Transferring the Principles of Alignment and Metacognition to Different Learning Environments

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**What we did**
The culture of instruction is shifting from content-based passive to student-based active learning. We experimented with transferring principles of integrated course design into the Philosophy Department’s “teaching seminar” for new TAs and into tutor training and professional development at the Philosophy and Odegaard Writing and Research Centers. Our greater aim is to foster a culture of active long-term learners.

The Philosophy Department assessed results quantitatively and qualitatively via TA, tutor and student feedback. The OWRC assessed results qualitatively via tutor workshops and informal feedback on sessions.

**What we learned**
Well-aligned learning environments encourage a metacognitive awareness, which empowers students to structure their own learning processes, for example, by (1) negotiating their paper writing priorities, (2) practicing strategies to meet those objectives, and (3) incorporating feedback strategically. Students transfer these strategies broadly outside of tutoring sessions, encouraging long-term active learning across the curriculum. Furthermore, new TAs and tutors feel more comfortable collaborating with students to structure their learning and balancing between directive and non-directive pedagogy.

**Implications**
The simplicity and flexibility of this model for alignment makes it highly transferable. It also accounts for the complex interrelatedness of the different components of the learning environment and how situational factors influence them. Although there is need for further research, these strengths make the model especially practical for shorter learning environments, such as TA quiz sections and tutoring sessions.

**Research question**
Recent literature suggests that alignment between (1) learning objectives, (2) pedagogy, and (3) assessment promotes metacognition for active long-term learning. When this model is used to structure shorter learning environments, such as TA quiz sections and tutoring sessions, what are the (anticipated) impacts on student learning?

**Learning Objectives**

1) **Learning objectives**: How do you want learners to be different after their time with you?

2) **Pedagogy**: What will you design for learners to change the way you intend?

3) **Assessment**: How will you know whether learners have changed? Given the first question, how should you adjust your learning objectives and pedagogy?

**References**

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