



Indicator: The school promotes metacognitive competency in school rituals and routines, such as morning announcements, awards assemblies, hallway and classroom wall displays, and student competitions. (D6)

Explanation: Personal learning models emphasize a number of instructional strategies to enhance students' metacognitive competency and encourage management of their own learning. Linking metacognitive competency to school rituals and routines can complement and reinforce the explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies within classrooms. The value of metacognitive competency should be conveyed through visible displays in classroom and hallways as well as through school announcements and awards regarding students' metacognitive achievements. Digital badges and portfolios can also enhance metacognitive competency and may offer a way for students to showcase their metacognitive learning within the school community.

Questions: What are the benefits of building students' metacognitive competency? How can metacognitive competency be promoted within a school's rituals and routines?

What Are the Benefits of Building Students' Metacognitive Competency?

Learner-centered, or personalized learning refers to “a teacher’s relationships with students and their families and the use of multiple instructional modes to scaffold each student’s learning and enhance the student’s personal competencies” (Twyman & Redding, 2015, p. 3). The student is actively involved with the teacher in co-constructing their individualized learning pathway, and often through technology the location, time and pace of learning may vary from student to student (Redding, 2016). Metacognitive competency, one of four personal competencies within recent personalized learning frameworks¹ becomes critical for student success, particularly within personalized learning pedagogies, as students are responsible to some degree for managing their own learning. Metacognition refers to how students learn, and self-regulate learning and use of learning strategies (Redding, in press). Metacognitive strategy instruction is particularly imperative given many states’ and districts’ adoption of Common Core Standards, which require students to be able to use metacognitive learning strategies extensively in order to engage in higher-order processes such as researching and synthesizing information, and critically reading and evaluating texts (Conley, 2014).

How Can Metacognitive Competency Be Promoted Within A School’s Rituals and Routines?

Twyman and Redding (2015) and others (e.g., Wolfe & Davis Poon, 2015) advocate teachers intentionally building metacognitive competencies into their teaching and lesson planning; for example, documenting explicitly how a lesson plan component promotes students’ self-regulatory abilities, goal setting, and tracking of mastery. In addition, metacognitive competency should be recognized within a school’s routines and rituals and its importance made visible within hallways and classrooms so that students, staff and parents realize its value to learning and future

¹ Other personal competencies are Cognitive, Motivational, and Social/Emotional. For a complete description of a personalized learning framework see Redding, in press: http://www.centeril.org/2016handbook/resources/Redding_chapter_web.pdf

success. Morning announcements and student awards can highlight metacognitive achievements by students (e.g., mastery of learning strategies); in addition, school rituals such as having students write letters to future students with reflections on their learning and advice at the end of courses can address metacognitive competency (Costa & Kallick, 2008). Metacognitive competency can also be reinforced through technology-aided resources, such as digital (online) portfolios or badges that allow students to document and display their progression through learning tasks and accomplishments (Redding, 2014). Digital badges “contain specific claims regarding what the earner learned or did, and detailed evidence supporting those claims” (O’Byrne, Schenke, Willis III, & Hickey, 2015). Digital badges can map out the learning trajectory expected of students within learning tasks both in formal and informal education settings, and can contain ways for students to document their attainment of many of the 21st century, “soft” skills not generally recognized within traditional school assessment systems. Digital badges can also help students become aware of what to monitor in their own learning, and help them set goals and envision success (Fontichiaro & Elkordy, 2015). These digital badges can be housed within a school’s social networks that recognize and celebrate metacognitive competencies (Redding, 2014). One example is the MOUSE program, which trains high school students in economically disadvantaged communities to be the technology and web literacy experts within their schools through an online credentialing system. As O’Byrne, et al., (2015) describe:

By introducing youth to professional communities of practice, MOUSE enables them to gain exposure and develop their skills in an age-appropriate professional work setting. The program extends students’ experience after school by connecting them with a peer community with shared interests. The online credentialing system allows students to identify their achievements and pathways of learning. The badges focus on the skills and accomplishments that do not receive much attention but are critical to the function of school communities and student identities. (p. 452)

Digital portfolios can also be used to capture students’ metacognitive accomplishments. Using digital portfolios can encourage students to examine strengths and weaknesses, learn to set goals, and generally assume increased responsibility for their learning (Meyer,

Abrami, Wake, Aslan, & Denault , 2010). Process digital portfolios, which are personal learning management tools designed to tell the story of a student’s effort and progress or attainment towards individual learning goals, may be particularly beneficial for at-risk students whose competency may be more accurately represented within these authentic tasks (Barrett, 2007). Digital portfolios have been shown through research to lead to increased 21st century literacy skills, critical thinking, active learning, and ability to self-regulate learning (Barrett, 2009; Meyer, et al., 2010; Meyer, Wade, & Abrami, 2013).

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