Transforming Attitude Towards Learning: Cognitive and Metacognitive Thinking and Critical Coreflection

Elizabeth Shetler
Faculty: Mara Alagic
School of Education, College of Applied Studies

INTRODUCTION: Cognition can be defined as all mental processes and abilities in which people engage on a daily basis such as memory, learning, problem solving, and evaluation, reasoning and decision-making. Cognition helps to generate new knowledge through mental processes and helps to use the knowledge that people have in daily life. Metacognition is often defined as thinking about thinking. It allows us to complete a given task well through planning, monitoring, evaluating and comprehending. This means while cognitive processes allow normal functioning of individuals, metacognition takes it a level higher/deeper making a person more aware of his/her cognitive processes.

PURPOSE: This study examined how cognitive and metacognitive thinking helps students transfer prior and current learning to new contexts with the emphasis on critical reflection and co-reflection (in support of metacognition) while transforming their attitude towards learning.

METHODS: The research was conducted by using a mixed research methodology in an English class of 18 high-school senior students. Interviewing students as well as observing grades and attitudes towards learning comprised the first part of the data collection. The questions involved in the interview consisted of questions that lets them explain their flexibility in an every-changing world. In addition, students reflected on the different elements that they have learned during class using a Google form survey document. Students also co-reflect in a group of their peers in order to show what they excelled at and what they need to work on to become effective participants during group work.

RESULTS: Collaboration is not something these students consider relevant. However, reflecting on their independent and group work students have a potential to increase their motivation to be better learners and teammate. From these collected data, I have found that students are more mindful with what they are doing when working with a group and want to communicate and teach each other more about what they know so they can grow and help others learn. I have also found the students want to hear different perceptive when discussion based conversation is involved.

CONCLUSION: These students knew that the learning was not only for them. That gave them a push to help to complete the work for their group members. Cognitively they are learning something new as in the novel and the different point of view of their peers. Metacognitively they are using what they know about how to read a novel, note taking, organizing, leadership, communication, and bringing it to other to help them grow and learn together.