Metacognition

Knowing the correct ways to study are probably the most beneficial tools in academic performance in college. Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of how well we think we are at performing certain skills. I believe personally, one of my downfalls is that I am not an effective studier, so even though I always read the book, take notes, and go to class, I don’t do as well on tests as I think I should. After watching the videos by Professor Chew, it made me realize my problem isn’t the amount of time or effort that I am putting into studying, the problem is what I am thinking about while studying is making the information go in one ear and out the other without full comprehension.

I completed the Metacognition Awareness Inventory, and it showed some interesting results about the way my mind works. It showed that I have good procedural and conditional knowledge, so I am good at the process of studying and timing, but struggle in effective comprehension. My declarative knowledge which is the knowledge of my personal skills and abilities as a learner is lacking. This means I don’t have good metacognition, so I am unaware of what learning is most effective for me. My worst category was information management strategies, which means that I am not good at focusing in on the information that is actually important. My comprehension monitoring is good because I constantly think about what I am learning and ask myself questions, but am obviously not processing the information in a meaningful way to make it stick in my brain.

It was very interesting understanding my studying style. When I study for a test I often use flash cards and have my phone with me. Another thing I do is eat or drink while studying. These are all factors that are making my studying ineffective. When I use flashcards, I memorize
the definitions, but I’m not relating it to any larger concepts, or connecting it with information that I already know. Using my phone is one of the worst things I can have when I study. I usually have my phone with me to take “breaks” with, such as taking a social media break, or a couple of minutes to text a friend back. But having the phone with me disrupts and distracts every time I hear it buzz or see it light up. Without even knowing, I am multitasking rather than concentrating fully on the information I am reading about. Eating and drinking while I study is another way I multitask. I have read and heard so many studies on the harms of multitasking, but I seem to do it anyways. If I want to give my full attention to what I am reading, so I don’t have to read it five times, I need to avoid phones or food that will break my concentration and make studying take even longer.

This semester I need to change a lot of things about my studying techniques. I need to make sure there are no distractions first and foremost. Then I need to make sure I am making connections between the information I already know and the information I am reading about. This will make it stay in my mind better, rather than simply memorizing definitions and hoping I can make sense of the questions on a test. My goal for the rest of the semester is to spend less time studying, but to study more effectively so I can learn more in less time, using the new techniques that I am aware of now.
Metacognition Essay

Metacognition allows students to evaluate their study habits and effectiveness of their learning skills. After I watched the videos How to Get the Most Out of Studying by Stephen Chew, professor of psychology at Samford University, I scored myself using the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI). I was able to evaluate my own metacognition strengths and weaknesses and formulate some strategies to improve my study skills.

Areas where I scored higher according to the MAI were: Debugging Strategies, Comprehension Monitoring, and Procedural Knowledge. Essentially, I scored better on my ability to recognize areas that I understand, and to look for different ways/strategies to clarify and strengthen concepts I don’t understand. Areas that I could benefit from improving are: Evaluation, and Declarative Knowledge. This is because I don’t always feel confident in my abilities to use critical thinking skills with topics I’ve learned. Many times I feel I am picking and choosing (guessing) what I think might be a question on a test, as opposed to learning the material as a “big picture” and applying the concepts to a series of material related questions. One way to improve in this area would be to learn the material as if I was going to have to teach it to someone else. This strategy would help me recognize where multiple questions could be generated from one topic and how I would answer them.

After watching the videos, strategies I plan on using to improve my study skills are to deepen my processing of the material. I plan to use more visualizing,
and compare and contrasting when I organize my notes for studying. For example, transcription and translation both have steps of: (a.) initiation, (b.) elongation, and (c.) termination; however, the mechanics differ, and further differ from prokaryotes to eukaryotes. I used this to build a poster with diagrams comparing the two side by side at each step along the way. This helps me make a visual “big picture” of what’s happening that I can mentally refer to, (instead of long wordy explanations in my notes.) Attending study sessions are also very helpful. I can get help where I’m confused, and be quizzed from other students on the material. Having other students quiz me challenges me to explain concepts from other perspectives, improving my Declarative Knowledge.