SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: THE SEVEN-STEP MODEL
Key Stage 3/4/5 lesson: Using flashcards for self-testing

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Practice testing, or self-testing, has been identified as an effective learning technique in research by Dunlovsky and is cited in recommendation six of the EEF Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning guidance report. Evidence suggests that pupils routinely engage in ineffective revision practices, and that they benefit from purposeful support and explicit teaching of specific strategies and self-regulation. This worked example shows how the seven-step model can be used to teach pupils how to self-test using flashcards.

Stage	Pupil/Teacher	Habits that support independence
1. Activating prior knowledge		• Ask pupils when they have used flashcards in the past. • When have they found them most useful? • Do they remember how much information they should write on them? • Will they look different in your subject to other subjects?
2. Explicit strategy instruction		• Provide step-by-step instructions about how to complete flashcards in your subject – explaining why this is the most effective way to create them and use them (subtle subject specific differences may be easily missed). • *e.g 'To use flashcards effectively, use both sides. If I want to remember a biology key term, I could write the word on the front and the definition on the reverse. This gives me a few seconds to think about the definition before I turn the card over. It's important to keep the definition brief to support the self-testing process.'*
3. Modelling of learned strategy		• Show an example of a completed flashcard, as well as one that isn't as effective (examples and non-examples) and explain why this is the case. • Share your thought processes with the pupils as you complete one live for them, verbalising how you are demonstrating perseverance, resilience and learning from mistakes you have made in the past. For instance, it may be when you have written too much onto a card or dropped a card from the set too early, as you were over-confident.
4. Memorisation of strategy		• Check to see if pupils have understood the instructions. • You could ask them to explain to their partner why one modelled flashcard is better than another and walk round the room to listen and check for accuracy.
5. Guided practice		• Start with some partially completed cards where pupils just need to fill in some missing words, then move on to providing a list of key words for a topic (you could ask the pupils to work in pairs to write the relevant descriptor for them). • Some pupils may need the key words for the subsequent topic, whereas others may be able to do this themselves without support.
6. Independent practice		• All pupils then complete flashcards for the next topic independently and then try self-testing using the cards.
7. Structured reflection		• Individually, or in small groups, support pupils to think about what went well and what they would do differently next time. • Pupils could look at each other's cards to think about different techniques (e.g. colour coding) and the possible benefits of this. • You may also encourage pupils to reflect on how motivated they were during their self-testing.

To find out more…

METACOGNITION AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING
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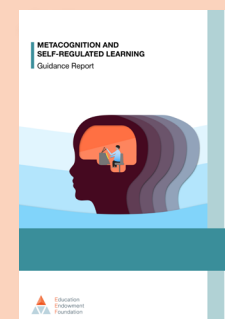
The EEF's guidance report Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning offers practical advice on how to develop pupils' metacognitive skills.