**Contribution of Metacognitive Questions   
to Accuracy of Judgment in Learning in a Digital Environment**

1. **Introduction**
   1. *Learning to Be Literate in a Digital Environment*

According the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society (UNESCO, 2004).

Development of literacy among pupils has become a cardinal objective of education systems worldwide. Accordingly, these systems engage in developing curricular materials for development of literacy skills in various disciplines, including reading literacy and mathematical literacy. Mathematical literacy is an individual’s capacity to reason mathematically and to formulate, employ, and interpret mathematics to solve problems in a variety of real-world contexts. It includes concepts, procedures, facts and tools to describe, explain and predict phenomena. It helps individuals know the role that mathematics plays in the world and make the well-founded judgments and decisions needed by constructive, engaged, and reflective twenty-first-century citizens (OECD, 2018).

Today, technological changes have created digital learning environments that facilitate teaching and learning processes that are substantially different from those invoked by the printed book, inducing changes in reading and learning habits from those typical of on-paper performance to others characteristic of reading in a digital environment (Murphy et al., 2003; Winter 2018). Learning in a digital environment has many advantages. Its surroundings are accessible, convenient (anywhere and anytime), an expensive; it offers diverse media (digital tasks, virtual online learning systems, MOOC courses, and broad fields of pooled content (digital books and journals, shared encyclopedias, and information databases in a range of disciplines, to name only a few (Csapó et al., 2012; Dennis et al., 2016). The research literature, however, has identified learning difficulties that surface in digital environments relative to on-paper formats and manifest in learners’ achievements in reading comprehension (Daniel & Woody, 2013; Kong et al., 2018; Mangen et al., 2013; Murphy et al., 2003; Singer & Alexander, 2017; Sperling et al., 2002). In an attempt to explain learning inferiority in a digital environment, we tested several hypotheses. Some are associated with technological failures that have both a physical effect, such as visual difficulties that trace to screen display characteristics (Benedetto et al., 2013; Chou, 2016; Jeong, 2012), and a cognitive impact, e.g., loss of mnemonic aids when learners navigate linear digital documents by scrolling (Chou, 2016; Mangen et al., 2013). However, even when digital reading that avoids these technological failures (e.g., e-books and tablets) and the use short texts that obviate the need for scrolling were examined, inferior achievements relative to on-paper learning were observed (Daniel & Woody, 2013; Delgado et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2018; Sidi et al., 2017).

To explain on-screen learning inferiority, researchers claim that readers consider the study of informative contents in digital environments easier because digital environments are commonly used in rapid, superficial, and decentralized interactions (correspondence, posting, etc.) that do not entail cognitive effort and deep processing (Morineau et al., 2005; Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). Accordingly, readers tend to develop sloppy and shallow on-screen reading strategies (Liu, 2005). Readers who use digital media intensively struggle to cope with complex informative texts (Annisette & Lafreniere, 2017) and the more frequently they use such media, the more difficulty they encounter (Duncan et al., 2015; Pfost et al., 2013). To determine how reading processes in digital environments may be improved, researchers have been testing metacognitive processes that regulate and monitor learning. One of these processes is judgment.

*1.2 Judgment*

According to the model put forward by Nelson and Narens (1990), individuals self-judge the quality and quantity of the knowledge that they acquire as they acquire it. Judgment is a metacognitive process that people carry out repeatedly and monitor and regulate their learning on its basis (Dunlosky & Rawson, 2012; Pieger et al., 2016).

According to the gap narrowing model (Butler & Winne, 1995; Dunlosky & Thiede, 1998; Nelson & Narens, 1990), learning is halted when the learner judges the level of learning knowledge attained to be adequate. Additional learning time is devoted to learning when learners still consider their level of knowledge below-target. It follows that when judgment is biased toward overconfidence, learning may be halted prematurely, whereas underconfidence may result in an overallocation of learning time (Bjork et al., 2013). If so, inaccurate judgment may result in ineffective learning and poor achievements. Accuracy in judgment of comprehension is calculated by comparing judgment with achievement in two senses: relative (resolution) and absolute (calibration). Relative accuracy denotes the extent to which individuals’ judgments correspond to their test achievements (Dunlosky & Thiede, 2000; Thiede, Anderson, & Therriault, 2003) and may be calculated by means of Goodman and Kruskal's gamma. The gamma correlation, ranging from 1 to -1 and ideally around 1, expresses a learner’s ability to differentiate between texts learned well and those not. Absolute accuracy (calibrated accuracy or calibration) is the extent to which judged achievement reflects actual achievement (Bol et al., 2005); it expresses the distance between judged achievement and actual achievement and its direction (above or below actual achievement). The smaller the disparity, the closer calibration is to the ideal.

Ackerman and Goldsmith (2011), comparing on-paper learners with digital-environment learners, found that those among the latter who struggled to self-judge their learning committed misjudgments that manifested in overconfidence in self-assessed knowledge. Namely, their self-assessed knowledge surpassed the knowledge they had actually acquired as reflected in performance on tests. The disparity that came about between judgment and achievement was significantly wider than that between judgment and achievement in on-paper learning. This finding recurred in additional studies among different age groups, in learning of different contents, and under different learning conditions (Ackerman & Goldsmith, 2011; Ackerman & Lauterman, 2012; Dahan Golan et al., 2018; Lauterman & Ackerman, 2014; Sidi et al., 2016, 2017). These findings aside, young learners are found to have particular difficulty in accurately judging their knowledge and correctly assessing how well they understand what they have learned (Pieger et al., 2016; Thiede et al., 2003).

If so, learning in a digital environment is typified by faulty metacognitive monitoring based on inaccurate judgment and is inferior to on-line learning for this reason. It is found, however, that learners who invoke learning strategies that induce deep processing (composing summarizing paragraphs, writing keywords, etc.) improve their judgment accuracy and their achievements and eliminate the digital learning inferiority (Lauterman & Ackerman, 2014; Sidi et al., 2017). Many researchers call for continued testing of innovative pedagogies based on additional learning strategies that may trigger deep processing and improve learning in a digital environment (Delgado et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2 018).

*1.3 Metacognitive Teaching*

Recent years have seen the development of learning strategies based on metacognitive processes. Resting on a broad basis of professional literature, they set within a theoretical and empirical framework importance of metacognitive teaching in promoting learning processes in traditional and digital environments. It has been found in research that the inculcation of metacognitive processes in learners advances their cognitive abilities in various fields, such as problem-solving and inquiry learning (Kim, 2016; Mihalca et al., 2017), reading comprehension (Carretti et al., 2014; Muijselaar et al., 2017), processing information and media (Pellas, 2014; Winne & Hadwin, 2013), and foreign-language studies (Forbes & Fisher, 2015; Pishghadam & Khajavy, 2013). Such teaching has been found effective in promoting metacognitive processes among learners and improving their achievements in diverse fields of knowledge and learning environments (Boström & Lassen, 2006; de Boer et al., 2018; Ellis et al., 2014; Kramarski & Kohen, 2017; Michalsky, 2013; Michalsky et al., 2009). One method of metacognitive teaching is the presentation of questions that bring metacognitive processes to the learner’s consciousness and are geared to the monitoring and regulation of learning. Direct asking of metacognitive questions significantly improves learners’ achievements in text comprehension (McKeown et al., 2009; McMaster et al., 2010; Michalsky et al., 2009). The question here is: Does metacognitive self-questioning improve judgment of learning accuracy in a digital environment? This question is amplified by to the dearth of studies that examine various aspects of accuracy in judging comprehension among young learners, even though learners of that age are able to regulate their learning by applying monitoring and judgment (Baars et al., 2014). Accordingly, our goal in this study is to investigate the effect of asking metacognitive questions on young learners’ judgment accuracy as they learn texts related to mathematical literacy and reading literacy. We hypothesize that metacognitive support in the form of self-questioning will improve judgment accuracy, mitigate on-screen learning inferiority, and enhance learners’ achievements in reading and mathematical literacy in a digital environment.

1. **General Description of the Two Studies**

The research reported on below comprises two studies that tested the effect of support, given in the form of asking metacognitive questions on accuracy of judgment of comprehension in digital learning in two fields of knowledge: reading literacy and mathematical literacy.

In both studies, learners read texts on screen, were asked to judge their understanding, and took a reading comprehension test. To examine the effect of metacognitive support on judgment accuracy, an intervention program was developed. The program included the integration of metacognitive self-questioning into the environment of the text read.

The purpose of Study 1 was to test the effect of metacognitive support on judgment accuracy in digital learning in reference to reading literacy by means of lengthy expository texts that learners of primary-school age were asked to read.

The purpose of Study 2 was to test the effect of metacognitive support on judgment accuracy in digital learning in reference to mathematical literacy by means of short texts that included mathematical symbols and language among learners of primary-school age.

1. **Study 1**

3.1 *Method*

3.1.1 Participants

Sixty-five fifth-graders (ages 10–11, 52.3% girls) took part in this study. They attended two different schools that were invited to take part in the study and gave their consent. The schools were of similar socioeconomic status as defined by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2019). Pupils who defined themselves as recent immigrants were deleted from the sample because their reading comprehension difficulties might trace to hardships of reading in a foreign language.

The pupils were divided randomly into two groups: Group 1, “Meta\_read” (*n*=32, 62.5% girls) engaged in reading literacy and received metacognitive support in the form of questions that were inserted into the text read. Group 2, “Control\_read” (*n*=33, 42.4% girls), engaged in reading literacy without receiving support.

3.1.2 The Intervention Program

To test our hypotheses, a courseware product called “Oriani—ze ani” (Literacy—That’s Me!) was developed. It presents learners with six different texts that probe reading literacy capabilities and are tailored to the fifth-grade curriculum. The texts were harvested from the corpus of tests of the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education (RAMA) in Israel. To provide metacognitive support, four metacognitive self-questions following the IMPROVE model (Mevarech & Kramarski) were implanted in the texts: a comprehension question (“What does the text that I read deal with?”), a context question (“To what topic that I know is the text that I read connected?”), a strategy question (“What strategies will I use to help me understand the text that I read?”), and a reflection question (“I’ve finished reading. Did I understand? How will I improve my reading next time?”)

3.1.3 Research Tools

A courseware product called “Oriani—ze ani” (Literacy—That’s Me!”) was developed for the purposes of the study. It was written in C Sharp and by its means students read texts, judged their comprehension, and were tested.

Figures 1–4 present the texts, the judgment question, and the test questions.

Insert Figures 1-4 here

*Measuring Accuracy in Judgment of Comprehension*

After reading each text, the participants were asked to judge how well they understood it. There are several possible ways of posing a comprehension judgment question (Ackerman & Goldsmith, 2011; Pilegard & Meyer, 2015; Redford et al., 2012). In the current study, participants were asked a performance-prediction question: “You are about to answer seven questions related to the text. How many of the seven will you be able to answer correctly?” The answer was given by sliding a cursor along a ruler that placed judgment of comprehension on a 0–7 scale.

At the end of the judgment activity, the courseware presented the participants with a multiple-choice test that examined their comprehension of the text. As stated, judgment of accuracy was calculated by comparing assessed comprehension with test scores in two respects: resolution and calibration. In this study, six judgments were compared with outcomes on six tests.

*Evaluating Achievements in Reading Literacy*

Achievements in reading literacy were evaluated by having the participants read and study six literacy texts in Hebrew and differentiate among them by taking reading-comprehension tests. The texts were of different kinds (fictional, scientific, etc.) and were 650 words long on average. To evaluate comprehension, a seven-item multiple-choice test was fitted to each text. The texts and the tests were based on the *Meitzav* (Hebrew acronym for “School Growth and Efficiency Measures”) tests in Hebrew and were processed to assure their fit to the study. The Hebrew-language Meitzav exams that test reading literacy among fifth-graders were developed by RAMA and passed quality testing that established their validity (RAMA, 2009).

A reliability check for internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha), performed for the full set of questions on all the tests (42 items), yielded an α=0.840 reliability coefficient. On the basis of this coefficient, a general index score on the comprehension test was calculated for each participant by averaging all 42 items in toto. A separate score for each test was also calculated. Each score was arrayed on a 0–7 scale; the higher the score, the higher the level of achievement.

3.1.4 Procedure

Each participant was instructed in the use of the courseware in the computer room. The participants in the “Meta\_read” group also received an explanation about metacognition in learning and practiced the use of metacognitive questions as they read texts that contained content of reading literacy in a digital environment.

Afterwards, all participants attended a workshop comprised of weekly one-hour lessons in which they were asked to work by means of the courseware. Participants in the “Meta\_read” group read a text in which the following metacognitive questions were inserted: “What does the text that I read deal with?” “To what topic that I know is the text that I read connected?” “What strategies will I use to help me understand the text that I read?” and “I’ve finished reading. Did I understand? How will I improve my reading next time?” They were asked to answer these questions in writing, using a notebook that they had been given.

After each participant finished reading, he or she pressed an on-screen button to confirm having completed the task. At this stage, the text disappeared from the screen and was replaced by a performance-prediction question: “You are about to answer seven questions related to the text. How many of the seven will you be able to answer correctly?” The participant answered by sliding a cursor along a ruler that ran from 0 to 7. Then the following question appeared: “Would you like to read the text again?” If the participant pressed “Yes,” the text reappeared; otherwise, the participant advanced to the testing stage. Now one question and several possible answers appeared on the screen. The participant was asked to select the right answer.

Table 1 summarizes the actions taken at each stage of the study.

To make sure the participants made their judgments on the basis of their level of comprehension of the text and not randomly, they were asked to read and be tested on a seventh test that was on a higher level than that suited to their age. This was meant to rule out the possibility that participants judged themselves randomly or uniformly. Low levels of judgment on this test would indicate the use of intelligent judgment that reflected the level of difficulty of the text.

*3.2 Results*

Literacy Achievements

Table 2 presents the reading literacy achievements of each research group separately.

The participants’ pre-test did not include metacognitive support. To rule out the possibility of variance in the achievements of the study groups, an independent-samples t-test was performed. Indeed, no difference in the achievements of the “Control\_read” and the “Meta\_read” groups was found: *t*(51.5)=1.52, *p*=.133.

To check for the existence of a significant difference between achievements in the pre-test and those in the post-test divided by study groups, a two-way repeated-measures analysis of variance was done (points in time: pre and post) x 2 (study groups: “Meta\_read” and “Control\_read”). In this analysis, no principal significant difference was found in achievements over time: *F*(1,59)=1.430, *p*=.237, =.024. However, a significant time x group interaction effect was found: *F*(1,59)=4.931, *p*<.005, =.077.

Figure 1 demonstrates the interaction effect graphically:

Insert Figure 1 here

Observation of the averages presented in Figure 1 and the simple-effect analysis reveals a significant difference between the tests among participants in the “Meta\_read,” such that achievements on the post-test surpassed those on the pre-test: *F*(1,30)=7.381, p<.05, = .197. In the “Control\_read” group, no significant achievement differences between the tests were detected.

To check for a significant effect on literacy achievements as manifested in all six tests, an independent-samples t-test was performed, with the average of the six exam scores as the dependent variable and the research group as the independent variable. The results show a significant difference between the study groups in average scores: t(63)=2.967, p<.005, as the achievements of the “Meta\_read” group (*M*=4.169, *SD*=1.12) significantly surpassed those of the “Control\_read” group (*M*=3.26, *SD*=1.34).

Judgment of Comprehension

Figure 2 parses the judgments and the achievements on the six tests by study groups.

Insert Figure 2 here

To make sure that the judgment was based on levels of text comprehension and not on random reportage, the participants were asked to read and be tested on a seventh text, a difficult one not suited to their age.

Figure 3 shows the differences between average achievements and judgments on the six tests that were based on age-suitable texts and those on the seventh text, a harder text above the participants’ age level.

Insert Figure 3 here

The data in Figure X [3?] and the paired-sample t-test analyses reveal, as expected, a significant difference between average test achievements on the six age-compatible texts and those on the seventh text: *t*(59)=7.836, *p*<.001, such that the average achievements on the six tests (*M*=3.744, *SD*=1.33) exceeded those on the seventh (*M*=2.55, *SD*=1.443).

Another significant difference was found between the average judgment on the six age-compatible tests and that on the seventh, *t*(59)=7.393, *p*<.001, such that average achievements on the six tests (*M*=5.497, *SD*=1.264) surpassed those on the seventh (*M*=5.497, *SD*=1.264).

To check for a difference between achievements and judgments on each of the six tests and those on the seventh, paired-sample t-tests were performed. All of them came out significant, such that significant differences were found between achievements and judgments on each of the six tests and those on the seventh.

Calibration

One aspect of accurate judgment is calibration, defined as the absolute difference between pre-test judgment and actual test achievements. Table 3 presents the participants’ calibrations on the six tests, parsed by study groups.

Insert Table 3 here

To examine the relation between calibration and reading-literacy achievements, the correlation between the absolute disparity and achievement was measured. Here a significant negative relation was found between the absolute gap and the achievements (*r*=-.72, *p*<0.001), i.e., the smaller the disparity—i.e., the better the calibration—the higher the achievements were.

The participants’ pre-test did not include metacognitive support. To make sure there was no variance in calibration between the study groups, an independent-samples t-test was performed. Indeed, the “Control\_read” and the “Meta\_read” groups showed no difference in calibration: (50.4)=1.23, *p=*.226.

To check for the existence of a significant difference in calibration between the pre-test and the post-test by study groups, a two-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (points in time: pre and post) x 2 (study groups: “Meta\_read” and “Control\_read”) was performed. In this analysis, a principal significant difference was found in calibration over time: *F*(1,59)=6.555, *p*<.05, =.100. A significant time x group interaction effect was found as well: *F*(1,59)=4.974, *p*<.05, =.078.

Figure 4 substantiates the interaction effect graphically.

Insert Figure 4 here

The averages reported in Figure X [4?] and the simple-effect analyses reveal a significant difference between the tests in the “Meta\_read” group, *F*(1,30)=11.316, *p*<.005, =.274, such that calibration was better (i.e., the difference was smaller) on the post-test (*M*=1.290, *SD*=1.346) than on the pre-test (*M*=2.258, *SD*=1.210). In the “Control\_read” group, no significant differences between the tests were found.

To check for a significant difference in calibration between the study groups as manifested on all six tests, an independent-samples t-test was performed with the average of the six absolute differences as the dependent variable and the research group as the independent variable. The results of the t-test revealed a significant difference between the study groups in average calibration, *t*(55.612)=2.923, *p*=.005, such that the disparities in the “Meta\_read” group (*M*=1.945, *SD*=0.919) were significantly lower than those in the “Control\_read” group (*M*=2.799, *SD*=1.393).

To examine the effect of metacognitive support on calibration among participants who achieved at different levels, the participants were divided into two groups on the basis of their median pre-test score (a score of 4 out of 7). Those who surpassed the median score (*n*=35) were placed in the first group (high achievers) and those scoring at or below the median (*n*=30) were assigned to the second group (low achievers).

To check for differences in the effect, an independent-samples t-test was performed among members of each of these groups. The results revealed significant calibration differences in the latter group (low achievers) between those who received metacognitive support (“Meta\_read”) and those who did not (“Control\_read”): *t*(33)=2.43, *p*=.021. Participants who received support were more accurate in their judgments (*M=*2.38, *SD=*1.08) than were those not receiving support (*M=*3.43, *SD=*1.38). Among those in the first group (high achievers), the differences were not significant. The differences are shown in Figure 3 [5?].

Figure 5: Calibration between low achievers and high achievers in the study groups.

Insert Figure 5 here

Resolution

Resolution denotes the extent to which judgment differentiates between higher levels and lower levels of actual achievements. A common way of measuring resolution is Goodman and Kruskal's gamma (Nelson, 1984; Thiede et al., 2003). In the current study, too, the gamma was calculated for each participant. To make sure their judgments were made intelligently as opposed to randomly, a single-sample t-test was performed compared with 0. In this test, the average gamma was found to be significantly different from 0 (*p*<.001), indicating that the participants applied intelligent judgment. In this study, weak correlations were found in both study groups (“Meta\_read”: *M*=0.32, *SD*=0.45, “Control\_read”: *M*=0.269, *SD*=0.47), with no significant differences.

To check for a difference in resolution between low-achieving and high-achieving participants, a t-test was performed. It found a significant difference in gamma between the achievement groups (*M*=-.066 ,*SD*=0.591 vs. *M*=.301,*SD*=0.545, respectively). Also, a significant relation between calibration and resolution was found among low achievers: the stronger the resolution, the smaller the average disparities (r=-.458, p=.024).

*3.3 Discussion*

The results of this study show meaningful improvement in reading literacy achievements in learning in a digital environment among pupils who receive support by being asked metacognitive questions. These findings reinforce, generalize, and expand on previous studies that dealt with metacognitive support (Author 1, 2013; Valencia-Vallejo et al., 2019). The study expands on its predecessors by shedding light on metacognitive processes that take place in literacy studies in a digital environment. It describes the process of improvement that the research group underwent: the six-encounter intervention program showed that metacognitive support induced improvement in literacy achievements from each session to the next. The participants’ achievements trended upward, albeit not significantly, from test to test.

The study introduced another variable related to literacy achievements: accuracy of judgment. The participants were asked to judge their learning by predicting their achievements on a comprehension test. As in research by others (Bjork et al., 2013), it was found here that calibration is a metacognitive process associated with effective learning and strong achievements. The significant relation found between strong achievements and calibration is reflected in the absolute disparity between prediction and achievement, such that the smaller the disparity, the better the achievements. This significant connection recurred in both groups, trial (meta) and control, and among high achievers and low achievers alike.

Calibration is an especially important element in the context of learning in a digital environment that is typified by inaccurate judgment of learning (Ackerman & Goldsmith, 2011). Accordingly, this study sought to introduce a metacognitive support program that would improve calibration. The findings prove that a support program that includes asking metacognitive questions does have a salutary effect on calibration. In the six-session intervention program, it was found that metacognitive support induced an improvement in calibration from one meeting to the next. The participants’ judgment became increasingly accurate, such that the gap between their evaluation and their actual achievements narrowed from test to test.

In an additional finding, the effect of metacognitive support on judgment accuracy differed among participants at different levels of achievement. Low-achieving participants who received support showed significantly stronger calibration than did low achievers who did not receive support. It follows that metacognitive support of digital learning is an immensely valuable strategy for low-achieving pupils in particular. This conclusion reinforces other studies that demonstrate the efficacy of metacognitive support in improving underachieving students’ achievements (Raes et al., 2012; Zohar & David, 2008; Zohar & Peled, 2008).

In contrast to the improvement in calibration, the current study found low resolution values in both study groups. Namely, participants found it difficult to make insights and differentiate between texts that they had learned and understood well and those they had not learned well and had to re-learn. This finding recurs in many studies on judgment of comprehension among young pupils (Piegre et al., 2016; Redford et al., 2012). The lengthy lapse of time between readings of texts (a week if not longer) may have degraded the participants’ resolution by making it hard for them to determine which texts they had learned well and which they had not.

To test the effect of the metacognitive support from a broader perspective, an additional trial took place, Study 2, in which the effect of metacognitive support on learning texts in the context of mathematical literacy was examined. Mathematical literacy has characteristics other than those of reading literacy. Mathematical texts, for example, are shorter than reading-literacy texts in terms of word count; they also demand comprehension of mathematical symbols and language. Accordingly, the purpose of Study 2 was to pinpoint the contribution of metacognitive support to accuracy of judgment in learning mathematical literacy in a digital environment.

1. **Study 2**

*4.1 Method*

4.1.1 Participants

Seventy-two fifth-graders (age 10–11, 45.8% girls) took part in this study. They attended two different schools that had been invited to take part in the study and gave their consent. The schools were of similar socioeconomic status as defined by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2019). Pupils who defined themselves as recent immigrants were deleted from the sample because their difficulties in reading comprehension might trace to hardships of reading in a foreign language.

The pupils were divided randomly into two groups. Group 1, “Meta\_math” (*n*=33, 47.1% girls) engaged in mathematical literacy and received metacognitive support in the form of questions inserted into the mathematical text. Group 2, “Control\_math” (*n*=39, 44.7% girls) engaged in mathematical literacy without receiving support.

4.1.2 The Intervention and Judgment Program

The intervention program in Study 2 was identical to that in Study 1, comprised of six texts that examined mathematical literacy and were tailored to the fifty-grade curriculum (RAMA, 2016). As in Study 1, four metacognitive self-questions following the IMPROVE model (Mevarech & Kramarski) were implanted in the texts.

4.1.3 Research Tools

Accuracy in judging comprehension was measured as it was measured in Study 1; see Section 3.1.3.

*Evaluating Mathematical Literacy Achievements*

The participants’ mathematical literacy was measured by having them read, study, and comprehend six texts that were developed for the purposes of the study. The texts were around 100 words long on average. Each text included a situation from daily life that poses a mathematical problem; the participants were asked to solve the problem and answer a seven-item multiple-choice test by applying mathematical procedures. The texts and the tests were thoroughly vetted by a “group of experts in teaching mathematics” for clarity and coherence and constituted a tool for measurement of mathematical literacy capability.

A reliability check for internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha) across the full set of questions on all the tests (42 items) yielded an α=0.804 reliability coefficient. On the basis of this coefficient, a general index score on the comprehension test was calculated for each participant by averaging all 42 items in toto. A separate score for each test was also calculated. Each score was arrayed on a 0–7 scale; the higher the score, the higher the level of achievement.

*Procedure*

The preparation and performance stages of this study were identical to those in Study 1; see Section 3.1.4.

*4.2 Results*

The participants’ mathematical literacy achievements, parsed by study groups, are shown in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 here

The pre-test given to the participants did not include metacognitive support. To rule out the possibility of variance in the study groups’ achievements, an independent-samples t-test was performed. Indeed, no difference in achievements was found between the “Control\_read” group and the “Meta\_read” groups: *t*(68)=.29, *p*=.769).

To check for a significant difference in achievements between the pre-test and the post-test divided by study groups, a two-way repeated-measures analysis of variance was carried out (points in time: pre and post) x 2 (study groups: “Meta\_math” and “Control\_math”). In this analysis, a principal significant difference was found for time: *F*(1,67)=28.228, *p*<.001, =.296. A significant time x group interaction effect was also found: *F*(1,67)=11.102, *p*<.005, =.142.

Figure 7 demonstrates the interaction effect graphically:

Insert Figure 7 here

Observation of the averages presented in Figure 7 and the simple-effect analysis reveals a significant difference between the tests in the “Meta\_math” group, meaning that achievements on the post-test surpassed those on the pre-test: *F*(1,32)=40.245, p<.001, =.557. In the “Control\_math” group, no significant achievement differences between the tests were detected.

To check for a significant effect among literacy achievements as manifested in all six tests, an independent-samples t-test was performed, with the average of the six test scores as the dependent variable and the research group as the independent variable. The results of the t-test show a significant difference between the study groups in average scores: *t*(70)=3.413, p<.005, the achievements of the “Meta\_math” group (*M*=4.136, *SD*=1.053) significantly surpassing those of the “Control\_read” group (*M*=3.284, *SD*=1.063).

*Judgment of Comprehension*

Figure 6 parses judgments and achievements on the six tests by study groups.

Insert Figure 6 here

*Calibration*

One aspect of accurate judgment is calibration, defined as the absolute difference between pre-test judgment and actual achievements on the test. Table 5 presents the participants’ calibrations on the six tests, parsed by study groups.

Insert Table 5 here

To examine the relation between calibration and reading-literacy [mathematical-literacy?] achievements, the correlation between the absolute disparity and achievement was measured. Here a significant negative relation was found between the absolute gap and the achievements (*r*=-.718, *p*<0.001), i.e., the smaller the disparity was—i.e., the better the calibration—the higher were the achievements.

The participants’ pre-test did not include metacognitive support. To make sure there was no variance in calibration between the study groups, an independent-samples t-test was performed. Indeed, the “Control\_math” and the “Meta\_math” groups showed no difference in calibration: *t*(68)=.639, *p=*.525.

To check for a significant difference in calibration between the pre-test and the post-test by study groups, a two-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (points in time: pre and post) x 2 (study groups: “Meta\_math” and “Control\_math”) was performed. In this analysis, a significant difference was found in calibration over time: *F*(1,67)=4.908, *p*<.05, =.068. Also, a significant time x group interaction effect was found: *F*(1,67)=4.104, *p*<.05, =.058.

Figure 8 substantiates the interaction effect graphically.

Insert Figure 8 here

The averages reported in Figure X [8?] and the simple-effect analyses reveal a significant difference between the tests in the “Meta\_math” group, *F*(1,32)=8.067, *p*<.01, =.201, such that calibration was better on the post-test (*M*=1.515, *SD*=1.752) than on the pre-test (*M*=2.757, *SD*=1.904). In the “Control\_math” group, no significant differences between the tests were found.

To check for a significant difference in calibration between the study groups as manifested in all six tests, an independent-samples t-test was performed with the average of the six absolute differences as the dependent variable and the research group (“Meta\_math” or “Control\_math”) as the independent variable. The results of the t-test show a significant difference between the study groups in average calibration, *t*(70)=3.359, p=.001 , such that the disparities in the “Meta\_math” group (*M*=2.098, *SD*=0.859) were significantly lower than those of the “Control\_math” group (*M*=2.851, *SD*=1.029).

To examine the effect of metacognitive support on calibration among participants with different achievements, the participants were divided into two groups on the basis of the median of their average scores. Participants who surpassed the median score (*n*=36) were placed in the first group (high achievers) and those scoring at or below the median (*n*=36) were assigned to the second group (low achievers).

To test differences in the effect, an independent-samples t-test was performed among members of each of these groups. The results show that in the former group (the high achievers) there were significant differences in calibration between those who received metacognitive support (“Meta\_math”) and those who did not (“Control\_math”): *t*(34)=3.42, *p*=.002. Participants who received support were more accurate in their judgment (*M=*1.53, *SD=*0.73 than did those not receiving support (*M=*2.4, *SD=*0.78). Figure 3 [כך?] presents these differences. Among the second group, too (low achievers), there were significant differences in calibration between participants who received metacognitive support (“Meta\_math”) and those who did not (“Control\_math”), *t*(34)=2.63, *p*=.013. Those who received support judged their comprehension more accurately (*M=*2.61, *SD=*0.54) than did those who did not receive support (*M=*3.36, *SD=*1.05).

*Resolution*

In Study 2, as in Study 1, a single-sample gamma t-test compared with 0 was carried out. The average gamma was found significantly different from 0 (*p*<.007), indicating that the participants applied intelligent judgment. In this study, weak correlations were found in both study groups—”Meta\_math”: *M*=.235, *SD*=.601, “Control\_math”: *M*=.167, *SD*=.523—with no significant differences.

*4.3 Discussion*

The results of this study show meaningful improvement in mathematical literacy achievements in digital environment learning among pupils who received support by being asked metacognitive questions. As in Study 1, Study 2 illuminates the process of improvement that the research group underwent. The six-encounter intervention program showed that metacognitive support induced improvement in literacy achievements from each session to the next. The participants’ achievements trended upward, albeit not significantly, from test to test.

As in Study 1 above and in additional studies (Bjork et al., 2013), it was found in Study 2 that calibration is a metacognitive process associated with effective learning and strong achievements. The significant relation that was discovered between strong achievements and calibration is reflected in the absolute disparity between prediction and achievement, such that the smaller the disparity, the better the achievements.

The findings of this study prove that the support program was also effective in enhancing calibration. In the six-session intervention, metacognitive support induced improvement in calibration from each session to the next. The accuracy of the participants’ judgment climbed such that the correspondence of judgment to actual achievements increased from test to test.

In contrast to the improvement in calibration, Study 2 yielded low values of resolution among both study groups. Namely, the participants found it hard to make insights and differentiate between texts that they had learned and comprehended well and those learned poorly and in need of re-learning. This finding appears in many studies on comprehension judgment among young pupils (Pieger et al., 2016; Redford et al, 2012). The lengthy lapse of time between readings of texts (a week if not longer) may have degraded resolution by making it hard for the participants to determine which texts they had learned well and which they had not.

1. **Composite Discussion**

Metacognitive support, in the form of questions, was found effective in improving calibration in both studies of which this research project was comprised: Study 1, relating to reading literacy, and Study 2, addressing itself to mathematical literacy. As shown in others’ research, calibration induces effective learning and strong achievements. In both studies reported here, a relation between calibration and high achievements was found, meaning that the intervention program that provided metacognitive support improved calibration and, in turn, literacy achievements in reading and mathematics.

In contrast, in both studies conducted here, no improvement in resolution was found among the groups that received metacognitive support. Namely, participants found it hard to make insights and differentiate between texts that they had learned and comprehended well and those not learned well and in need of re-learning. The lengthy lapse of time between readings of texts (a week if not longer) may have degraded the participants’ resolution by making it hard for them to determine which texts they had learned well and which they had not.

The difference found between Study 1 and Study 2 lies in the effect of metacognitive support on calibration among pupils at different levels of achievement. In Study 1, the intervention program was found especially effective among low-achieving participants. Namely, those participants who received metacognitive support showed a larger significant improvement in calibration than did high achievers. In Study 2, no such difference was found; the improvement of calibration did not vary among pupils at different levels of achievement.

The reason for this may be the cognitive load that comes about when one reads a “wordy” text—an effect manifested only in Study 1, which concerned reading literacy. Low-achieving participants found it more difficult to cope with this load than did higher achievers, but those with low achievements who received metacognitive support managed to cope with the load and improve their calibration. In Study 2, in contrast to Study 1, no cognitive load was created because the texts were short; therefore, no difference in improvement of calibration was found among participants at different levels of achievement.

**Limitations of the study and proposals for future research:**

This study had several noteworthy limitations. First, its Study 1 was based on reading texts of different kinds. The research framework allowed no way to determine whether the effect of the metacognitive support on judgment accuracy and achievements depended on the genre of the text. In view of studies among adult readers that found a relation between text genre and accuracy of judgment (Delgado et al., 2018; Golke, 2019), the role of text genre in the context of judgment accuracy among young readers needs to be tested in future research. Second, the research matrix comprised six stages. Each stage included reading a lengthy text followed by testing; it took roughly an hour and was carried out once every week or two. This interval was determined in order to test the efficacy of the intervention program over time. Accordingly, much time passed between readings. This may have caused difficulty in differentiating between texts well learned and those not and may have led to difficulty in resolution. Resorting to studies that calculated resolution on the basis of reading different texts in one sitting (Dunlosky & Lipko, 2007), future research should construct a design that would allow several short texts to be read in one sitting with concurrent judgment. Third, the intervention program included metacognitive questions that were integrated into and presented within the text. This research frame offered no possibility of animating the questions. If the questions had been presented in an active and animated manner as the reading progressed, they might have been more effective; this needs to be investigated in future research. Finally, the text-comprehension tests included multiple-choice questions but not open-ended ones. In reference to studies that noted the drawbacks of tests that lack open-ended questions (Ozuru et al., 2013), courseware in future research should present metacognitive questions in an active and animated manner.

The results of this study are very important for education systems. Reading and learning in digital environments have become common tasks for learners of all ages. The study proposes an intervention program that may be helpful in metacognitive learning processes, possibly improving comprehension judgment and enhancing achievements in reading literacy.

**Figure 1**

*Examples of a Reading Literacy Text by the "Literacy - That's Me!" Courseware*

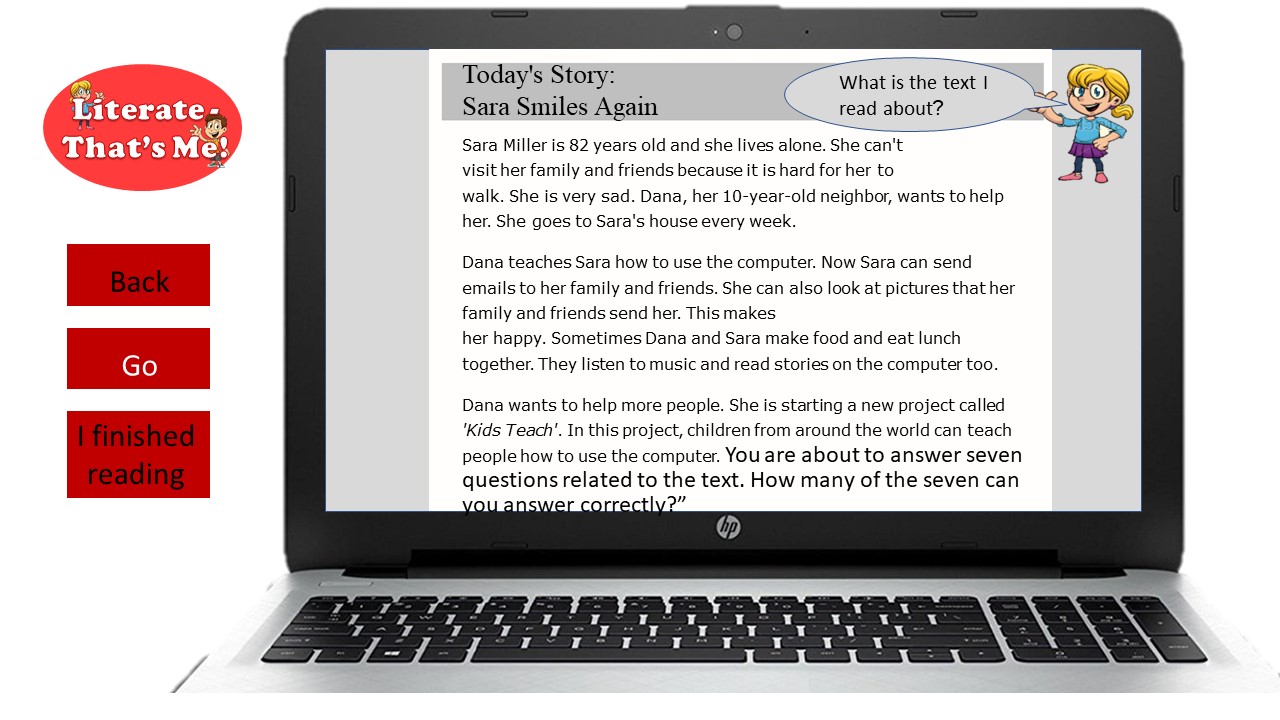
תמונה שמכילה אלקטרוניקה, מחשב

התיאור נוצר באופן אוטומטי

Note. This Text Used in Study 1. The "Literacy - That's Me!" software introduces the text, with the option of continuing to read, reverse or finish.

**Figure 2**

*Examples of Metacognitive Question by the "Literacy - That's Me!" Software*



Note. For the Meta\_read group, the courseware introduces a metacognitive question.

**Figure 3**

*Judgment of Learning—Prediction-of-Performance Question*

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התיאור נוצר באופן אוטומטי

Note. The prediction-of-performance question: You are about to answer seven questions related to the text. How many of the seven can you answer correctly?

**Figure 4**

*Examples of Question in Literacy Test*

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Note. The "Literacy - That's Me!" Software introduces a literacy question. The student was asked to choose one correct answer.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Actions Taken at Each Stage of the Study*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage of performance** | **Action taken** | **Instructions** |
| **Stage A** | Activating the courseware | Participants are asked to input a personal code. They are allowed to mark in their notebooks anything that may help them to comprehend and remember what they have read. |
| **Stage B** | Reading a text | Metacognitive questions are implanted in texts read by the “Meta\_read” study groups; participants are asked to answer them in writing in their notebooks. |
| **Stage C** | Judgment of comprehension by means of a ruler | Answer the question: “How many of the seven [questions] will you be able to answer correctly?” by sliding a cursor across the screen. |
| **Stage D** | The option of re-reading | Answer the question: “Would you like to read the text again?” If the participant wishes to re-read the text, he or she will be asked to re-judge his or her comprehension. |
| **Stage E** | Insights about the text | Answer seven questions by choosing one of four possible responses. |
| **Stage F** | The option of correcting responses | Answer the question: “Would you like to change one of the responses that you selected?” |

**Table 2**

*Student Achievements in Reading Literacy by Study Groups*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Control\_read | | Meta\_read | |  |
| *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* |  |
| 2.07 | 3.44 | 2.05 | 3.43 | Test1 |
| 1.69 | 2.94 | 1.36 | 3.59 | Test2 |
| 1.68 | 2.82 | 1.68 | 4.10 | Test3 |
| 1.59 | 3.66 | 1.36 | 4.16 | Test4 |
| 1.68 | 3.67 | 2.24 | 4.45 | Test5 |
| 2.44 | 3.10 | 1.86 | 4.84 | Test6 |

**Table 2**

*Calibration Indices in Reading Literacy by Study Groups*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Control\_read | | Meta\_read | |  |
| *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* |  |
| 1.98 | 2.53 | 0.97 | 1.46 | Test1 |
| 1.83 | 3.36 | 1.56 | 2.10 | Test2 |
| 1.92 | 3.27 | 1.23 | 1.96 | Test3 |
| 1.82 | 2.81 | 1.51 | 1.93 | Test4 |
| 1.62 | 2.30 | 1.44 | 1.89 | Test5 |
| 2.30 | 2.54 | 1.57 | 1.75 | Test6 |

**Table 4**

*Student Achievements in Math Literacy by Study Groups*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Control\_math | | Meta\_math | |  |
| *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* |  |
| 1.59 | 2.97 | 1.75 | 3.09 | Test1 |
| 1.54 | 3.32 | 1.88 | 4.00 | Test2 |
| 1.65 | 3.11 | 1.51 | 3.94 | Test3 |
| 1.55 | 3.42 | 1.51 | 4.03 | Test4 |
| 1.53 | 3.33 | 1.77 | 4.56 | Test5 |
| 1.90 | 3.47 | 1.70 | 5.27 | Test6 |

**Table 3**

*Calibration Indices in Math Literacy by Study Groups*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Control\_math | | Meta\_math | |  |
| *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* |  |
| 1.62 | 3.02 | 1.90 | 2.75 | Test1 |
| 1.70 | 2.78 | 1.52 | 1.84 | Test2 |
| 1.64 | 3.16 | 1.44 | 2.27 | Test3 |
| 1.58 | 2.36 | 1.78 | 2.28 | Test4 |
| 1.70 | 2.86 | 1.31 | 1.82 | Test5 |
| 2.07 | 2.97 | 1.75 | 1.51 | Test6 |

**Figure 5**

*Pre-Test and Post-Test Achievements*

**Figure 6**

Judgments and Achievements on the Tests

**Figure 7**

*Judgments and Achievements* *on* *the Tests*

**Figure 8**

*Pre-Test and Post-Test Calibration*

**Figure 9**

*Calibration among High Achievers and Low Achievers*

**Figure 10**

*Pre-Test and Post-Test Achievements*

**Figure 10**

*Pre-Test and Post-Test Calibration*

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