New guidance report published: how to develop pupils’ metacognitive skills

The EEF has published its latest guidance report, designed to support teachers in changing their classroom practice to improve their pupils’ metacognitive skills – in short, their ability to plan, monitor and evaluate their own academic progress so they become better at learning and studying.

Evidence suggests the use of ‘metacognitive strategies’ – which get pupils to think about their own learning - can be worth the equivalent of an additional +7 months’ progress when used well. However, while the potential impact of these approaches is very high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, less is known about how to apply them effectively in the classroom.

Metacognition and self-regulated learning reviews the best available research to offer teachers and senior leaders practical advice on how to develop their pupils’ metacognitive skills and knowledge. The report has recommendations in seven areas and ‘myth busts’ common misconceptions teachers have about metacognition.

For example, some teachers think they need to teach metacognitive approaches in ‘learning to learn’ or ‘thinking skills’ sessions. But the report warns that metacognitive strategies should be taught in conjunction with specific subject content as pupils find it hard to transfer these generic tips to specific tasks.

This guidance report sits alongside the EEF’s other guidance reports – focused on literacy, maths, effective implementation and making best use of teaching assistants - providing the basis for an overall advance towards evidence-informed school improvement.