

# Metacognition, respect and academic excellence: Discourse analysis in a Grade 2 and 3 inquiry classroom

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## Context

In education there are different kinds of classroom setups that can exist. For the purpose of this study we examined video DATA recorded in a Grade 2 and 3 split inquiry classroom. We wanted to gather an understanding of what takes place in this classroom environment to foster the students' metacognition, respect for each other as well as their teacher and classroom, and achieve academic excellence. We decided to examine the types of questions the teacher of this inquiry classroom uses to facilitate discourse regarding the students' own self-driven goals. Using a theoretical based approach we have conducted a brief qualitative study to discover just what makes this particular classroom environment special.

## Methodology

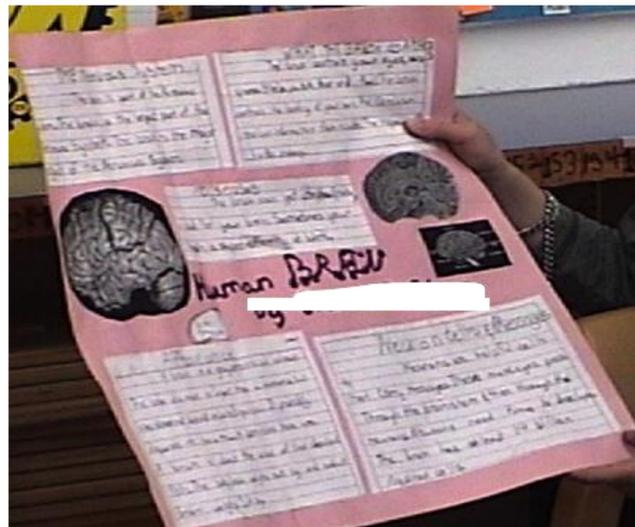
This was a qualitative study in which we examined video DATA filmed in an Alternative School classroom context. Specifically, we examined a particular classroom interaction involving the types of questions the teacher uses to prompt her students and her students' fostered metacognition, respect and initiative with each other. In this video, students share their progress with their personal project goals and their intended work to be completed on them.

## Findings

Evidence of students' metacognition was apparent in their responses to the teacher during the inquiry classroom discourse about their goal topics. Students in this class learn to take initiative and demonstrate/ represent their own thinking and knowledge in different ways. One student notably stated:

"My research is going really well. And I'm almost done the human brain research. And I just need it edited and made into a poster."

(Grade 2/ 3 student)



Students at this level took initiative to cover a variety of topics including: Algebra and Graphing, Drawing using three-dimensional shapes, Komodo Dragons, and the Human Brain among others. It was interesting to see that a student at this grade level took the initiative to research the human brain and create a poster to present to her classmates. I have included the image below.

What we observed in the video was that the students sat on a circle at the same level as their teacher and they listened intently and respectfully to one another. When one student indicated that they might be struggling with one aspect in attaining their goals, the other students readily offered advice and encouragement to help the student in accomplish their goals. In this way students model learning and provide scaffolding for each other.

## Conclusion

After having transcribed, and analyzed the students and teacher's interactions, we took interest in the teacher's style of questioning. In future we would like to conduct further analysis on this style of questioning as well as the open learning environment which we believe might create the foundation for the students' metacognition, respect for each other, and excellence in academic achievement. The UROP has provided me with a great opportunity to discover many fun and exciting aspects of conducting a research study such as this. Working with professor Barbara Graves and learning about how the students and teacher collaborate to foster profound, personal, and meaningful learning has inspired me to want to emulate a similar learning environment with my own student in the future. It is our hope that the findings in this study might inspire others to inquire further into this open style of teaching.

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