of the revised PROGRAM OF STUDIES. What is metacognition? How can we help our students become more metacognitive? The session will allow time for revisiting your unit and for reflection on how metacognition relates to your current instructional practice. At the beginning of all orientation sessions, you will be invited to respond to the following prompts:

WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE REVISED SENIOR HIGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM, I AM CONCERNED ABOUT...

Concerns will be charted and revisited at the conclusion of the session, in future sessions or in individual consultations with the presenter. Remember that teachers typically react to any curriculum change with concerns about how the revision will affect current practice.

DEFINING METACOGNITION

How typical is the following dialogue?

TEACHER: I have a concern about this part of your work. Do you know what it is?

STUDENT: No.

TEACHER: Do you want to find out?

STUDENT: Not really.

TEACHER: Do you want a higher mark?

STUDENT: Yes.

- Metacognition is a goal for students which teachers can encourage so that student ownership for their own learning is more evident than in the dialogue above.
- Briefly talk about what teachers can do so that students will take ownership of their own learning.
- Consider how an emphasis on metacognition makes a teacher's work more efficient and more satisfying.
- Cognition refers to the process of knowing.
-"Meta" is derived from the Greek for "beyond".
-Metacognition refers to knowing how we know and how we learn and consciously controlling and taking ownership for our learning.
- Key aspects of Metacognition
 - Awareness that one has options in one's learning
 - Self-regulation of one's learning
 - Conscious control of one's learning
 - Conscious awareness of one's learning
 - Choosing options and strategies to learn effectively
 - Assessing one's own learning
 - Explaining one's choices in learning

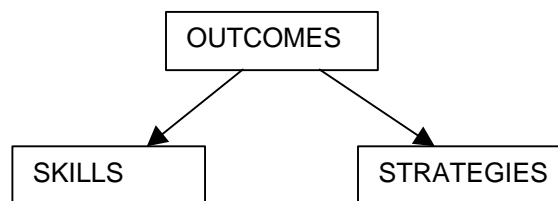
-Goal-setting for future learning

There is much debate over exactly what metacognition is. One reason for this confusion is that there are several terms currently used to describe the same basic phenomenon.(Jennifer Morrison)

In exploring what teachers can do to foster metacognitive behavior by students, this session will emphasize the power of learning strategies.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

A useful way to analyze outcomes included in the PROGRAM OF STUDIES is to distinguish between skills and strategies.



Some outcomes are skills; some are strategies. What is the difference?

- How would you distinguish a skill from a strategy?

SKILL

-Definition:

-Example:

STRATEGY

-Definition:

-Example:

- Notice the emphasis on strategies in the following excerpt from the Introduction to the revised PROGRAM OF STUDIES:

Reading provides students with a means of accessing the ideas, perspectives and experiences of others. By using effective reading strategies, students construct meaning and develop thoughtful and critical understanding and interpretations of a variety of texts. They also use reading strategies to reconstruct the meanings of others.

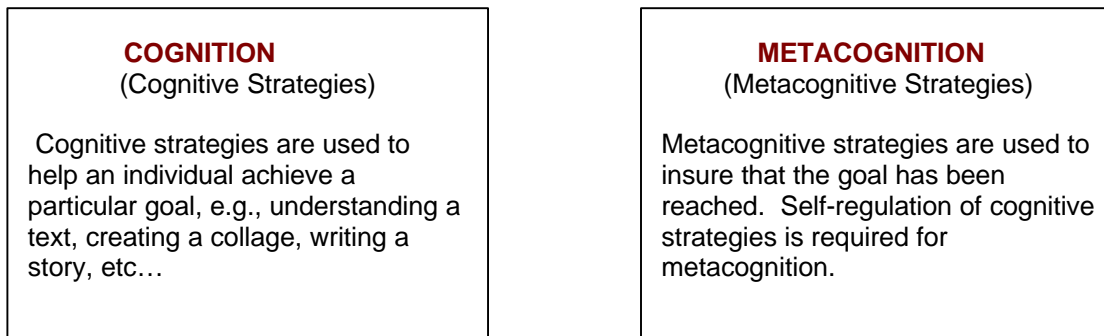
Writing enables students to explore, shape and clarify their thoughts and to communicate these thoughts to others. By using effective writing strategies, students discover and refine ideas, and compose and revise with increasing confidence and skills. (page 3)

LANGUAGE ARTS STRATEGIES

1. What are some of the strategies used by effective readers?
2. What are some of the strategies used by effective writers?
3. What are some strategies used by effective speakers?
4. What are some strategies used by effective listeners?
5. What are some strategies used by effective photographers, illustrators, and filmmakers?
6. What are some of the strategies used by effective viewers of film?

DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN COGNITIVE AND METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

The following chart separates cognitive strategies from metacognitive strategies:



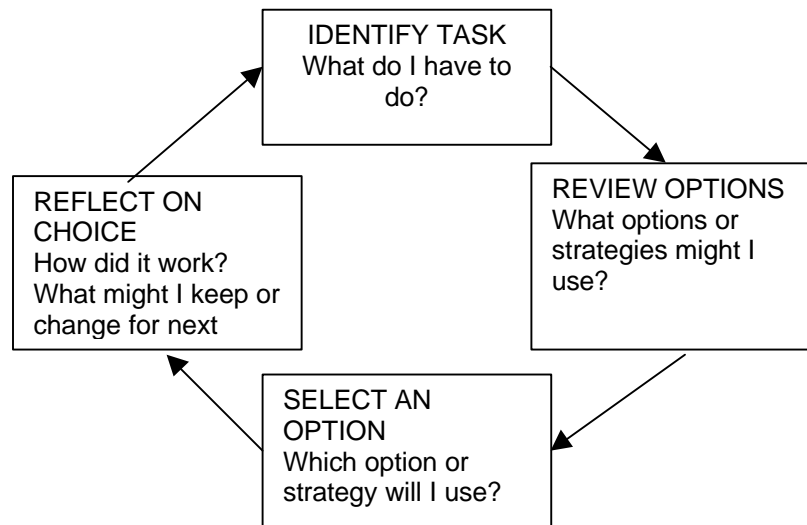
- From your reflection on your learning, cite some examples of cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

REFLECTION: Exploring Metacognition

- Take a few minutes to talk or write about the following questions:
 - What do you find easy to learn?
 - What do you find difficult to learn?
 - What do you do when you find something difficult to learn?
- In follow-up discussion, consider the following:
 - What do you notice about how different people answer these questions?
 - Did individuals identify strategies that worked for them?
 - Did you notice differences; e.g. what works for one person may not for another?
- In the following discussion consider the question:
Is it possible for students to use strategies without being metacognitive?

A MODEL FOR METACOGNITION

- The following model attempts to capture goals for metacognitive behavior in students.



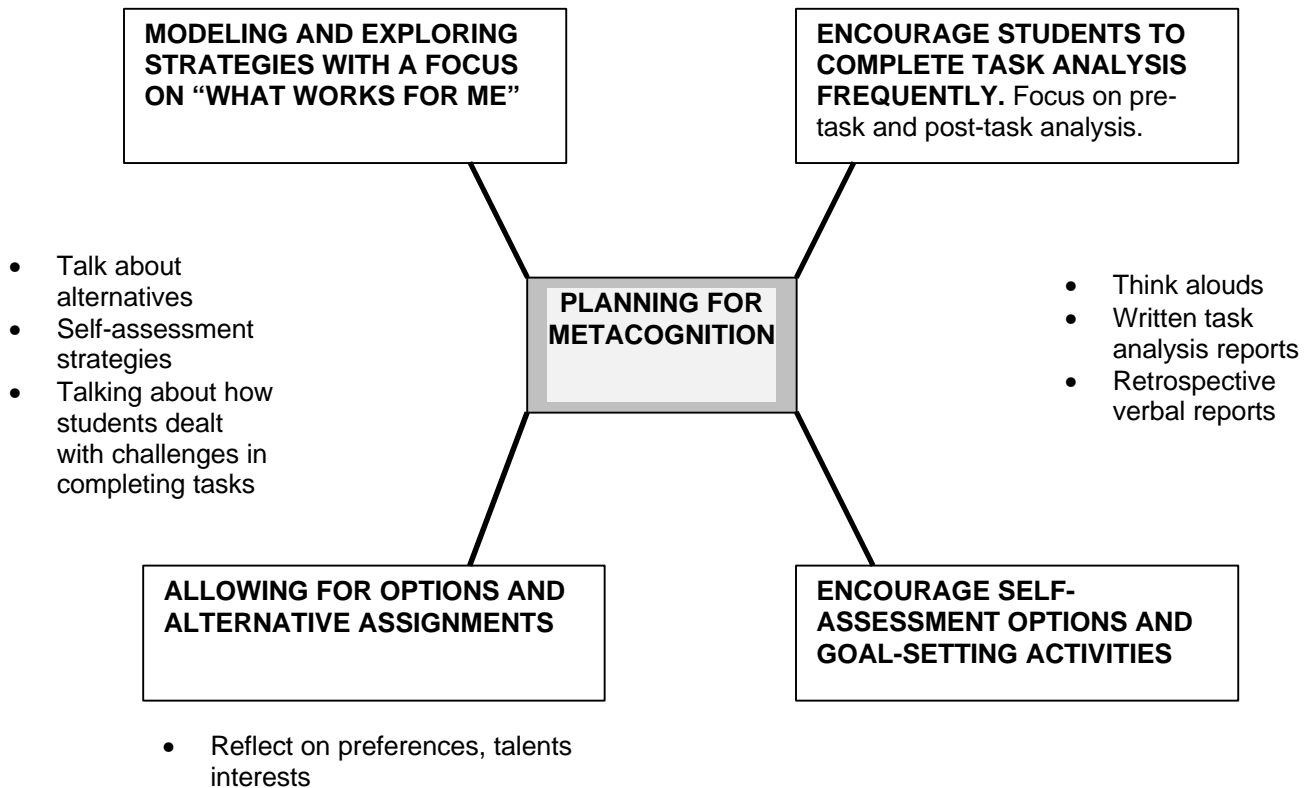
This model is elaborated on a website sponsored by the Calgary Catholic School District:

www.crcssdl.calgary.ab.ca/curr//ang/project/meta/index.htm

- Consider how this model applies to the things you found easy to learn and the things you found hard to learn.
- Consider how the model applies to subjects other than English Language Arts.

PLANNING FOR METACOGNITION

- Before you consider the following chart, talk about or write about what teachers can do to promote metacognition.
- The following chart presents key features of a program that emphasizes metacognition.



METACOGNITION IN PRACTICE: Applying metacognition to a current unit

- Review the unit that you have brought to the session to consider modifications related to the goal of metacognition. What parts of your unit emphasize metacognition? What could you add? Delete? Modify?

Consider:

1. Where can the unit emphasize the modeling and exploring of strategies?
2. Where can the unit encourage students to complete task analyses, and to review and select options and strategies?
3. Where can the unit allow for alternate assignments?
4. Where can your unit encourage students to explain their choice of options and strategies, and to complete other self-assessment and goal-setting activities?

REFERENCE:

Teaching and learning strategies employed in this workshop

—reference page 12-13 PILOT PROGRAM OF STUDIES

1.1 Discover possibilities

1.1.1 Form tentative understandings, interpretations and positions

1.2 Extend awareness

1.2.1 Consider new perspectives

1.2.2 Express preferences, and expand interests

1.2.3 Set personal goals for learning

2.1 Construct meaning from text and context

2.1.3 Engage prior knowledge

4.2 Improve thoughtfulness, effectiveness and correctness of communication

4.2.1 Enhance thought and detail

4.2.2 Enhance organization

5.2 Work within a group

5.2.1 Co-operate with others, and contribute to group process

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Cook, Doris M. (1989) STRATEGIC LEARNING IN THE CONTECT AREAS.
Madison, WS: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Daniels, Harvey (1994) LITERATURE CIRCLES, Markham, ON: Pembroke
Publishers

Foster, Graham (1996) STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT, Markham, On:
Pembroke Publishers

Hinson, Bess (2000) NEW DIRECTIONS IN READING INSTRUCTION
(Revised), Newart, ED: International Reading Association

Langer, Judith A. (1995) ENVISIONING LITERATURE, Newark, DE:
International Reading Association

