

METACOGNITION, SELF-ASSESSMENT AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT: KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

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In my teaching career, I have always been interested in three categories of students: those who 'study hard' and perform well in their exams, those who 'study hard' and perform poorly and those who 'study smart' and perform well in their exams. The second category is a group of students who believe they put a lot of effort in their studies but don't just understand why they could not perform well or simply they worked hard but the exam was too difficult. The justification for good performance for the first and third category is studying hard and smart, respectively. This scenario raises the following four questions which are discussed extensively in this paper: 1. Can students be accurate in self-assessment? 2. What is the role of self-knowledge in self-assessment? 3. What is the effect of student's self-assessment on achievement? 4. How can students be trained on self-assessment? A thematic review of empirical studies was done using multiple electronic databases. The paper also explored metacognition as one of the important theoretical constructs underpinning self-assessment. The key findings from the synthesis and analysis of the previous studies were as follows: 1. There is a positive relationship between student's accuracy in self-assessment and metacognitive awareness 2. Increased awareness increases student's accuracy in self-assessment 3. Through self-assessment, students can be able to identify their own skill gaps and set realistic goals which impacts positively on their learning achievement 4. It takes time and effort for students to develop self-assessment strategies hence teachers play a key role in this process. There were limited research findings relating to question 4, because most studies only mentioned the need for training students in self-assessment strategies but only one study focused on how secondary school students can be trained in self-assessment. This makes training on students' self-assessment a potential area for empirical research. This study is intended to contribute knowledge to the body of existing literature on formative assessment, metacognition and learning achievement. The findings and suggestions will be helpful to practicing teachers on how best to equip students with self-assessment strategies hence fill the gap on the limited research on how learners can be trained in self-assessment which is critical to formative assessment.