Chapter 3

Academic Learning Between Cognition and Metacognition: Analyses and Highlights in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The interest towards the quality of school-bound and academic learning in the new formal and informal education environments has significantly increased in modern research data from psychology of education, education sciences and neuro epistemology. Relevant issues consistently pop up on the agenda of international organizations and within the decision makers responsible for the sustainable future of new generations of pupils as well as young people. Learning competency and efficient self-management at EU level paradigm cannot disregard curricular values. Hence, there is a need for examining the current context, the stage reached in the reference domain and in certain prestigious scientific research, whose impact is either direct or indirect on the understanding, valorization, and optimization of pupils' and/or students' learning. The arguments invoked are in connection to the nature of challenges waiting for answers, the quality of certain working hypotheses and the ecological validity of empirical research results.

INTRODUCTION

The academic universe has been attached new standards: the depth and superiority of the supporting comparative arguments, as well as the multiplication of the intrinsic professional motivation registers, associated with the maturity of the practising actors’ maturity. Academic learning has significantly penetrated the sphere of values of the psycho-, ethno and socio-genesis of modern universities, a competitive one, facing today state and effects of massification difficult to anticipate only yesterday. The theme of metacognition and successful learning strategies in higher education is a hot area of research.

University learning frontiers are expanding. The impact of the scientific and technologic revolution on the learning behaviour of the students is a reality that we can no longer neglect. The interfaces of

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the student – academic environment contacts and the pressures of the work labour mobility are going beyond the experts’ predictions. Today, experience and innovations, university conduct potential and material shaping are circumscribed to the domination of globalization strategies, of interdependencies and integrations created by the processes frequently invoking the pursuing of academic learning, explicitly formulated as: continuous learning/formation/development.

The exponential curves in the domain of digital communication of information sometimes substantially transforms our manner of conceiving academic learning as the unity and dynamics of the processes of design, implementation and evaluation of applied transformative didactic and scientific knowledge (Mezirow, 1991; 1995; 1997). Thus, establishing of priorities in the sphere of basic and transversal competences, directly or indirectly connected to the science of academic learning, becomes legitimate and necessary. We take into account the logic and pace of research, development and innovation, producing competences in technology and the art of studying efficiently. This is even truer, as the graphic of the information explosion shows a reduction of the distances between the time and rate of discoveries, and the distance of effective response behaviour rates to these explosions. The average informed person has to allot today approx. 20% of their working time for current documentation and information!

The consequences for the university world have to consider the logic of development mediated by the psychopedagogy of study, of intellectual work, by the offer of formative solutions ever since high school training (Manasia, 2015; Neacşu, 2015:). New values of learning, quality and efficiency of the academic learning reflect the current agenda of academic society. However, there are many insufficiently explored issues. There are equally many roadblocks. We have to become aware of both the positive practices and the new contexts generating constraints and limitations. Institutionally, we are living and sensing the confrontation with the new generations of students’ values, conduct and expectations, as well as those of the employers. The humanistic - active - creative codes specific to higher education are witnessing a high pace process meant to satisfy three major aims:

- Creating of heritage in science, culture, technology, as well as spiritual civilizing values;
- Disseminating of this high quality value spectrum within the educational space of the interested communities of social practice;
- Efficiently converting missions, content and attitudes of the cultural, scientific, moral, spiritual and technological type into professional conduct necessary for the insertion in the labour market and the implementation of personal projects of authentic development.

These statements can be qualitatively designed and practised by means of a shared social ethos, intelligently incorporating the set of fundamental concepts in the paradigm named: autonomous higher education learning/study. It is a time for new approaches, new mechanisms and evaluation systems of the training quality, and the reconsideration of the value of individual and social success precursors.

Researchers and students must became aware of the actual global challenges, and they must understand the values of new strategies for learning. By recognizing potential capacity of the student to learn about learning, teachers can begin work towards reinforcing metacognition and successful learning strategies in Higher Education. The general perspectives of the chapter is to describe the specific features of self-regulated learning in Higher Education as interdependencies between cognition and metacognition. In this chapter, we argue that metacognitive learning is a pillar of effective learning in higher education. In addition, we emphasize that self-regulated learning is usually associated with positive learning patterns, as Gibets, Richardson, Donche, and Vermunt (2014) suggest.