3.4.3 PROBLEM SOLVING

It is a metacognitive technique that enables the learner to become aware of the problem.

It is divided into the following steps:

1) Problem identification and analysis:

Students are asked to set out what they see as the problems they experience within their class.

Methodology:

- They are asked to write on anonymous notes or through the development of an essay the problems experienced within the class.
- Problems may arise spontaneously during the discussion
- A ranking list of the problems identified is prepared to identify the one that students want to tackle first (preference voting).
- Examples: teasing, insults, threats, hitting, spitefulness, dealing with teachers, disrupting the lesson, damaging, or stealing personal material, exclusion from games, aggressive play, revealing personal secrets.

2) Problem definition:

Methodology:

- One way to clarify the problem is to break it down into its components, describing it in concrete and verifiable terms.
- To this end, it may be useful to identify an example situation from individual experience, trying to define it as specifically and concretely as possible (When does the problem occur? Where? When? With whom?)
- Examples: " Disruptive behaviour in the classroom " ---> general class chatter; some classmates get up from their desks and annoy
- Examples: 'disrespect among classmates ---> hitting, damaging material, teasing.

3) Identification of possible solutions

Methodology:

- Avoid negative evaluation of the ideas presented (create a non-judgemental environment)
- Take care to define the problem and the objectives you want to achieve at the beginning of the activity and whenever necessary
- Provide all participants with an opportunity to intervene
- Offer stimuli and suggestions when interruptions occur

- Problem: during breaktime, students from other classes hide material and write swear words on books.
- Solutions:
    - Analysis of handwriting.
    - Cameras.
    - Hiding a classmate.
    - Taking turns on guard duty.
    - Install an alarm system.
    - Set traps.
    - Hidden audio recorder.
    - Lock the door.
    - inform the headmistress.
    - Put up barbed wire.
    - Putting on infrared beams.
    - Hiding objects.

4) Choosing the best solution

Methodology:

- For each solution, list all possible consequences.
- Weighing up pros and cons for each solution
- Example:
    - Problem: chatting during the lesson
    - Solution: suspend the chatterers
    - Advantage: Being able to follow the lesson
    - Disadvantage: you should apply it too many times, you miss classes and fall behind, you have to do too much homework, you get yelled at by your parents.

5) Action Plan:

- Depending on the type of solution identified, the following activities can be implemented:
    - Role playing
    - Making posters reminding of the rules of behaviour identified
    - Involving the teachers
    - Appointing a supervisor

- Example:
    - Problem: being insulted
    - Solution: pretend nothing happened at all
    - Pretend that nothing happened... but how?
        - I express contempt by looking into the eyes of those who offend me and then I turn around
        - I turn away as if I had not heard

        - I give a wry smile and walk away
        - I look indifferently at those who offend me and continue doing what I was doing before

    - Role play

6) Evaluation:

- Debate
- Collection of self-observations

Objectives:

- to learn to solve problems in group

- to promote prosocial behaviour

- to improve classroom climate and peer relations

- to help children to become ‘agents of change', leveraging their natural ability to help their peers

- to improve learning and school performance

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