History How To's

Metacognition

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What is metacognition?

Empowering students to understand to know more about how they think by explicitly engaging them in discussions and practice with regards to how they plan, monitor and evaluate their learning. This gives them a "tool belt" of ways to consciously approach given tasks using strategies which will result in more successful learning.

What does the research say?

Metacognitive strategies improve academic achievement across a range of ages and cognitive abilities. This includes reading and text comprehension, writing, reasoning and memory (Dignath & Buttner, 2008; EEF, 2019; Hattie, 2009).

Pupils making an average of seven months' additional progress'* (EEF)

Further Reading

EEF Metacognition Guidance Report:
https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/31617/1/EEF_Metacognition_and_self-regulated_learning.pdf
Cambridge International:
https://cambridge-community.org.uk/professional-development/gswmeta/index.html

Using metacognition

When using metacognition to introduce learning strategies, ensure that throughout the whole process that you:

- **Think aloud** – Through each stage explain what you are doing, why you are doing it and how you are doing it.
- **Live modelling of the both the process and the strategy being introduced** – for example using the 'I do, we do, you do'
- **Question the students throughout to track their understanding of the process and strategy**

Share Purpose & Process

Explicitly state:

- What the task is
- What the strategy is
- Why you are going to use this certain to approach this task – this helps them to see the purpose and taps into their intrinsic motivation.
- How to do this they will plan, monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the strategy for this given task

Plan the task

- What do I have to do?
- How could I do this?
- Have I encountered a similar task before?
- What strategy did I use and how effective was it for this task?
- What do I do first?
- How will I monitor my progress through this task?

Monitor the task

- Am I on track?
- What is working well so far?
- What is left to do?
- Do I need to adapt my strategy at all?
- If I'm not on track, how do I get back on track?
- What comes next?

Evaluate the task

- What went well?
- What is the right / best strategy to use for this task?
- What could I improve upon for next time?
- Where else can I this strategy (in other tasks and other subjects)?

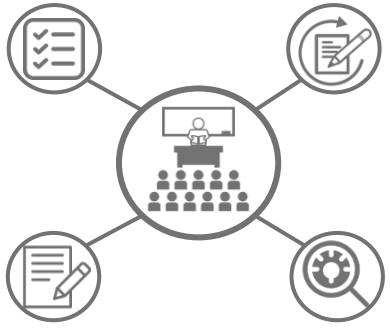
Do's and Don'ts

- Metacognitive oracy – think aloud, explaining what you are doing, how and why.
- Introduce slowly and chunk it – metacognition is an evolutionary process that needs to be built upon over time.
- Scaffold the process and introduction of the strategy
- Don't assume once they have learned a strategy once, that they are experts. Consistently practice the strategies, taking them through the metacognitive process as you do.
- Use it for the sake of it – metacognition should be used when appropriate to do so. Don't put it into a lesson for the sake of it or when it's not purposeful to the learning

In the History Classroom

Exam wrappers
Planning their revision strategy
Undertake the exam.
Reflect on the impact that their revision strategies had.

Personalised Learning Checklists
Give students 2 to 3 examples to compare and explain which is better, and why



Revision Strategies
Teach a revision technique using the metacognitive process – this will build up their revision toolkit for different topics.

Source analysis
Strategies to understand, analyse and evaluate a range of sources