

# IMPERIAL

Festival of Learning and Teaching 2026  
– Ignite session

**"I was just thinking,,,"**

**- metacognition and meta-thinking for academics**

- Mrs. Heather Hanna
- 24/03/2026



“So few people are really aware of their thoughts.

Their minds run all over the place without their permission, and they go along for the ride unknowingly and without making a choice.”

- Thomas M. Sterner, CEO of The Practicing Mind Institute



## Definition

 **meta·cog·ni·tion** [ˌmetəkɒgˈniʃn]

### Noun

metacognition (noun) · meta-cognition (noun)

psychology

1. awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes.

## Types of Metacognition

- Metacognitive knowledge
- Metacognitive experience
- Tasks and Goals
- Metacognitive strategies

“A great many people think they are thinking when really they are rearranging their prejudices”

- William James, American Philosopher 1842 - 1910

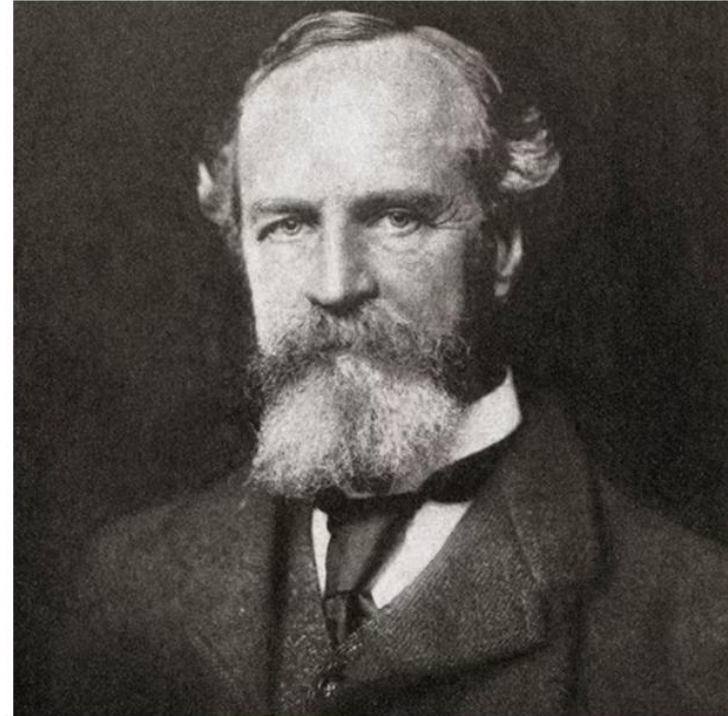


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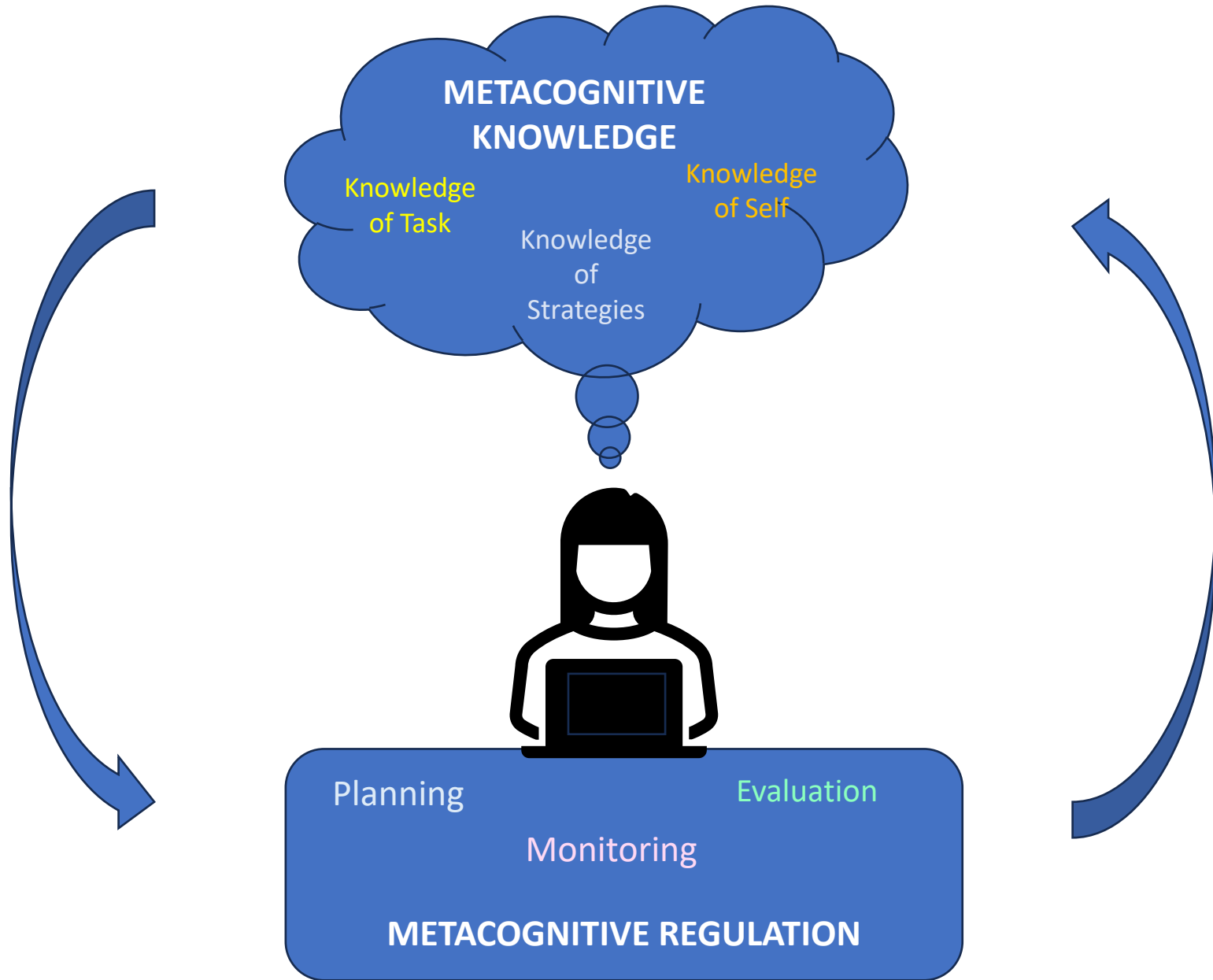
“True long-term thinking is goal-less thinking. It’s not about any single accomplishment. It is about the cycle of endless refinement and continuous improvement.” – James Clear “Order your life.com”









“We have a very unhealthy habit of making the product — our intended result — the goal, instead of the process of reaching that goal...

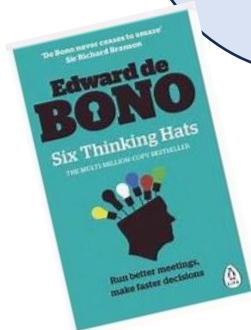
When you focus on the process, the desired product takes care of itself with fluid ease. When you focus on the product, you immediately begin to fight yourself and experience boredom, restlessness, frustration, and impatience with the process.”

- Thomas M. Sterner, CEO of The Practicing Mind Institute



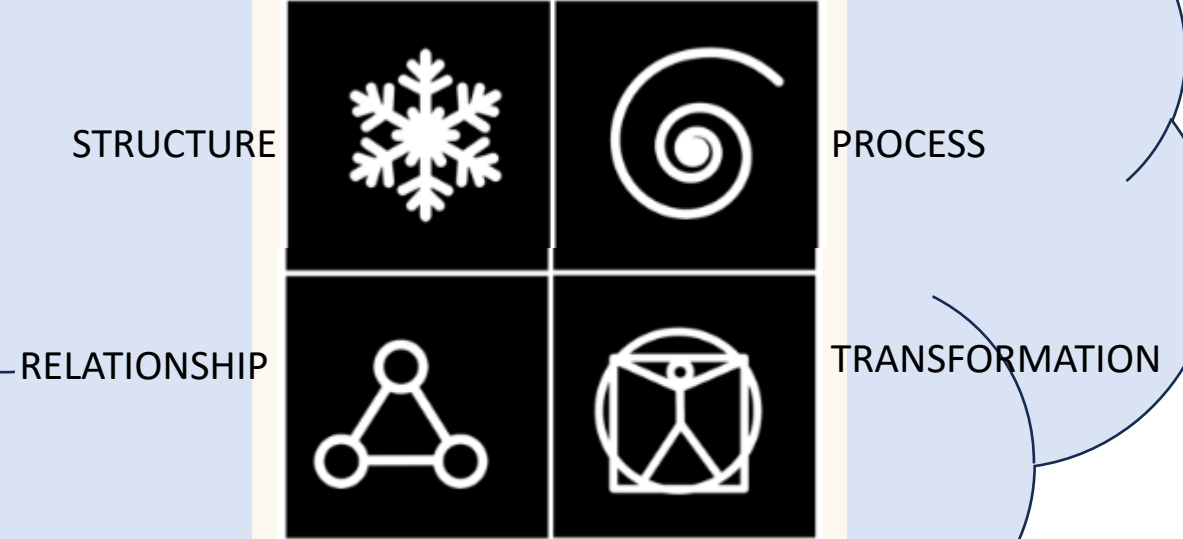
# Six Thinking Hats

	<b>White Hat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List out the facts</li> <li>What information is missing?</li> <li>How can you get it?</li> </ul>
	<b>Red Hat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Express your gut feelings</li> <li>What are your fears, likes and dislikes?</li> </ul>
	<b>Black Hat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be pessimistic</li> <li>What are the downsides and risks?</li> </ul>
	<b>Yellow Hat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be optimistic</li> <li>What are the benefits to be gained?</li> </ul>
	<b>Green Hat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on alternatives</li> <li>Are there any new options?</li> </ul>
	<b>Blue Hat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on control &amp; progression</li> <li>Which hat do I wear?</li> <li>What else should I consider?</li> </ul>

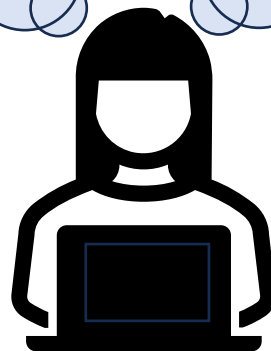


De Bono, Edward.  
*Six Thinking Hats*. Revised and updated ed. London: Penguin, 2000. Print.

# Four Thinking Modes



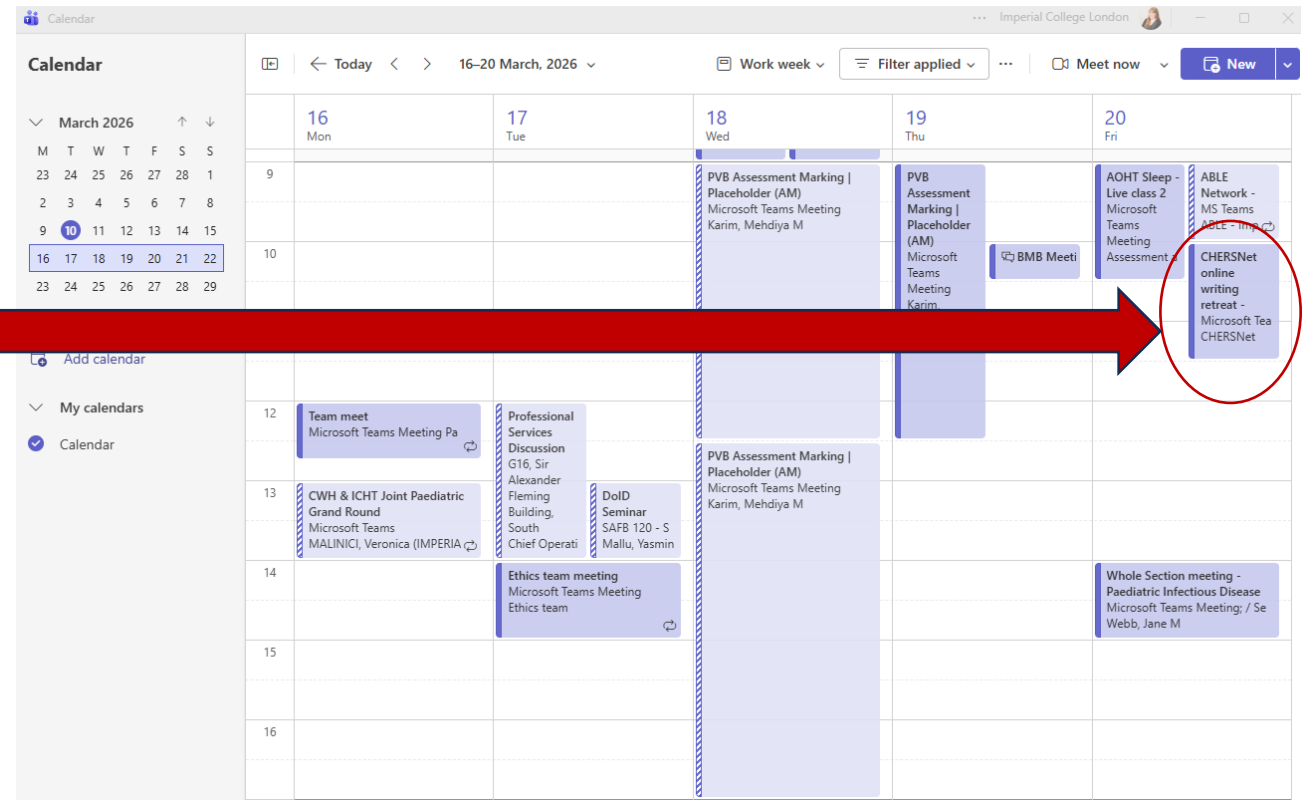
Shannon, N. and Fritschner, B. (2021)  
*Metathinking; The Art and Practice of Transformational Thinking*. Cham, Switzerland, Springer Cham



# How to incorporate thinking time into our routines...

1.

Literally block out regular time on your calendar



# How to incorporate thinking time into our routines...

2.

Utilise a CHERSNet Writing retreat **or** set a similar event up for your colleagues!



“The CHERSNet writing retreats have been a great opportunity for me to **block time** in my calendar to work on projects and research outside my day-to-day teaching activities. They are great sessions that have allowed me to tune into my educational research while being **connected to like-minded colleagues....**”

‘Senior Teaching Fellow, Faculty of Medicine’

“These writing retreats work for me on different levels. There's the **social accountability** angle - we all verbally commit to a goal that we intend to achieve. And we have to report back at the end.

Secondly, I am a social person: **seeing other people focus for an hour** helps me to put my “out-of-office” on and dig deep...

There is also something about the **level of focus** I can achieve - there is immense value in committing to a single task for a deep dive rather than flitting around. I have cracked some very complex problems by allowing myself the guilty pleasure of being held onto a single task for a defined period....

We are all quite honest about our goals and challenges, so it feels like a friendly and socially respectful space.”

'Senior Academic, Faculty of Medicine'

# How to incorporate thinking time into our routines...

3.

Thinking out Loud



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Human-ness will always  
be important



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# THE WRITER'S IN THE WRITING



sketchplanations

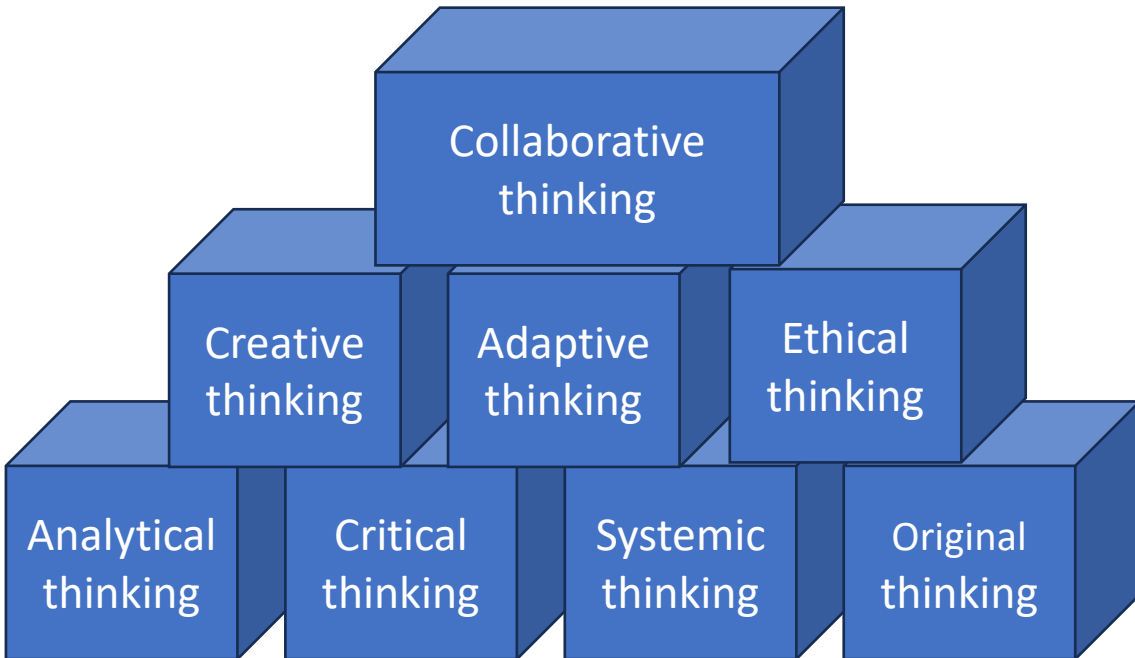
“Our timidity or confidence is reflected in the tone and style. Our education in the choice of words. Our kindness and patience, or cynicism and frustration, is revealed to the reader. And the choice of what you write or paint reflects you.”

- Jono Hey [The Writer's in the Writing. The Artist's in the Art. - Sketchplanations](#)

# THE ARTIST'S IN THE ART

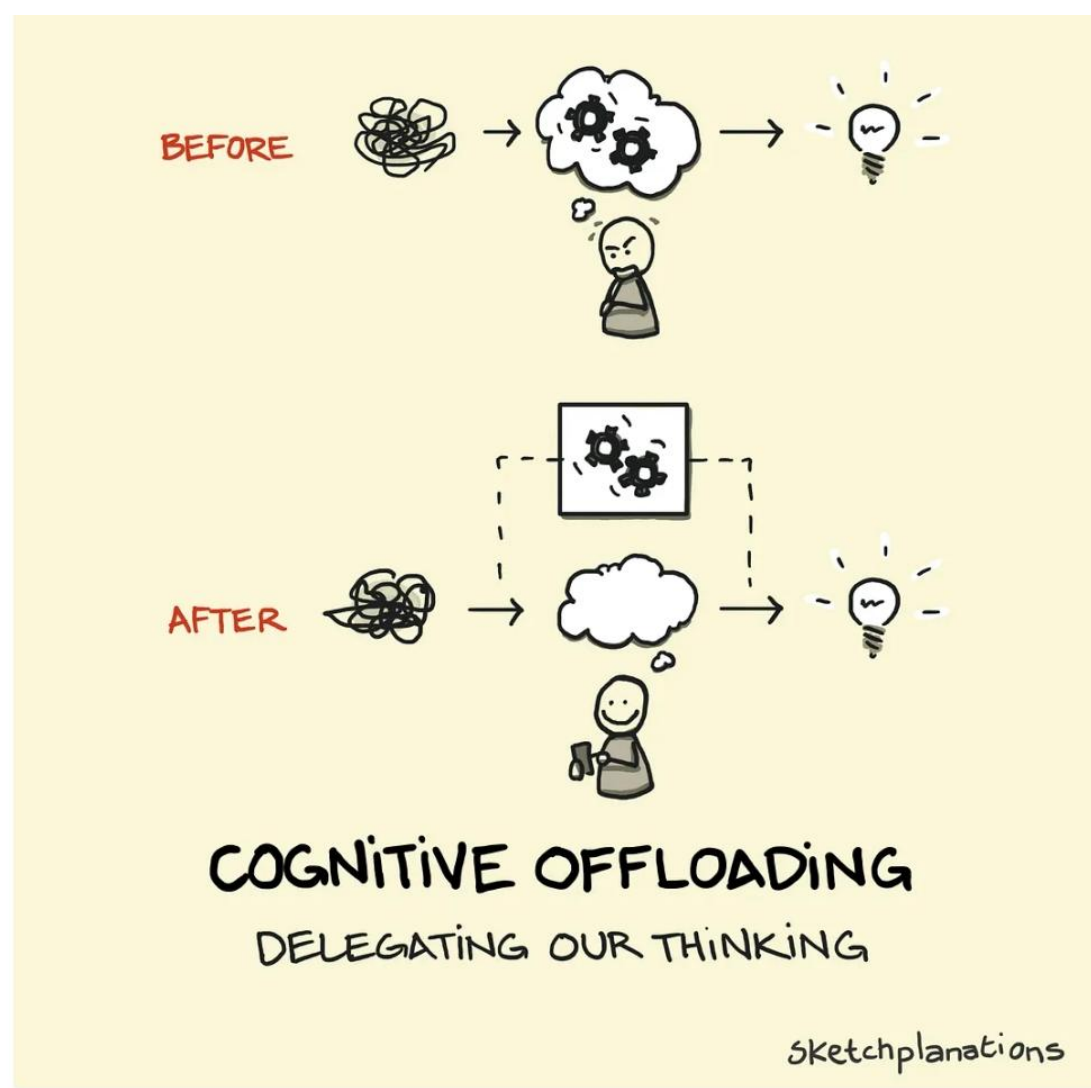


sketchplanations





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*Thank  
You*