Model your own thinking to help pupils develop their metacognitive and cognitive skills

- Modelling by the teacher is a cornerstone of effective teaching; revealing the thought processes of an expert learner helps to develop pupils’ metacognitive skills.
- Teachers should verbalise their metacognitive thinking (‘What do I know about problems like this? What ways of solving them have I used before?’) as they approach and work through a task.
- Scaffolded tasks, like worked examples, allow pupils to develop their metacognitive and cognitive skills without placing too many demands on their mental resources.

Set an appropriate level of challenge to develop pupils’ self-regulation and metacognition

- Challenge is crucial to allow pupils to develop and progress their knowledge of tasks, strategies, and of themselves as learners.
- However, challenge needs to be at an appropriate level.
- Teachers should support pupils to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning.
- Teachers should explicitly support pupils to develop independent learning skills.
- Carefully designed guided practice, with support gradually withdrawn as the pupil becomes proficient, can allow pupils to develop skills and strategies before applying them in independent practice.
- Pupils will need timely, effective feedback and strategies to be able to judge accurately how effectively they are learning.
- Teachers should also support pupils’ motivation to undertake the learning tasks.

Promote and develop metacognitive talk in the classroom

- As well as explicit instruction and modelling, classroom dialogue can be used to develop metacognitive skills.
- Pupil-to-pupil and pupil-teacher talk can help to build knowledge and understanding of cognitive and metacognitive strategies.
- However, dialogue needs to be purposeful, with teachers guiding and supporting the conversation to ensure it is challenging and builds on prior subject knowledge.
- Teachers should explicitly support pupils to develop independent learning skills.
- Teachers should also support pupils’ motivation to undertake the learning tasks.

Explicitly teach pupils how to organise and effectively manage their learning independently

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Schools should support teachers to develop knowledge of these approaches and expect them to be applied appropriately

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- Develop teachers’ knowledge and understanding through high quality professional development and resources.
- Senior leaders should provide teachers with time and support to make sure approaches are implemented consistently.
- Teachers can use tools such as ‘traces’ and observation to assess pupils’ use of self-regulated learning skills.
- Metacognition shouldn’t be an ‘extra’ task for teachers to do but should be built into their teaching activities.