Class Activities

# Chapter 12: Reasoning and Decision Making

## 1. Metacognition

Metacognition is the process of thinking about thinking. When students reflect upon their own knowledge they not only become more engaged in the learning process but also ultimately improve their own learning. The purpose of this activity is to teach students an easy metacognitive strategy.

Distribute index cards to your class. At the end of the class, tell your students to write down the main topic discussed that day on one side of the index card, and on the other side to describe how they are going to use the information. For example, if the topic of the day was Confirmation Bias, students may say that they will try to be more aware of their personal biases and be more open-minded about what information they seek out.

## 2. Piaget’s Developmental Stages

This activity is designed to demonstrate Piaget’s stages of development in class. You will need to plan ahead for this activity and find parents willing to allow you to use their children in a class demonstration. For each demo, the younger child is within the age range for the stage and the older child should be at the stage above, developmentally.

Sensorimotor Stage Demo – Object Permanence

You will need two children, one around 12 months and another around 24 months. You’ll also need a small toy and a blanket. With the younger child seated on their parent’s lap, put the toy on the table for the baby to see and play with. Then, place a blanket over the toy. Repeat this three times. Then, do the same with the older child. You should find that the older child has developed object permanence and pulls the blanket off of the toy when it is covered, whereas the younger child does not.

Preoperational Stage Demo – Conservation Task

You will need two children, one around 5 years old and another around 9. Begin with the first child seated at the table with two parallel lines of five quarters.

Then, ask the child “Does this line have more quarters? (point to top line) Does this line have more quarters? (point to bottom line) Or are they the same?”

Now, take the top line of quarters and space them out so the line is longer. You’ll still have five quarters in each row. Then, ask the child the same questions above. Repeat this task with the older child.

You should find that the younger child believes that by stretching the top line, it now has more quarters whereas the older child knows the two lines are still the same.