Educational Psychology Overview Guide

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Putting children first

Metacognitive strategies:

Metacognition approaches to teaching aim to support pupils to think about their own learning and the learning process; teaching them strategies for planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning. Many have described this as "thinking about thinking" or "learning to learn". The Education Endowment fund found that the use of meta-cognitive strategies can be worth an additional +7 months progress when used well, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils with good metacognitive skills:

- Know what they know / what they do not know
- Know what to do when they encounter difficulty
- Are aware of the thinking strategies they are using when they solve problems and complete tasks.
- Can set goals to achieve a task, monitor their behaviour in terms of their goals and reflect on their effectiveness. This increases their self-satisfaction and motivation to continue to improve their learning.

What metacognitive strategies look like in the classroom:

Teacher's need to develop pupil's knowledge of metacognition, including knowledge of themselves (their emotions and abilities), knowledge of the task and knowledge of strategies needed to start the task. It is only with practice of these strategies will children begin to identify the best ones for them and the task. Teacher language is key to metacognitive development, such as, the type of questions that staff use. Teacher's should support pupils to develop skills in planning, monitoring and evaluating.

Metacognition should not be taught alone, rather it should be woven into current teaching practices. However, teacher will need to explicitatly teach metacognitive strategies, including how to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning on specific tasks. It may be useful to start this on a task that activates the children previous learning and ending with a structured reflection.

Modelling your own thinking is an important strategy which allows children to understand your metacognitive processes by hearing you "think aloud" (e.g. ('What do I know about problems like this? What ways of solving them have I used before? What tools could be useful to have before I start?') as you work through an example together.

Set an appropriate level of challenge for each child so that they can develop their knowledge of strategies and themselves as learners whilst also being mindful not to impact the motivation to complete the task if it is too difficult.

Carefully withdraw support as pupils become more independent in their metacognitive learning skill as they become more confident in what this involves. Provide effective feedback and comment aloud on their own ability to accurately judge their learning.

Resources:

Learning Power Approach: Teaching Learners to teach themselves (The Learning Power Series) by Guy Claxton
Educational Endowment Foundation (EFF) https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/metacognition https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAik_RQY_Dg and YouTube videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAik_RQY_Dg