

# Metacognition

Metacognition is the process of thinking about thinking. Flavell (1976) describes it as follows: "Metacognition refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes or anything related to them, e.g., the learning-relevant properties of information or data. For example, I am engaging in metacognition if I notice that I am having more trouble learning A than B; if it strikes me that I should double check C before accepting it as fact." (p 232).

Flavell argued that metacognition explains why children of different ages deal with learning tasks in different ways, i.e., they have developed new strategies for thinking. Research studies (see Duell, 1986) seem to confirm this conclusion; as children get older they demonstrate more awareness of their thinking processes.

Metacognition has to do with the active monitoring and regulation of cognitive processes. It represents the "executive control" system that many cognitive theorists have included in their theories (e.g., Miller, Newell & Simon, Schoenfeld). Metacognitive processes are central to planning, problem-solving, evaluation and many aspects of language learning.

Metacognition is relevant to work on cognitive styles and learning strategies in so far as the individual has some awareness of their thinking or learning processes. The work of Piaget is also relevant to research on metacognition since it deals with the development of cognition in children.

For further discussion of Metacognition, see <http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/metacognition/start.htm> or <http://www.gse.buffalo.edu/fas/shuell/cep564/Metacog.htm>

## References:

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