Gen Ed News

What is metacognition?
And why do we care?

Metacognition:

The ability to
- Think about one’s own thinking;
- Be consciously aware of oneself as a problem solver;
- Monitor, plan and control one’s mental processing;
- Accurately judge one’s level of learning. (John Falvell, 1976)

Most teachers want their students to learn, not just memorize. The following are some steps you can take to teach your students to learn. (Modified from the book by Saundra Yancy McGuire, Teach Students How To Learn, Stylus Publishing, 2015)

1. Wait until students have gotten the results of their first major test or quiz; they are more likely to listen.
2. Don’t tell the students that the class session will present learning strategies ahead of time; they are more likely to show up.
3. Show dramatic before and after results from other students or classes.
4. Define metacognition.
5. Ask reflection questions:
   A. What’s the difference between studying and learning? Which have you been doing to this point?
   B. For which task would you work harder? To make an A on the next test, or to teach the material that will be covered on the next test for a review session for the class?

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D2L Brightspace Update

On May 11th, 2018 at 9:00 am, D2L will have a new look and feel. As soon as you login, you will notice visual improvements including the ability to use D2L on laptops, tablets and smartphones. With the exception of the My Home page, where there is a new way to organize courses, the core functionality of D2L will not change.

With the update, we will refer to D2L as D2L Brightspace to align with D2L’s own rebranding. D2L is the company and Brightspace is the product, but the terms are essentially interchangeable.

More information on the update at http://oia.arizona.edu/content/453
J.F. McKale came to Tucson in 1911 to accept a job at Tucson High School. His state championship baseball teams were known for their victories, embarrassing the college teams at the UA and Tempe Normal. A student petition was presented to University President A. H. Wilde, asking him to hire McKale as athletic director and coach of all UA sports. Although he was opposed to the hiring, Wilde announced McKale’s appointment on June 2, 1914, at a salary of $1,700 per year. Wilde’s successor, Rufus B. von KleinSmid was not much more enthused with the benefits of collegiate athletics, and records for 1915 show that McKale’s total appropriation to run his program amounted to $835!

Despite meager resources and an inexperienced group of players, McKale’s first football team made history. On Nov. 7, 1914, the team traveled to the west coast to play Occidental, then one of the reigning gridiron powers in California. Occidental won 14-0, but the loss was responsible for a great University athletic tradition -- the "Wildcats". "They Fought Like Wildcats"

Covering the game for the Los Angeles Times was young correspondent Bill Henry. Henry, in his story wrote: "The Arizona men showed the fight of wildcats and displayed before the public gaze a couple of little shrimps who defied all attempts of the Tigers to stop them". When the news reached the campus, the phrase "the fight of wildcats" was repeated over and over. The name stuck. The McKale legend was born.

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A BIT OF UA HISTORY

Thinking about your teaching? Want to get some objective feedback on how you are doing? OIA can help you with that.

Peer Review of Teaching Protocol

The protocol for peer review of teaching is designed to guide UA instructors in the process of formative review of peers’ teaching, as well as evaluation of teaching for summative review.

Formative review is used to provide feedback for professional growth and development; it is usually confidential and non-judgmental and its goal is self-motivated change. It is grounded in the belief that instructors can be their own best resources for improvement of teaching.

Evaluation of teaching (e.g., for annual reviews and P & T) is a more formal process; guidelines for using this protocol in that process are outlined in the Evaluation of Teaching document.

The process of peer review of teaching includes three stages:

1. a pre-observation meeting to discuss the target class and goals for the observation,
2. a classroom observation,
3. a post-observation meeting to discuss how the class went and what the observer noticed.

The Peer Review of Teaching Protocol includes:

- Guidelines for the Reviewee
- selecting a reviewer for formative review
- purpose of and preparing for the pre-observation meeting
- selecting items from the Classroom Observation Tool

- Purpose of post-observation meeting

- Guidelines for the Reviewer
- structuring the pre-observation meeting
- selecting items from the Classroom Observation Tool
- doing the classroom observation and completing the Tool
- structuring the post-observation meeting

- Classroom Observation Template (for the reviewer to record notes during class session)

- Classroom Observation Tool

- Observation items in eight areas:
  - Lesson Organization, Content Knowledge & Relevance, Presentation, Instructor-Student Interactions, Collaborative Learning Activities, Lesson Implementation, Instructional Materials, and Student Responses.
  - Customizable (users choose from among ~80 items, recommend ≤ 20 items for an observation).
  - Full Word version also available to download.

- The sections of the protocol are available at http://teachingprotocol.oia.arizona.edu/.

If you have any questions about the use of the Peer Review of Teaching Protocol or would like to provide any feedback, please email Ingrid Novodvorsky.
What is metacognition? (Continued)

(The overwhelming majority of students would say they would work harder if they have to teach the material.) Up to this point, when preparing for a test, have you been putting in the amount of effort commensurate with making an A or teaching the material?

6. Introduce Bloom's taxonomy.

7. Introduce the study cycle: 1. preview, 2. attend class, 3. review, 4. intense study sessions, 5. assess.

8. Discuss specific strategies, particularly emphasizing the following:
   A. Reading comprehension: preview material before reading, develop questions you expect the passage to answer, and read one paragraph at a time while stopping to paraphrase the information read.
   B. Doing homework without using examples: Study the information before looking at the first homework problem, work the example problems without looking at the solutions, and treat the homework problems as if they were test questions.

9. Discuss reasons student may or may not have done well on the first exam or quiz. Highlight reasons that focus on the students' behavior, not on circumstances they can't control. Lead them to take responsibility for their results.

10. Ask students the following two questions “on a scale of 1 to 10” to bring it home:
   A. How different are these strategies from what you were doing before?
   B. How motivated are you to use them?

11. Elicit a commitment by asking students to write down which strategy or strategies they will commit to using for the next few weeks.

12. Provide online resources and direct students to the campus learning center.

13. Express confidence that if students use the strategies, they will be successful, no matter what their past performance has been.

Writing Tip of the Month: Modeling writing practices

Like all learning, writing ability is developed over time and in social settings. Instructors can help students adapt their writing for new contexts by providing examples that help them conceptualize and practice new types of writing. Modeling disciplinary writing practices, as well as revision and peer review practices, helps make visible how writers work through various stages of writing. Here are a few ideas to incorporate examples and model writing in your courses:

Post annotated examples of previous student work (anonymized and with permission) to D2L. In your annotations, point out specific ways the writer accomplishes (or does not accomplish) certain aspects of the assignment. For example, you may highlight the ways a student used data to support a claim, or how their use of passive voice was (or was not) appropriate for the task.

Tip: Consider using a variety of student work to demonstrate how different students accomplish the assignment. Ask students to discuss the examples and annotations together (this could be done in-person or online).

Spend class time going over examples of previous student work. Work together to examine parts of the writing to determine how the writer meets, or does not meet, the criteria for the assignment.

Tip: This activity works well to model peer review and revision as well. Use examples of a previous peer review and discuss how effective the feedback is, or isn’t, for informing revision. Practice giving constructive feedback together on this work. Work with students to revise certain parts of the writing that could be clearer or meet the criteria more completely.

Facilitate a “writing process gallery walk” with students to make visible all the of the steps and actions one does while working on a piece of writing. Facilitate a discussion with students about which thinking and writing activities require more time and care in the writing process. Use this information to inform where you as the instructor might facilitate more structured activities for students to practice the writing process. Participate alongside students and talk about your own writing process.
