

Ref. in APA: Scharff, L., Draeger, J., Verpoorten, D., Devlin, M., Dvorakova, L., Lodge, J., Smith, S. (2017). Exploring Metacognition as Support for Learning Transfer. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* (accepted), Special issue ICWG.

## Exploring Metacognition as Support for Learning Transfer

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### ABSTRACT

The ability to transfer learning to new situations lies at the heart of lifelong learning and the employability of university graduates. Because students are often unaware of the importance of learning transfer and staff do not always explicitly articulate this expectation, this article explores the idea that metacognition (intentional awareness and the use of that awareness) might enhance the development of learning transfer. Our exploratory study includes results from a survey of 74 staff and 118 students from five institutions in Australia, Belgium, UK, and USA. Our data indicate that many staff and a majority of students do not have a clear understanding of what learning transfer entails, and that there are many mismatches between staff and student perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding learning transfer. This helps explain why learning transfer does not occur as often as it could. We found significant positive correlations between thinking about transfer and thinking about learning processes and the likelihood to use awareness of metacognition to guide practice. Our findings suggest a positive relationship between metacognition and learning transfer. Implications for scholarship of teaching and learning are discussed.

### KEY WORDS

learning transfer, metacognition, student perspectives, faculty perspectives