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Final Paper

This course has taught me a lot and there were a lot of topics that I really enjoyed. Probably the two that struck me the most were metacognition and cognitive apprenticeship. I feel that I am drawn to these because I have developed my learning in the realm of thinking. I like the idea of learning because you think. Both of the mentioned topics deal with that very concept.

**Metacognition**

Metacognition is defined by Gredler (2005) as a process that “involves thinking about thinking” (p. 228). This sounds much more brain intensive than other activities. Gredler (2005) also mentioned certain components to metacognition. The first is that the one knows and is aware about how they think. The second is that the one knows when and where to use any obtained procedures. The individual needs to know of what information they have, know what they are capable of doing, and aware of any difficulty that could arise.

To take this a step further, it has been argued that using the model of metacognition should consist of “planning, evaluation, and monitoring” (p. 228). This isn’t just a typical process for one to go through. When you plan, you set up goals that will aid you in learning. When you evaluate, you ensure that you are learning and understanding what you need to. And last, monitoring means you check where you are at and determine what you still need to work on or what you need to fix to make learning more efficient.

To truly apply metacognition, one needs to have a plan or a strategy for learning. The strategy must be followed to aid in comprehension and learning. As the strategy continues, improvements are made so concepts can be learned. What is nice is that even when one fails to learn the actual material, they can be successful in the realization, which leads them to a metacognitive success (p. 228). Knowing that you can be successful without actually learning can be a relief. Knowing that the learning can still be done can be calming. This is what makes metacognition so powerful.

**Metacognition Applications**

Metacognition has impacted me as an educator. I want what is best for my students and I want my students to be learning the content. But what is more important is that they become a life-long learner. When the student wants to learn for the rest of his/her life, the student empowers himself/herself and gains control of the path to be taken. Those that accomplish whatever they want use the ability to set goals, ensure that those goals get met, and change the way they execute those goals.

This aspect should be applied to teaching. It can be difficult to see this in a classroom because usually you see the instructor getting data from students in the forms of grades, but not much about what the students are doing about their learning. They just follow what the instructor does and teaches. The instructor is the metacognitive agent. Another problem is that certain students take specific classes because they need to in order to graduate. In these classes, students don’t care to learn the content. They just want to pass. This needs to switch.

I am not sure the best way to apply this method. One thing that could be done is give the students the standards for the class and have them apply self-directed learning. As the students learn the standards on their own, they can apply metacognition and develop a strategy for learning the required material. Through metacognition, the students will learn the material. There are drawbacks to this method, especially for the students I have worked with. Most of the students I have are too familiar with the behaviorism model and need to be told what to do. Metacognition is far from that. Many students wouldn’t know what to think of metacognition.

**Cognitive Apprenticeship**

Now I will move onto cognitive apprenticeship. I could relate very well how it operates because of graduate school. Graduate school uses this model. Brown (1989) mentioned this topic, cognitive apprenticeship, and described it as trying “to enculturate students into authentic practices through activity and social interactions in a way similar to that evident - and evidently successful - in craft apprenticeship” (p. 37). Students learn through their mentor teacher. The mentor teacher can guide the students and teach them the specific skills required by that profession. Because the mentor teacher watches and observes the students closely, they can lead and correct the pupils when needed. After the experience of being mentored, the student can go out and further develop their trade.

What is intriguing to me is the fact that this is done in a cognitive way, meaning the development and mentoring is all done through concepts from the profession, not the physical skills like in a craft apprenticeship. The instructor teaches the concepts and ensures that the learners are understanding those concepts by testing their knowledge by posing more difficult ideas dealing with the concepts. Brown (1989) quoted Schoenfeld in the press when he said “In most classes, so-called “problems” are exercise; you are done when you’ve shown that you’ve mastered the relevant technique by getting the answer” (p. 38). Thus teachers in cognitive apprenticeship don’t care that you get the right answer, but that you learn the right technique.

**Cognitive Apprenticeship Applications**

This model can be hard to implement in a public school setting. The more specific a topic, the easier it is to apply. In the public school setting, teachers usually have a high student-to-teacher ratio. This is counterproductive to cognitive apprenticeship because the teacher is most effective with less students. The teacher can give more time to each student and really develop the knowledge the student needs to be successful.

As mentioned earlier, I feel like this method is used the higher education one receives. It works well in this setting because there are fewer students trying to achieve this. Another key aspect is that the students are learning the content that is specific to that field because the higher education is more specific. Professors also like this because they can shape the students, just as they were shaped by their mentors. It seems like an endless cycle for mentors.

**Motivation**

The topic of motivation really interested me, but I feel like I want to explore this topic more. As I looked through different readings, I realized I don’t know as much as I thought I knew. I learned about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and what they are. I learned some of the basics to increase intrinsic motivation and ways to avoid extrinsic motivation. But as I learned more about motivation, I realized new techniques and methods that I can use to help my students increase their intrinsic motivation for the content.

Dweck (2007) mentioned the difference between the growth mind-set and the fixed mind-set. Any student could fall into either category, depending on the teacher and what happens during the instruction time. When a student has the growth mind-set, they believe that they can accomplish a task through their effort. These students will keep working until the problem gets solved. When students have a fixed mind-set, they believe that their intelligence will carry them through a task. When their intellect runs out, the students become stumped and believe they can’t do anything else to solve the problem. They don’t want to use any more effort than is needed. As instructors give praise, to lead students to a growth mind-set, the praise should be aimed at the effort and not the intellect. When this happens, students realize that they need to work to solve problems and not rely only on what they know.

As I analyzed this article, I decided to take a look at other directions for motivation. I looked online for different theories that dealt with motivation. The results had more theories than I thought would come up. I tried reading the basics of each theory and tried to get a better feel for it. A lot of these theories brought new light to the subject, but there was a lot more for me to learn. This is a basic list of the theories that I found: drive reduction theory, attribution theory, cognitive evaluation theory, and self-determination theory. I want to try and understand these theories better so I can best motivate students.

**Motivation Application**

There are many different ways to apply the different theories. As for what Dweck (2007) suggested to only praise students on their effort and not their intellect. Instructors can help their students maintain a solid drive to do their work when they know that it is their effort that helps them learn.

As for the other theories, you would need to analyze them and generate a plan to apply them in class to help the students get motivated. There are a lot of different strategies that can promote motivation in the classroom.

This field is very broad and it has brought a lot of interest to me. There is a lot that I can learn and apply to help students be motivated. Keeping students motivated will help students perform better. Their performance in class will lead them to be more or less successful later on in life and where they go.

**References**

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