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IMPORTANCE OF METACOGNITIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Nowadays students belong to the generation that labeled as ‘digital natives’ or ‘the Net generation’ and ‘Google generation’ highlighting the role of technologies and Internet networks in defining their lifestyles, studies and development. Most of them are active learners who prefer looking for information on their own besides listening to readymade lectures and who use laptops, tablets or smartphones and the keyboards more often than traditional pens and copybooks [3]. Active learning means that learners take increasing responsibility for their learning, and that teachers are becoming enablers and activators of learning, rather than lecturers or deliverers of ideas.

The informational abyss is at their fingertips, and that is a fundamental change in the way young people communicate, socialize, create and learn. The Internet has reshaped the way they search for information and the way they think. But all young people face the same problem how to navigate that vastness by building knowledge and understanding in response to learning opportunities provided by their teachers.

Young people have to learn how to plan and approach the learning tasks, which skills and strategies to apply for problem solving, how to monitor their own comprehension of the materials, how to perform self-assessing and self-correcting in response to the self-assessment, evaluating progress toward the completion of a task. These skills are vital in new educational environment and belong to metacognitive skills which are essential for lifelong learning.

Metacognitive skills are defined as strategies applied consciously or automatically during learning, cognitive activity, and communication to manipulate cognitive processes before, during, or after a cognitive activity. Examples are executive function processes such as verbal mediation, self-regulation, planning, judgment, and self-monitoring” []. Application of metacognitive skills allows students to be aware of their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences; to relate those internal states to the external environment and events in order to construct meaning from information; to infer the mental states of others (theory of mind); and to draw implications about the motives and intentions of others. Metacognitive skills contribute to the communicative competence during interaction with one or more communication partners through pragmatics, or the social use of language [2].

Despite the complicated sounding name, metacognition is fast becoming one of the most common topics being discussed by teachers. Research suggests that

helping students develop [metacognitive strategies](#) is one of the most efficient and effective ways to help the students make progress.

Metacognition is defined as “[cognition](#) about cognition”, “[thinking](#) about thinking”, “[knowing](#) about knowing”, becoming “aware of one’s [awareness](#)” and higher-order thinking skills. The term comes from the root word [meta](#), meaning “beyond” [1]. Metacognition can take many forms; it includes knowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or problem-solving. Its purpose is to guide instructors in incorporating activities and discussions that will help learners understand how they learn, their strengths and their needs, and to better understand the learning process, increase their autonomy and motivation.

The ability to understand and analyze students’ own learning provides more opportunities for learning languages. Like technology skills, learners’ metacognitive abilities are rarely aligned exactly with their language skills levels. Students have to be aware what they do or do not know and how to overcome the gaps in their knowledge. The teacher’s task is to help students set their goals which should be [both challenging and realistic](#), short and long term ones, focusing more on skill development and considering potential obstacles.

Metacognition helps students evaluate thinking and use of strategies when they need to develop their language skills. Students need to focus their attention on learning the language and recognize what thought processes they experience while learning. What they need to do to widen their vocabulary, what steps to make to succeed in communication, how to overcome the barrier and start speaking. How do they choose what strategies to use? What works and what does not work? Metacognitive skills allow learners to plan, control, and evaluate the process. Therefore the teachers’ role is to assist in every step of planning, exercising self-control and evaluation of the outcomes.

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USING TV COMMERCIALS AT ESL/EFL CLASSROOM

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Using TV commercials in the ESL classroom could bring a number of benefits to language teachers and stimulate the interest to study foreign language