Normally, we face different problems in life every day. Some problems are easy to solve while some are not. There are problems that need time to focus in order to realize the solution to the problems that bother us. If we adults face different obstacles and challenges every day, children also share the same. Most of the time, children meet different problems in their everyday lives in school. Sometimes, there are lessons that they find hard to understand. In Mathematics for instance, children find it hard to analyze and solve worded problems. In English, some find it hard to construct an essay. Others find it difficult to analyze different situations given in a particular activity. All of these experiences lead them to failure that suggest for them to quit and say that they can’t. The negative feelings they experience easily turn into negative self-talk such as “If I’m so smart, why did I fail the test? I am not smart. I am useless.” This gives them negative mindsets.

At this point of time, children need to make transition from the negative “I can’t” phrase to a positive and proactive phrase “How can I?” In order to help these children deal with their problems, they need to think about the reason why they are stuck. What makes them frustrated? What made them think certain tasks to be hard? What would they need to get moving? They need to develop a skill of processing their own thinking – and that is metacognition.

“Metacognition” is one of the most trending words in educational psychology nowadays. Some teachers know about it. The length and abstract nature of this word makes it sound intimidating, yet it is not as disheartening concept as it might seem. The phrase was termed by American developmental psychologist John H. Flavell in 1979, and the theory was developed throughout the 1980s among researchers working with young children in early cognitive stages (Madeline, 2017).
Everyday, we unconsciously engage in an activity or a situation that involves metacognitive activities. When we face problems in everyday life and try to find solutions through a careful evaluation of different possible solutions to solve the problems is actually a metacognitive activity. Reflecting on our own thoughts is how we gain insight into our feelings, needs, and behaviors. We have the running conversation in our heads that is mentally sounding ourselves out in making plans. Training kids to use metacognition proactively to overcome obstacles can be a powerful tool.

Studies suggest that kids who are taught to use metacognitive strategies early on are more resilient and more successful, both in and out of the school. Training children to become metacognitive develops mindset, which promotes self-awareness and resilience (Jacobson, 2018).

Indeed, metacognition plays a vital role to attain successful learning. When a learner practices metacognitive processes, he develops deeper understanding in different subject areas because he looks for interrelationships in the things he learns. When it comes to problem solving, he first tries to understand the problem, looks for boundaries, and creates a mental picture of the problem instead of hurriedly giving solutions to the problems. When it comes to learning and thinking strategies, he learns to innovate new strategies that would best suit the task. Moreover, when it comes to the production of outputs, he learns to check his errors and redirect his efforts to maintain quality output.

Thus, the challenge now for all the teachers is to integrate more activities that would build their students’ capacity to reflect on their own characteristics as learners, the task they need to do and the strategies that they can use to learn. Always remember that the most important goal of education is not only to teach their pupils to learn but moreover to teach them how to learn. This will be attained if teachers will develop their pupils’ skills to evaluate their own thinking and to think on how to make their own learning process more effective. Hence, they will become successful, lifelong critical thinkers.
References:
