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# METACOGNITIVE PRACTICES IN TRAINING FOR ESSAY WRITING IN A TARGET LANGUAGE

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The relevance of the article stems from the problem of common student frustration with their essay writing performance in target language training. The issue is manageable when integrating essay writing skills with practices that use metacognitive strategies in cognitive processes. These strategies focus the thought of learners on personal development and consequently help them become more self-aware and proficient writers. The paper's purpose in this regard is to specify metacognitive practices as patterns of strategic behaviour and outline the rationale for their use in writing performance. In achieving this, the research employs methodological tools corresponding to current and archival materials analysis (student essays and teacher feedback techniques on their quality), behavioural observations, and case studies. Insights into self-assessments, self-efficacy beliefs, and the wide-ranging usefulness of various reflective procedures for advancing metacognitive abilities are among the objectives of this mixed-methods approach. The main results are embodied in certain transformations of theoretical ideas into specific learning tasks with metacognitive content and practices for their fulfilment, as well as in their visual illustrations and examples. The metacognitive model is part of these results, which frame metacognitive practices in the educational process. Despite its generalizing application, the model structure (personality – task – strategies at the level of cognitive and metacognitive thinking – teacher/peer student/group) limits the metacognitive practices functioning to strategic goals or attitudes aimed at cognition regulation. When the model is assumed, its extension through metacognition depicts these moments: (1) Stages of training metacognitive strategies: planning (analyzing essay requirements), monitoring (tracking progress during writing), evaluation (critically assessing written work), regulation (adapting strategies based on feedback), and others. (2) Skills development within these strategies. (3) Emotional factors. (4) Practical toolkits: reflection journals, peer reviews, and feedback integration.

Overall, metacognitive practice implemented within the educational curriculum alters writing from a challenging task into a structured, intentional learning

experience, suggesting that further research is warranted to refine and expand on these findings.

***Keywords:*** *cognitive processes, essay writing, learning strategies, metacognition, metacognitive practices.*

**Problem statement.** The target language learning experience in the student's mind is often represented by situations that allow them to reassess their previous outcomes and identify their frustrations with them. In particular, the case results from their performance in writing on literary topics. Thus, at a later stage of the study, when re-reading their essays, the students ask: *How could I have written such a thing? Why is my reasoning so poor? Did I not understand the topic?* Consequently, the following problem arises – how to mitigate the negative effect of their reactions to their works.

Problem resolution is achievable when designing a learning path with a learning package for a particular literature course in which the setting of training objectives will allow for the possible building of metacognitive skills. Metacognitive skills enable language learners to become more strategic, self-aware, and proficient in essay writing, transforming the writing process from a demanding task to a structured, intentional learning experience. These skills are the indispensable attributes of metacognitive practices, the elaboration of which depends on a clear understanding of metacognition theory.

**Analysis of current research.** In academic discourse, the term metacognition sounds modern, while the essential description of the elements inherent in this concept came from Aristotle in his works *The Metaphysics* and *De Anima* (On the Soul) [4; 3]. His insights on cognition (*gnōsis*) (such as practical wisdom, active and potential or passive intellect, actual thinking, contemplation, and cognitive development) can align somehow with ideas about self-awareness, reflection, and regulation of personal thought processes, or control of individual cognition. Aristotle does not use the term metacognition, but his philosophy is quintessential to the concept in modern interpretation [6; 14; 15].

Influenced by J. Piaget's theories, in particular his idea on intentionality, which assumes goal-directed, deliberate thinking and entails organising a series of acts, J. Flavell was the first to define metacognition for learning in educational psychology: "Metacognition refers, among other things, to the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the

cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in service of some concrete goal or objective" [11: 232]. He further specifies the definition and refers to metacognition as "knowledge that takes as its object, or that regulates any aspect of any cognitive endeavour" [10: 16].

Subsequent research on the term has confirmed, explained and expanded its conceptual content, pointing to potential implementation in education, including modern technologies, modelling, or its ambiguous nature. Essentially, they encapsulated it as a general comprehension of being conscious of one's mental or psychic activities and states and the ability to exert control over them [17; 2; 18; 19; 13; 16; 1]. Some researchers examine the importance of metacognition in writing [22; 20; 21]. Moreover, "the concept has been broadened to include anything psychological, rather than just anything cognitive. For instance, if one has knowledge or cognition about one's own emotions or motives <…>, this can be considered metacognitive" [8: 523]. So, S. D'Millo integrated goal-appraisal and network theories of affect within cognitive process models of writing [7], and A. Wells explored the human Metacognitive Control System and its relevance to understanding and treating psychological disorders [23].

**The aim and tasks of the research.** Here, a specific perspective is to demonstrate the idea that every field of knowledge grows through the development of new concepts. In this context, the nuanced understanding of the notion in question is warranted, as "thinking about thinking or the monitoring and regulation of thinking" [8: 523] – traditionally defined as metacognition – refers to the ability to cognise and reflect upon or recognise and, consequently, experience, feel one's mental processes. This discussion highlights three aspects: (1) cognising, which denotes the process of learning and comprehending mental activities through experiential knowledge, reflective thought, and sensory input, (2) recognising, which involves the acceptance of their existence, coherence, or authenticity, and (3) emotional, which means to emotionally respond to one's own cognitive behaviours and monitor them.

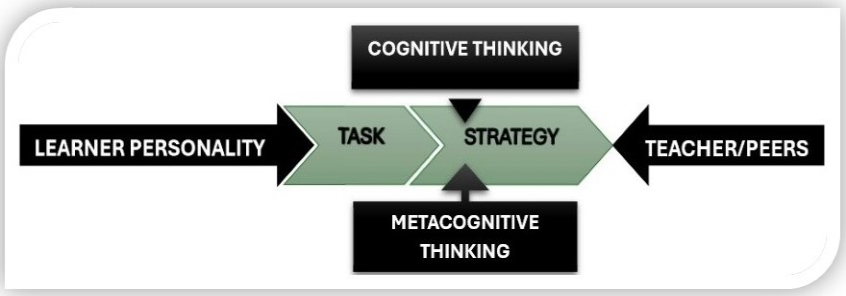
This article argues that engaging in metacognitive practices, which encompass distinctive strategies, increases students' awareness and attention concentrating on their cognitive processes, and indicates the tendency to continue the growth of their metacognitive abilities in learning and considerably in essay writing. Viewed this way, it aims to outline the theoretical framework that highlights these benefits and

introduce the core principles for implementing metacognitive strategies in the classroom through a metacognitive model.

**Methods of the research.** The present metacognitive study applies methodological tools such as analysis of the current and archival material (student essays and teacher memos to them), behavioural observations, and personality analysis questions inherent in education psychology. In the article, the subject matter notes the limitations of using personality analysis questions in its unfolding. It emphasises exploring data collection methods, expressly case studies and observations, to understand metacognitive judgements and self-efficacy beliefs. These methods stipulate a consistent approach to analysing the research problems and relevant material and designing the dual-purpose instructional training package. It seeks to address, firstly, a set of metacognitive practices and requirements and guidelines for their implementation, and secondly, the potential for assessing the progression of students' metacognitive skills.

**Presentation of the main material.** The package mentioned may take the form, for example, of a practical Metacognitive Reflection Worksheet. However, its creation first needs a clear understanding of metacognitive processes through its schematic representation.

The entrenched scientific stance on metacognitive knowledge as the embodiment of person, task, and strategy knowledge [9; 24; 12] took center stage in creating a model that can mirror what and how an individual is willing to perform and still receive feedback responses. According to the logic of this statement, our model will summarize its subjectivity (Self and environment), objectivity (task, including one's thought process), and structurally integrated metacognitive skillfulness, including operations with cognitive components (Picture 1).




*Picture 1. Metacognitive model of learning*

Subjectivity in the modelling context represents the interaction between the direct partners of the educating situation, namely: (1) the student as a personality and (2) the teacher or (3) the group as a collective subject or the peer student. Here, personality means identity in cognitive, psychological, and social dimensions of learning. This model, being universal in different types of communicative activities training, conditionally restricts the actions of the participants to metacognitive practices in the overall organizational arrangement of preparing essays on literary topics and performing this writing through the strategies considered as a system of expedients and, thus, requiring a positive understanding in task solving. As a result, the model transforms into a model of metacognitive practices and fulfils the worksheet format. These initiatives focus on (1) providing students with robust matrices to realize their potential for self-knowledge and (2) accepting the inherent struggles while (a) developing conventional cognitive thinking and (b) acquiring strategic metacognitive thinking during the assignment.

The model provides insight into the expected outcomes of metacognitive practices by addressing the issues that stem from the explicit distinctions between cognitive and metacognitive thinking. According to L. Carson, cognitive processing occurs when learners focus on gaining a deeper understanding of the task content or doing the task, but not how to do the task [5: 6], and metacognitive processing "occurs when learners are concerned with how learning should proceed" [5: 7].

Cognitive thinking is a multifaceted mental activity that covers information acquisition, processing, storing, transforming, adapting, and using. Metacognitive thinking is a higher-level mental process, or advanced monitoring system, that helps individuals cope with concerns affecting their cognitive functions by stepping back to observe their judging strategies and produce cognitive alterations. According to the target setting, metacognitive thinking appears in the following:

1. Self-Awareness: Students might realize that *I write best by schematizing or creating visual images*. 2. Self-Monitoring: *Do I understand this material? What strategies am I using to write this? Am I staying on topic? Is my writing clear and concise? Have I provided enough evidence to support my points?* 3. Self-Regulation: Students consult reference materials, reflect on previous experience or switch to a different style of task performance. Visual learners organize their

ideas by creating mind maps or colour-coding notes. Auditory learners can clarify their ideas by discussing an essay plan with a course mate, peer student, or teacher. They may also record themselves explaining important points and listen to the recordings to deepen or alter their understanding. Reading/writing learners take detailed notes or read extensively before writing. Kinesthetic learners use physical activities, for instance, walking around while generating ideas or using gestures to help recollect key points. 4. Emotion control evolves through awareness (*I know I sometimes get anxious during tests and rush through questions*), monitoring (*I am going to pay attention to my stress levels and breathing while writing*), and regulation (*If I notice I am getting overwhelmed, I will take short breaks*). Balancing emotional expression with clarity and objectivity is a key to well-laid-out sensitive content in writing that resonates with readers.

The characteristics of metacognitive thinking make assertions about the skills necessary for sufficient strategies. Metacognitive strategies, being integral parts of metacognitive skills, are commensurable quantities of metacognitive practices. These ideas suggest an adaptation to writing the essay on literary characters that serves as a background for the structure and content of a Metacognitive Literary Analysis Reflection Worksheet that shows how metacognitive and cognitive thinking strategies interact in an instruction-tailored way for metacognitive practices within consecutive steps as follows:

1. Pre-writing reflection: Acquisition of skill in analyzing a literary character.

| **Cognitive training (Task)** | **Metacognitive Questioning** | **Reflective training** |
|---|---|---|
| Identify key scenes involving the character while reading the literary work. Note initial observations about the character's actions and dialogues. | *What are my first impressions of this character?* | *What assumptions am I bringing to my interpretation? What aspects of the character intrigue or leave me in doubt? How might my personal experiences influence my reading?* |

*Picture 2. Personal Assumptions Exploration Reflection Template*

Cognitive layer: Surface-level understanding of a character (initial impressions based on plot and basic character description). Metacognitive strategy: Creating a Character Reflection Template

(Picture 2). Metacognitive practice: Self-questioning. Reflective reasoning.

2. Close Reading Strategy: Multilayered Character Examination.

Cognitive process: Quotes. Specific Actions. Metacognitive cognition doubling: Two-Column Textual Analysis Method: (1) Textual Evidence: Task. (2) Interpretative Reflection: Judgements. Self-questioning (Picture 3).

| **Textual Evidence** | **Interpretative Reflection** |
|---|---|
| Analyse character's actions, dialogues, and relationships. Identify key character evolution moments. | *What does this moment reveal about the character's inner world? How does this scene challenge or confirm my initial understanding? What psychological or social factors might explain this behavior?* |

*Picture 3. Two-column textual analysis*

3. Conception Building Strategy: Multiple Interpretative Patterns

| **Cognitive approach** | **Metacognitive Interpretation Questioning** |
|---|---|
| Psychoanalytic Perspective | *What unconscious motivations might drive the character?* |
| Philosophical/Moral Implications | *What if a character's behaviour is the nuanced response to life complexity? What if character's actions are sophisticated forms of moral resistance?* |
| Gender-sensitive Critique | *How does the character's gender impact their representation?* |
| Historical Context: Cultural/Social/Political | *What societal norms influence the character's actions?* |
| Author's biographical references | *Do the character's ideas* or *behaviour trace their origin to the author's ideology?* |
| Personal Reflection | *Which perspective resonates most with my understanding?* |

*Picture 4. Hypothetical Interpretation Matrix*

Cognitive thinking: Gathering critical interpretations of a character. Understanding different hypothetical approaches. Metacognitive contingence: Creating a Hypothetical Interpretation Matrix (Picture 4).

4. Argument Development: The Intellectual Blueprint.

Cognitive Process: Organizing main arguments about the character. Developing a coherent thesis. Metacognitive Enhancement: Dialectical Outline Structure: Initial thesis. Potential counterarguments. Synthesis of competing interpretations.

5. Drafting Strategy: Interpretative Dialogue Technique.

Writing Process: Writing a draft in conversation with multiple perspectives. Incorporating voices of different critical interpretations. Metacognitive Reflection Breaks: Making regular pauses. Asking: *Whose perspective am I most privileging? What voices might I be inadvertently silencing? How might a reader from a different background interpret this?*

6. Revision Strategy: Critical Distance Technique.

Cognitive Review: Checking argument coherence. Verifying textual evidence. Metacognitive Perspectives: Metacognitive Checklist (Self-Assessment): 1. Character's perspective: *How might the character respond to this interpretation?* 2. Critical scholar: *Would a literary theorist find this analysis compelling?* 3. General reader: *Is this accessible and engaging?* 4. Teacher, peer student, group: *Is my vision of the character congruent with those of my educational partners?* 5. Learning Reflection: Interpretative Growth Journal.

7. Completing the Essay. Reflecting on: *How has my understanding of the character evolved? What surprises emerged during my analysis? How might future readings of this character be different? What did I learn about literary interpretation?*

8. Emotional Intelligence in Interpretation: Reflective Emotional Mapping: *How are my emotional responses influencing my interpretation? What personal experiences might influence my understanding?* Emotional Reflection Techniques: Identifying emotional triggers in the text. Exploring why certain character moments resonate or disturb. Separating personal emotional response from objective analysis.

9. Technology and Resource Integration: Using digital note-taking tools.

Despite the model's magnitude, its functionality is flexible and deeply introspective. At the same time, it is the subject to discussion. The question of how to introduce metacognitive practices as interdisciplinary modalities is an issue of special concern.

**Conclusion.** In this article, the research background gave depth to understanding metacognition and reinforced its relevance in applying it to target language essay writing. Metacognitive practices proved significant through a substantiated discussion of their impact on student enhancing writing proficiency and raising emotional awareness and advocacy for their implementation in education. So, metacognitive skills transform writing into a more structured and intentional learning experience and mastering emotional control through metacognitive awareness is essential for objective judgement about literary textual evidence and its interpretative reflection. By incorporating metacognitive strategies, educators foster learners' self-regulation in writing performance and create a supportive environment. The article also proposed a dynamic model for literary analysis that blended cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Its adapting nature can reshape students' cognitive pathways for education through new realities and give them new experiences.

**Prospects for further research** in this field should call for refining metacognitive models and practices, potentially integrating modern technologies and interdisciplinary links.

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## МЕТАКОГНІТИВНІ ПРАКТИКИ У НАВЧАННІ НАПИСАННЯ ЕСЕ ЦІЛЬОВОЮ МОВОЮ

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Актуальність статті зумовлена проблемою поширеного розчарування студентів у своїх результатах написання есе під час вивчення іноземної мови. Цю проблему можна вирішити, якщо інтегрувати навички написання есе з практиками, які використовують метакогнітивні стратегії у когнітивних процесах. Ці стратегії фокусують думку учнів на особистісному розвитку і, як наслідок, допомагають їм стати більш самосвідомими та досвідченими

авторами. Мета цієї статті – визначити метакогнітивні практики як способи стратегічної поведінки та окреслити обґрунтування їхнього використання у письмовій діяльності. Для досягнення цієї мети в дослідженні використовується методологічний інструментарій, що включає аналіз поточних та архівних матеріалів (студентські есе та педагогічні техніки зворотного зв'язку щодо їхньої якості), поведінкові спостереження та кейс-стаді. Серед цілей цього змішаного підходу – розуміння самооцінок, переконань щодо самоефективності та широкої корисності різних рефлексивних процедур для розвитку метакогнітивних здібностей. Основні результати втілені в певних трансформаціях теоретичних ідей у конкретні навчальні завдання з метакогнітивним змістом і практики їх виконання, а також у їх наочних ілюстраціях і прикладах. Складником цих результатів є метакогнітивна модель, яка формує метакогнітивні практики в освітньому процесі. Незважаючи на узагальнююче застосування, структура моделі (особистість – завдання – стратегії на рівні когнітивного та метакогнітивного мислення – викладач / студент-т'ютор / група) обмежує функціонування метакогнітивних практик стратегічними цілями або установками, спрямованими на регуляцію пізнання. Коли в модель приймається її розширення через метакогніцію, то вона відображає ці моменти: (1) Етапи навчання метакогнітивних стратегій: планування (аналіз вимог до есе), моніторинг (відстеження прогресу під час написання), оцінювання (критичне оцінювання письмової роботи), регулювання (адаптація стратегій на основі зворотного зв'язку) та інші. (2) Розвиток навичок у межах цих стратегій. (3) Емоційні фактори. (4) Практичні інструменти: листи рефлексії, експертне оцінювання та організація зворотного зв'язку. В цілому, впроваджені в освітню програму метакогнітивні практики перетворюють письмо зі складного завдання на структурований, цілеспрямований навчальний процес, що свідчить про необхідність подальших досліджень для поглиблення та розширення цих висновків.

***Ключові слова:*** *когнітивні процеси, метакогнітивні практики, метапізнання, написання есе, стратегії навчання.*

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