Metacognition Skills For Lower Ability Pupils

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Abstract: Metacognition plays an important role in crafting the educational path and mindset of pupils. This paper sheds light on the finer meanings and aspects of metacognition. It aims to define who lower ability pupils are. While there is no fixed definition for lower ability pupils, this paper categorizes the basic domains in which these pupils come under. This paper discusses the importance and benefits of metacognitive learning and looks at some of the essential metacognition skills for lower ability pupils.

Index Terms: Metacognition, Lower Abiity Pupils.

1 INTRODUCTION

All educational institutions are moving in the direction towards an education system that is more flexible and diverse. All pupils should be provided with greater choices in terms of learning styles and choosing the one which optimizes their potential to shine. Being able to choose what and how one learn will encourage pupils to take greater ownership of their learning. Every pupil will eventually find his or her own talents. This will enable them to grow and become more competent. They will be able to face society and the world with confidence. We want pupils to follow their passion in whichever field they feel comfortable with. This is where the concept of metacognition will come to the rescue. Proper implementation and application of metacognitive strategies in the class room will ensure that learning gaps will be closed.

CONCEPT OF METACOGNITION

Metacognition, put in a very simple way, is merely thinking about one's thinking. It deals with the processes of planning, monitoring and assessing one's understanding and performance. There are two aspects of metacognition. The first aspect is reflection. It is basically thinking about what we know. The second aspect is self-regulation. It is about managing how we go about learning. Metacognition was originally referred to as the knowledge about and regulation of one's own cognitive activities in learning process (Flavell, 1979; Brown, 1978). Metacognition involves awareness of how they learn, an evaluation of their learning needs, generating strategies to meet these needs and then implementing the strategies (Hacker, 2009). To sum it up, Metacognition is a cycle. First, pupils assess the task. Then they evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. They then plan the approach. It does not have to be a detailed plan. In some cases, pupils can visualize how they want to accomplish, and how they want to get there. They go on to take action and apply strategies. During this phase, they monitor their progress. Finally they reflect on their learning and adjust their approach. Pupils may discover new strategies, which may prompt them to reassess their task.

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LOWER ABILITY PUPILS

Lower ability pupils are those who have slower learning pace and higher learning needs. This group of pupils may be less academically capable than their peers but they may excel and shine better than their peers in other specific areas. This will serve as a reminder to us that this group of pupils should not be treated as a disadvantaged group at any cost. We are in discussion about employing metacognition strategies to help this group of pupils academically only.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF METACOGNITION

Metacognitive skills support active learning. Piaget notes that metacognitive strategies helps students in understanding how to verbalize the task become more aware of thinking and how to perform the practical skills (Kagan, 2013). Pupils who have the ability to take ownership of their studies and plan their studies stand to gain most from metacognition. Many lower ability pupils may be slower but possess the will power to keep going. Self-guidance will take over once metacognitive skills have been acquired. This will enhance the learning experience of the learner and motivate him or her to achieve greater heights. Metacognitive approaches help learners in evaluating their progress in learning and thus offer good guidance (Herrera, Holmes &Kavimandan, 2011).

2 METACOGNITION SKILLS FOR LOWER ABILITY PUPILS

Knowing their limits

This is a very important skill as it prevents a potential burnout. It will be good for pupils to know the limits of their own memory for a particular task. This shortfall can be compensated by creating a means of external support. Lower ability pupils have to know that it is perfectly fine to have limitations. The situation is made more perfect when they are able to realize it and think of alternatives and corrective actions. Seeking support is also part of learning and progressing, especially for lower ability pupils.

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring one's learning strategy will enable to lower ability learner to devise new ways and strategies to engage himself or herself in a particular subject with more conviction.They will be able to self-monitor their behavior and assess their results. Self-monitoring does not create new skills or knowledge. However, it increases or decreases the frequency, intensity and duration of existing behavior. It also saves time for the teacher. This self-monitoring process needs active and willful cooperation from students. The teacher needs to be with the pupils and give them moral support and

encouragement.

Slow down

When the pace gets fast and when the going gets tough, lower ability pupils should slow down. They should stop for a while if necessary. They should take time to read and think about information. When information seems heavy and complicated and non-comprehensible, there may be a chance that it may be important. At this juncture, it is perfectly fine for the lower ability pupil to really slow down. This group of pupils should feel comfortable in this doing this. This will enable them to focus on important information. This buffer will prevent them from getting stressed or giving up on their tasks.

Drawing Diagrams

Lower ability pupils can sometimes be more of visual learners. Drawing diagrams is an effective metacognition skill. Pupils will be able to relate main ideas to one another. They will be able to look out for themes that connect the main ideas. When a lot of factual information is presented, lower ability pupils may not be able to take in everything. This is where this strategy will ensure that there is no memory load. Diagrams allow pupils to visualize facts easily. Lower ability pupils have to know when they are supposed to do this. Teachers need to help them out.

3 CHALLENGES OF TEACHING METACOGNITION SKILLS TO LOWER ABILITY PUPILS

Metacognition can affect the learners negatively (Cullen, 2013). Metacognition can actually affect the self-esteem of lower ability students. Most of the time, lower ability students are not able to develop proper self-esteem. This may in turn affect their ability to plan, monitor and assess their learning skills. Metacognitive strategies cannot work for students who lack proper reading and comprehension skills (Kagan Kaskin, 2013). We have to come to terms with the fact that language and communication skills are prerequisites of metacognition. It requires students who are capable to understand the instructions and demands of the tasks given (Cohen, 2014).

4 CONCLUSION

A good teacher is one who is confident. He or she is not judgmental. A good teacher makes the lesson enjoyable not just the academically inclined but also for those who are lagging behind. Metacognition is critically important but often overlooked. When lower ability students are made to understand and to be aware of the processes going on in their head, it will enable them to achieve better results. When these pupils understand how they are making meaning of things, they eventually will need lesser guidance. This will boost their confidence level. Metacognition has great value in the class room. A lot of time is spent on throwing information at the pupils and expecting them to absorb everything but time is rarely spent on showing these pupils how to learn the information. Pupils should be made to understand that when they take responsibility for their own learning, this will boost their academic success.

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