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Metacognition's potential for Existentialism in classrooms

Nesrin Ozturk

Abstract: The instrumentality and standardization of education may be important for functioning in contemporary societies. However, reducing education to measurable competencies may result in the loss of human value. Indeed, education becomes real when it relates to the reality of individuals. Existentialist education focuses on students' freedom and agency; however, it is criticized for not having coherent and convincing educational guides. This analytical comparison paper argues that the premises of Existentialism and the components of metacognition may interact. While metacognitive awareness and thinking for essence lays the ground for individuality and autonomy, metacognitive knowledge relates to self-knowledge and not accepting ready-made concepts through self-questioning and dialogic encounters. Also, metacognitive experiences might mimic existential crises where individuals engage in highly conscious thinking during which metacognitive knowledge and regulation simultaneously help the individual deal with failure or anxiety. During such experiences, metacognitive regulation might facilitate individuals' free choices and responsible engagement when building the self or handling difficulties. In this sense, enhancing metacognition may help individuals' transition to the existing phase by building adequate self-knowledge and regulating thinking. This paper, finally, describes a set of pedagogies for fostering metacognition that could potentially facilitate existential attitudes or behaviors in mainstream classrooms.

Key words: awareness, Existentialism, metacognition, pedagogy, thinking

Introduction

Instrumentality, the standardization of programs or organizations, and their usefulness may feature among educational objectives for contemporary societies, political ideologies, economic necessities, and social conditions. That is why schools may train people "to function usefully and ef-

ficiently" (Niblett, 2010, p.109). However, although it is easier to educate students for the extant demands of for example, work force, policies, or culture and measure their achievement "than education of a deeper sort" (Niblett, 2010, p.109), reducing education to measurable competencies may "result in that the value of human being is often associated with the number of qualification" (Rumianowska, 2020, p.261). That is, education may simply serve the functionality of the masses (Niblett, 2010) and that runs counter to *educating the person* or the existential dimension of life (Rumianowska, 2020).

Existentialism rejects the subordination of human beings to a system or any sort of categorization (Noddings, 1995). Since human beings can freely make themselves by planning, reflecting, choosing, and acting, they may not be representative of the types, categories, or elements found in orderly (superficial) systems. In this sense, Existentialism could be a means of protesting at "the mechanization of human beings" (Rumianowska, 2020, p. 262). Instead of "being stamped into the choices of collectivity" (Malik, Akhter, 2013, p.88), the individual should become "an enlightened (communicatively competent) subject who is capable of critique of ideology, critical self-reflection, and transforming social action" (Leena Kakkori, Huttunen, 2012, p.363). In other words, Existentialism is a call for individual responsibility in authentic living (Niblett, 2010)

In Existentialism, education should promote individuals' uniqueness, self-realization, and authenticity (Lieberman, 1985; Koirala, 2011; Malik, Akhter, 2013; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017; Rumianowska, 2020). It pertains to the individual's search for meaning and becoming fully responsible for the *self* (Rumianowska, 2020). Existential education also focuses on self-examination (Kauka, 2018) and respects human beings' free choices (Kakkori, 2008). Indeed, Existentialism emphasizes that *education becomes real when it pertains to the individual's reality* (Baniwal, 2013, *emphasis added*), understanding, and beliefs (Webster, 2004). However, it might be difficult to translate Existentialism into education, as Yosef-hassidim (2017) stated. Existentialism has been criticized for not possessing a "coherent and convincing body of guides to educational practice" (Denton, 1968, p.101). But equally, Existentialism can easily be ignored in educational policy (Koirala, 2011). However, I reject these previous arguments and suggest that metacognition pedagogy could be used to help incorporate Existentialism into classrooms for its indispensable notions of agency, freedom, and responsibility to create a human value.

Metacognition, popularly defined as *thinking about thinking* (Flavell, 1979, *emphasis added*), has been studied worldwide. Research has found academic benefits, such as achievement or effective learning (Ozturk, 2022). Consequently, educational policies suggest that the curriculum should include metacognitive skills, and that high-stakes or standardized international tests should test higher order thinking (P21, n.d.). However, the discussions on the nature of metacognition and related pedagogies in the following sections may point to a potential that goes beyond the academic benefits. In thinking about the self and cognitive processes, one may find that metacognition helps construct *the self*. Such practices may help students develop existential attitudes or behaviors in mainstream classrooms. In this sense, this paper will seek to answer the following research questions:

a) How do the components of metacognition and the premises of Existentialism relate?

b) How could pedagogies of metacognition foster existential attitudes or behaviors in mainstream classrooms?

Theoretical Framework

Foundations of Existentialism

Existence Precedes Essence

Individuals exist, and they may define themselves afterwards (Sartre, 2007). They are free and responsible for determining who they want to be (Koirala, 2011). In this sense, individuals create the authentic meaning of their life (Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). Human beings form themselves by attaching significance to their presence and goals (Lieberman, 1985); hence, an individual's essence is personal.

However, humans live in an impersonal environment (Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017), and their culture or the societies in which they can justify their existence or find their identity may lead to greater depersonalization. Superficial identities in the culture or society might leave individuals' self-hood unknown (Lieberman, 1985). Human beings can either conquer or be conquered by these forces of depersonalization. In this sense, authenticity which pertains to "an ability to develop a personal truthfulness with oneself, being true to one's beliefs and values" (Rumianowska, 2020, p.262) may be the most fundamental existential choice. It is, indeed, an act of existing more consciously and reflectively in the world (Rumianowska, 2020).

Man is not alone

All human beings are motivated to be discovered or recognized for the meaning of life or becoming genuinely a person (Lieberman, 1985; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017; Rumianowska, 2020). When individuals are connected to others (Koirala, 2011), they also define freedom in relational terms (Greene, 1988). To Sartre (2007), freedom of choice is an absolute being (p.44), and each absolute character of free commitment realizes "a type of humanity" (Sartre, 2007, p.43). For this reason, when others do not listen to, understand, or recognize one, this experience turns to failure or suffering for the one who is not acknowledged (Rumianowska, 2020). That is, human beings cannot be anything unless they are acknowledged by others (Sartre, 2007; Rumianowska, 2020).

For Sartre (2007), the scope of responsibility to create essence and essence of dignity lies beyond the individual. When one decides and acts for their essence, they actually "create an image of man as we think he ought to be" (Sartre, 2007, p.24). A human being never chooses evil, and their choice commits to and affirms the value for all human beings. Sartre (2007) emphasized that individuals' actions concern the whole of mankind; therefore, the individual is responsible for themselves and for everyone else.

Freedom and responsibility

Freedom is the product of awareness, and it distinguishes human beings from other beings (Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). As Shoarinejad (2004, cited in Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017) argued, awareness is the highest level of experiencing and source of wisdom. Because individuals are free to choose their essence (Koirala, 2011), absolute freedom means taking full responsibility for one's decisions and actions.

No acceptance of ready-made concepts

There are no absolute truths and nor is there a final destiny to guide human beings. In this sense, individuals cannot accept concepts of existence that are forced upon them (Koirala, 2011). It is only through humans' free choices and determination that every value or truth is recognized (Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017).

Death and nothingness

Life is absurd (Sartre, 2007), and the value of life may be enhanced by death (Lieberman, 1985). It may be that contingent life circumstances such as fear, horror, anguish, solitude, and uncertainty mimic death and help human beings search for meaning. For Kierkegaard (2005, as cited in Fernando, 2017), intense moments of existence, especially painful ones, are important because they enable us to grasp reality by managing tensions and difficulties.

Self-knowledge

The basic principle of Existentialism pertains to self-knowledge or knowing oneself (Koirala, 2011) which may also become "choose thyself" (Lieberman, 1985, p.324). Human beings can choose themselves via their efforts of selectivity to understand the meaning of their existence. In this sense, reality or essence can be relative and bound to individuals' judgements (Sartre, 2007; Fernando, 2017; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017).

Existential education

Kierkegaard (1843, as cited in Rumianowska, 2020) defined education as the course that helps individuals form themselves. Educating someone means creating conditions or presenting individuals with opportunities to ponder, question, and become oneself (Yosef-hassidim, 2017; Rumianowska, 2020). One can become *oneself* via reflective experiences that can fall into mental, personal, and emotional domains (Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). In the next section, aspects of existential education (i.e., the curriculum, teachers' and students' roles, instructional and assessment practices, and the school or classroom ethos) will be described before we turn to consider the interplay between existential education and metacognition.

Regarding the curriculum, existentialists "reject any subject matter that is unrelated to human aspiration, needs and conditions" (Koirala, 2011, p.42). Morris (1961, as cited in Denton, 1968) argued that the curriculum should include subject matter that "require individual choosing" (p.98); thereby, students can develop awareness of their interests, needs, and goals, practice freedom of choice, and construct agency via taking responsibility for their choices. Instead of operating standards or standardized policies on students, collaborating with students to develop curriculum (Yosef-hassidim, 2017) should be adopted.

Moreover, teachers should be aware that they are educating individuals, and their teaching fosters students' agency (Buber, 2017; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). Teachers are not role models, and they *cannot force* students to be what others expect them to become or do what others do and require (Rumianowska, 2020). They cannot impose prescribed methodologies. Instead, they should guide students so they can discover their individuality and realize themselves (Koirala, 2011; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). In this sense, the student-teacher relationship is built on dialogue in which emotional and intellectual autobiographies are shared (Malik, Akhter, 2013). That is, the teacher and students reveal their true essence and accept each other unconditionally (Rumianowska, 2020). When they leave their prejudices, categorizations, and manipulations aside (Rumianowska, 2020), the relationship is characteristic of the I-Thou dialogue rather than an I-it that simply reduces human beings to the level of an object (Buber, 2017).

Teaching practices that embrace dialogic encounters do not reflect teacher-centered practices but emphasize student-growth. Some of these practices can be Socratic dialogues, problem-solving, role-play, fieldtrips as well as peer-initiated and peer-directed learning (Koirala, 2011; Malik, Akhter, 2013; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). By using such practices, teachers would be able to ascertain what students already know (Rumianowska, 2020), develop students' ability to think, question, and make decisions, as well as encourage them to construct a value system, practice freedom in learning, and take responsibility for their decisions and actions (Koirala, 2011; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). Moreover, the use of such practices can shift the focus "from 'can' to 'want': from …students' abilities to one that gives more space to their dreams, wonders, and doubts" (Yosef-hassidim, 2017, p.441). In such classrooms, students are appreciated for being. That means, they can be tolerant and willing to acknowledge other human beings with different perspectives, goals, or ways of being (Pine, 1974).

In existential education, mass teaching which can be a form of "[m]echanization and impersonality" (Koirala, 2011, p.43) is opposed. Since "it is the individual who may be educated, while the masses can only be trained" (Lieberman, 1985, p. 322), mass testing and calibrating scales for social standards are opposed, as well. Indeed, mass testing devalues human beings and diminishes their potential. Instead, self-assessment is encouraged because it enables one to think about oneself and relates to their being (Lieberman, 1985; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017).

Metacognition theory and pedagogy

Metacognition is thinking about thinking, which can be practiced through metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive regulation, and metacognitive experiences (Flavell, 1979). Metacognitive knowledge refers to tacit knowledge about personal characteristics, tasks, strategies, and goals. Pintrich, Wolters, and Baxter (2000) divided metacognitive knowledge into the following categories: declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. Declarative knowledge is a person's understanding of what influences cognitions (Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, Afflerbach, 2006), and it pertains to self-awareness and knowledge about oneself as a cognitive being (Flavell, 1979) in relation to tasks, goals, and strategies. On the other hand, procedural knowledge pertains to the awareness of thinking (Jacobs & Paris, 1987) and how skills work (Cross & Paris, 1988) for different tasks or goals. Individuals also need conditional knowledge, so they are aware of the types of conditions that affect cognition or performance (Jacobs & Paris, 1987). This set helps individuals develop or maintain an awareness of when to use strategies and why (Paris et al., 1984). Metacognitive knowledge helps individuals to "select, evaluate, revise, and abandon cognitive tasks, goals, and strategies in the light of their relationship with one another" while keeping in mind their abilities or orientations (Flavell, 1979, p. 907).

Metacognitive regulation, on the other hand, can provide mechanisms to manage cognitive processes for specific task-demands or goals. During metacognitive regulation, individuals may plan, monitor, and control their cognitive acts, regulate strategies for task demands or goals, and evaluate performance and outcomes (Flavell, 1979; Veenman, 2016). Planning relates to goal setting (Jacobs, Paris, 1987) and helps monitor cognition (Pintrich, Wolters, Baxter, 2000). Planning involves making predictions, selecting appropriate strategies, as well as allocating attention, time, and other resources selectively to optimize task performance (Paris & Jacobs, 1984; Schraw, 1998). Monitoring refers to the online awareness of ongoing cognitive activities (Pintrich, Wolters, Baxter, 2000). Regulation, on the other hand, refers to adapting cognition to personal goals or task demands. Finally, evaluation refers to examining oneself as well as the efficacy and products of a cognitive enterprise (Schraw, 1998).

Metacognitive experiences are occurrences involving highly intellectual thinking (Flavell, 1979). They can occur when "items of metacognitive knowledge" enter one's consciousness (Flavell, 1979, p.908) and are revised using regulatory strategies. A metacognitive experience might require the

individual to utilize their metacognitive knowledge and regulatory strategies simultaneously in pursuit of a goal or task demands. For example, a 5-year-old child may decide to hold a garage-sale to collect money for animals in a shelter. As the child says she loves animals and cares about them, she feels responsible for them (metacognitive knowledge). To achieve her goal, she can ask her parents for money or look for ways to save some. In the meantime, she realizes that it will be hard to do these things quickly, and she will not collect enough money. She, therefore, looks for other ways of raising money. She checks with her teacher and realizes that she could hold a garage-sale and sell various items. For this task, she asks friends to help her, and she cleans all the gadgets she has collected. She then puts reasonable prices on the items (metacognitive regulation). This scenario shows that individuals can engage in higher order thinking to utilize knowledge for a specific goal and apply different strategies in pursuit of its demands which may involve consecutive steps.

Metacognition has been studied in many disciplines, and educational research has found evidence showing that metacognition is both an effective tool for learning (Wang, Haertel, Walberg, 1990; Fisher, 2002; Kerndl, Aberšek, 2012) and important predictor of achievement (Veenman, 2016). Research has also found that metacognition can be taught through the creation of opportunities to stimulate higher order thinking. Recently, a pedagogy of metacognition for reading (PMR) was developed based on a comprehensive review of the research on teaching metacognition in mainstream reading classrooms (Ozturk, 2022). A PMR which requires teachers' explicit use of their metacognition and strategic practices for students' execution of metacognition highlights seven dimensions. Those dimensions are fostering metacognitive knowledge, scaffolding strategic acts, encouraging independent strategic acts, assessing metacognition, adopting goal directedness, integrating the language of thinking, and prolonging metacognition instruction.

Various instructional practices can be used to target these dimensions. Examples include the explicit teaching of strategies, teacher's modeling and thinking aloud about strategic cognitive acts, holding metacognitive discussions with students, the co-regulation and shared regulation of strategic acts, using instructional tools for metacognitive thinking, providing students with feedback on their strategic acts, helping students with self-assessment, and assessing student's metacognition as to adapt instruction to students' needs and interests. In addition, teachers could adopt a language of thinking whereby they show what they are thinking and explain their

evidence, justification, reasons, assumptions, hypotheses, and thinking. Furthermore, it is important to explain why students should perform these acts, given that it is both tiresome and time-consuming. Similarly, it is important for students to develop arguments and set goals for learning higher order thinking. It may take time to develop this type of mind-set and for it to become automatic. Therefore, teachers should continue with metacognition instruction until it becomes automatic for students (Ozturk, 2022).

Methodology

This paper adopts a comparative analysis to examine the interplay between metacognition and Existentialism and describe the potential of metacognition pedagogies in existential education. Comparative analysis, a natural function of the human mind, is a method that requires reflection and careful consideration (Azarian, 2011). Used in philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, political sciences, literature, and history (Griffiths, 2017), comparative analysis is a distinct mode of inquiry in which at least two cases are systematically contrasted with a specific phenomenon or certain dimensions to explore parallels and differences to arrive at a typology (Azarian, 2011). May (1993, as cited in Azarian, 2011) identified four types of typologies; the import-mirror view, the difference view, the theory-development view, and the prediction view.

This paper adopts the import-mirror and the theory development views. The import-mirror view refers to the reflexive function of comparison that helps broaden insights and widen horizons for challenging assumptions and conceptions. The theory-development view, on the other hand, pertains to extracting insights about the causal relations of the similarities or differences (Azarian, 2011). Focusing on the units of existential principles and components of metacognition, this paper aims to present the interplay between two phenomena and simultaneous practice by reviewing seminal papers on Existentialism and metacognition. Adopting a document analysis methodology and analyzing seminal literature interpretively, this paper counters the claim that Existentialism has no guides for classroom practice and that metacognition relates to cognition only.

Interplay of Metacognition and Existentialism

A pragmatic approach to metacognition can silence its potential for Existentialism. While Existentialism asserts essence, metacognition may postulate its tools. In the following, the components of metacognition and the

principles of Existentialism will be described in relation to interplay especially in educational contexts where others (e.g., teachers or peers) recognize a person's existence as one forms themselves into an essence.

Awareness and thinking

Metacognition and Existentialism come from different realms (i.e., psychology and philosophy); however, they got acceptance by the other and many disciplines. Flavell (1979) defined metacognition as thinking about thinking. Similarly, Sanderson (2004) stated that Existentialism places value on the "aware-self as a thinking being" (p.3). For Existentialists, absolute truth is consciousness that confronts itself (Sartre, 2007). In this sense, while individuals are thinking about, for example their academic or school related engagements, they may also be directly or indirectly thinking about *themselves*; who they are and who they want to be in a setting where multiple standards are imposed. While they must meet these standards to get a place in a society or workforce, they also need to create their unique identity. Recognizing these external forces and thereafter, taking a position may require a great amount of awareness and thinking.

Metacognitive knowledge, self-knowledge, and not accepting ready-made concepts

Metacognitive knowledge and existential self-knowledge may be similar in nature. Metacognitive knowledge may be dependent on individuals' experiences and subjective with an intrapersonal characteristic (Flavell, 1979; Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, Afflerbach, 2006). Similarly, the truth that helps one construct oneself may be subjective within inter-subjective arenas (Sartre, 2007).

Metacognitive knowledge can relate to Heidegger's (Heidegger, Krell, 1993) Dasein who "enjoys an authentic moment of vision" (Tubbs, 2013, p.483). When individuals ask questions about being, their thinking enters into the realm of experiences. Individuals relate to their essence as "Thinking lets Being be" (Tubbs, 2013, p. 483). Heidegger (1996) stated that Dasein

> always understand itself in terms of its existence, in terms of its possibility to be itself and not be itself. Dasein has either chosen these possibilities itself, stumbled upon them, or in each instance already grown up in them. Existence is decided only by each Dasein itself in the manner of seizing upon or neglecting such possibilities. We come

> to terms with the questions of existence always only through existence itself (p.10).

Regarding the language of Existentialism, Kruger-Ross (2015) emphasized the importance of asking the kind of questions which charge "the inquirer to carefully and reflectively consider the manner by which the question is approached" (p.2). Individuals might inquire into things that have a deep and personal meaning (Malik, Akhter, 2013). In this sense, both metacognitive and existential individuals who engage in questioning, reflective thinking, or reasoning may recognize their beliefs, understandings, weaknesses, strengths, and desires (Ozturk, 2022) rather than accepting the norms. As in the example given above, the little girl is aware that she cares about animals. She may think about this characteristic and discover why, how, and when she cares about animals and what she does for them.

Metacognitive experiences, existential crisis, and others

Flavell (1979) defined metacognitive experiences as intellectual enterprises where "highly conscious thinking" is stimulated and there is "quality control" over thinking (p.908). However, individuals may not necessarily recognize or respond to intellectual stimuli even when clearly presented to them. This is because they may not show a sensitivity for executing metacognitive competencies for those specific stimuli. Meijer et al. (2013) recently defined metacognitive responsiveness as individuals' sensitivity to metacognitive experiences, and it may mimic existentialists' search for meaning for their essence.

In Existentialism, existential crises may be an effective means of changing or being authentic (Webster, 2004). Webster (2004) stated that an individual can be a relation to how they exist in the world or how they relate to the meaning. However, the dilemma of whether one should adopt a subjective truth concerns the fact that the meaning or purposes may become relative and be subject to arbitrariness unless approached dialectically. Encountering a turning point that changes the meaning may elicit angst- the feeling of doubt and uncertainty (Webster, 2004, p.86). Such a feeling shows that the meaning coming from the other is significant enough to shatter the individual.

In practice, schools are sometimes places where students experience internal or interpersonal conflicts, or they may feel helpless and disappointed. As some existential crises trigger metacognitive experiences, some students

may have to face up to their own weaknesses, fears, or hesitations. They may think about this realization and take responsibility for making choices, taking decisions, and their actions (Rumianowska, 2020). The angst of existential individuals can be the product of metacognitive responsiveness to change or adaptation to what others (e.g., teachers, peers, and parents) think is important. While Heidegger (2019) called such crises through-provoking confrontations, for Flavell (1979) they are metacognitive experiences facilitated by responsiveness.

Metacognitive regulation, existential freedom, and responsibility

Metacognitive experiences enable individuals to connect to metacognitive knowledge and execute appropriate strategies. That enables them to handle failure or achieve goals (Flavell, 1979). The effectiveness of such experiences can be measured through self-assessment which is a collection of mind-sets that operate simultaneously "at the edge of consciousness" (Afflerbach & Meuwissen, 2005, p.144). Self-assessment can consist of asking questions about one's *self-capabilities, perceptions, or preoccupations, strategic decisions, and purposeful actions* in relation to tasks or more broadly, school.

Self-assessment is one of the basics for existentialist education (Kauka, 2018). Some students who experience failure, anxiety, sense of inferiority, demotivation, lack of interest, or drop out of school may feel insecure or doubtful about their essence. In such cases, those who have existential attitudes may reject ready-made concepts and being objectified can engage in self-examination (Kauka, 2018). Existentialists comparing their *self* to socially accepted norms may find ways of protecting, modifying, or projecting their essence in the same way that metacognitive individuals follow regulatory strategies to cope with failure or problems.

The 'will-to-power' of the battle between existence and essence pertains to Know Thyself, and Existentialists may evaluate actions reflecting their essence by asking "could humanity regulate itself by what I do?" (Tubbs, 2013, p. 481). At this point, the individual can find meaning in the self (Kaufman, 1959). Metacognitive individuals may also ask such questions about one's essence. For example, they may self-assess by asking 'Who am I in this context? What are my capabilities/ the tools I must do this task? How can I do it despite thinking it is nonsense? What would happen if I did not do this task?' In other words, both metacognitive and existential individuals can engage in critical and reflective thinking and test their actions against

conformity and consistency with others or expectations (Tubbs, 2013) while creating an autonomous self.

Development of existentialism and metacognition

Developing Existentialism and metacognition may follow a similar trajectory and metacognitive development can help existential attitudes emerge. There are two periods of Existentialism in education: the pre-existing period and the existing period (Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). In the pre-existing period, individuals are unaware of their identity and destiny, and may be controlled by external authorities such as teachers or social groups (Lieberman, 1985; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017). When the existing period begins, individuals become aware of their presence, make free choices, and take responsibility for their actions (Fernando, 2017; Yahyaei, Mahini, 2017).

Similarly, metacognition develops in two stages. Between the age of 6 and 8, children may show some evidence of having adequate metacognitive knowledge (Veenman, 2016). When children are formally required to use their metacognitive skills, they can also show some evidence for them (Veenman, 2016). The preliminary period of metacognitive competency may mimic the pre-existing period of Existentialism. This is because at both phases, children are exposed to external directives to acquire knowledge about themselves, others, and the world as well as they are directed to practice some strategies. That is, children may have limited free will. However, it could be a preparatory stage for the existing phase because acquisition in this phase will help individuals use mechanism to handle existential crises and assume responsibility for their actions.

Fourteen-year-olds have substantial domain specific metacognition. That means individuals can competently use metacognitive skills in one subject area and transfer them to new situations (Veenman, 2016). Students with an array of strategies and aware of their interests, needs, beliefs, dreams, and fears are able to cope with failure or anxiety and achieve specific goals. That is, they can self-direct their learning in schools. They may be able to transfer these skills to non-school contexts and contribute to the formation of the essence. Performing various tasks and managing processes to meet goals enables individuals to discover who they are and ascertain how far they are from who they want to be in a particular context.

The interplay between two phenomena might be theoretically straightforward to display and comprehend. However, practitioners may need instruc-

tional guides or classroom tools. Therefore, in the following section, I discuss pedagogical implications of simultaneously fostering both metacognitive competencies and existential attitudes or behaviors. Because metacognition and Existentialism in education share characteristics and Existentialism is claimed to lack practical guides, the following section discusses how metacognition pedagogies can support existential practices.

Pedagogical Implications

Regarding the previous interpretive analysis, I hypothesized that metacognition can also foster existential attitudes and/or behaviors beyond its academic outcomes. However, it is important to note that there is a lack of empirical evidence. Therefore, it is suggested that the following practices' efficacy with students' display of free choice, reasoning, responsibility taking, and agency with the *self* is examined in mainstream classrooms.

Following pedagogies of metacognition contain more practical insights from Existentialism. As stated previously, a variety of metacognition pedagogies can be implemented in the classroom. To boost metacognitive knowledge, teachers can hold metacognitive discussions or Socratic dialogues through which students can identify their own characteristics, interests, weaknesses, strengths, needs, justifications, preoccupations, beliefs, and priorities. In metacognitive discussions, students can describe what they think and reflect on their thinking while others can help them identify inconsistencies or gaps in their understanding of concepts (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2016). Socratic dialogues are also a way of helping individuals to unpack claims, analyzing personally relevant concepts, or guiding the problem-solving process (Wilberding, 2014). These techniques can help students internalize effective questioning and reasoning while it is important for students not to respond by arguing instead by identifying the roots of their thinking, assessing the strength and relevance of their arguments, and detecting any logical mistakes (Wilberding, 2014).

Rumianowska (2020) argued that students in existentialist classrooms need to be stimulated to think and ask questions about themselves, others, and the world. While the social context of a language provides concepts to think about (Tishman, Perkins, 1997), encounters are crucial for prompting students' curiosity rather than pedagogical horror (Kakkori, 2008). In encounters, students engage with or confront "another human being, a word, a question, text, film, other culture, song or music, as well as with 'border situations' that a person may experience" (Rumianowska, 2020, p.265). Stu-

dents' involvement in such classes can encourage self-reflection, adoption of an attitude towards life, and responding to the values and personal meaning associated with it (Rumianowska, 2020). Students could use the language for thinking that "embraces many ways we describe our own and other's mental states and mental processes" (Tishman, Perkins, 1997, p.367). While the language for thinking is an indispensable part of a PMR, it may also be an indispensable part of Gelassenheit -education grounded in the Heideggerian understanding of Existentialism. This is because it could be a useful tool for identifying or questioning the rationale, hypothesis, or evidence behind the thinking during encounters.

Moreover, teachers could get students to work together to complete tasks (Klingner, Vaughn, 1998). During such collaborative practices, students could question and provide feedback to each other's thinking, decisions, and actions. In risk-free environments, students could learn how to listen to each other, appreciate different views or actions, and develop each other's ideas (Jones, 2007; Wilberding, 2014). Being aware of the other person and seeing them as a partner opens the dialogical realm of the interhuman which Buber (1965) posited as a category of existence. Via I-Thou dialogues (Buber, 2017), individuals may come to realize that people may be inclined to approach tasks in diverse ways or simply, to become; the meaning is found through dialogue and their essence is interpersonal (Baniwal, 2013).

Furthermore, it is important for students to have independent experiences or practices of self-questioning and self-assessment. For this purpose, students could be given opportunities to choose their own materials, projects, and even subjects to study that align with their essence or who they want to be. Indeed, these practices help students take responsibility for their own thinking, reasoning (Pearson, Dole, 1987; Papleontiou-louca, 2003), decisions, and choices. Rather than being exposed to the doctrines of categorization of different forces such as economy, politics, and even culture, students should become sufficiently autonomous in directing their own processes to become who they want to be while they achieve educational standards.

In addition to these practices, goal-directed instruction is important. Because students are more likely to engage in thinking when they have "a purpose in their lives as opposed to simply being told" (Israel, 2007, p.32). Teachers could help students become more aware of their motives, expectations, or goals for learning within the extant context. Moreover, when students are provided with opportunities to self-question, they have something to think about and value (Israel, 2007). That way students need no longer

feel oppressed by the requirements of a (superficial) system and their autonomous engagement can be boosted.

For existential educationalists, there is no distinction between teacher and student in terms of their position because *education is an occurrence that belongs to everyone* (Kakkori, 2008). In relations where there is mutual respect, students' trust, self-expression, self-worth, and self-actualization can be fostered (Baniwal, 2013; Malik, Akhter, 2013); conversely, preconceived schemas or prejudices may be detrimental to both parties (Malik, Akhter, 2013). Indeed, "[n]either participant should objectify the other" (Malik, Akhter, 2013, p.89) because the reality may have several aspects. However, at the preliminary stages, students' negative self-perceptions might interfere with metacognitive development or existential attitudes. That means teachers' having empathetic and dialogic conversations is important for students to identify and accept their weaknesses, strengths, beliefs, competencies, and the reasons for failure. When teachers refuse to be understanding and empathetic, they could assume the role of demystifier, someone who thinks that other people live in an imaginary world; however, s/he (the teacher) possesses the truth (Sæverot, 2011). Students are then forced "upon another meaning, persuasion or belief" (Kierkegaard 1859, as cited in Sæverot, 2011) and left with no identity.

Conclusions

Existentialism and metacognition, the phenomena of the second half of the 20th century, have influenced education. While Existentialism can be criticized for not having coherent and practical guides for educational practice, its basic understanding and premises augment *the value of human beings*. Also, although metacognition is more practical in terms of educational practices, its potential for human beings may be underestimated. Indeed, both can help the individual develop the *self* via awareness and thinking for autonomy. The components of metacognition may boost existential principles as metacognitive knowledge of the self, others, the world, and strategies can help individuals acknowledge themselves or their aspirations or reject ready-made concepts and labels being imposed on them. Metacognitive experiences, on the other hand, may mimic existential crises where individuals become sensitive to a stimulus and try to attain it for their goals or essence. Metacognitive regulation may correspond to existential free choice and taking responsibility for one's choices and actions. Just as all individuals cannot choose to be alike, metacognitive individuals may not employ the same strategies, experience the same process, or set the same goals. That is, in-

dividuals who are exposed to similar conditions or tasks will still have their own unique ways of becoming or achieving goals. Rather than running the risk of seducing students and suppressing their essence, teachers should recognize students' choices and acknowledge their freedom to become. In classrooms where thinking, responsibility, tolerance, and respect are guaranteed, students can emerge as unique human beings. So, we should *let them become one-self*.

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Author:

Nesrin Ozturk, Ph.D.
İzmir Democracy University
Faculty of Education
Curriculum & Instruction department
Üçkuyular mah. Gürsel Aksel bulvarı, No: 14 Karabağlar
Izmir
Turkey
Email: ozturknesrin@gmail.com