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Modelling
Teaching and Learning

Securing Attention

By securing full attention before you begin and using clear, concise language, you reduce cognitive overload and ensure pupils focus on the key learning. For example, you might pause, use an agreed signal, and say, "Watch carefully as I show you this step," so pupils know exactly what to concentrate on.

Verbalise Thinking

By asking pupils to explain their reasoning, you strengthen their understanding and uncover misconceptions. You might use sentence stems such as, "I know this because..." or ask pupils to explain their method to a partner before sharing with the class.

Visuals

By using visuals, manipulatives and clear demonstrations, you make abstract concepts tangible. For example, you might use base ten blocks to demonstrate regrouping or model annotating a text under a visualiser so pupils can see each step clearly before attempting it themselves.

I Do → We Do → You Do (Gradual Release of Responsibility)

By structuring learning through I Do, We Do, You Do, you gradually move pupils towards independence. You first demonstrate the skill, then practise it together, before pupils apply it independently. For example, you might model writing a persuasive sentence, co-construct one with the class, and then ask pupils to write their own.

Thinking Aloud

By verbalising your thinking, you make the invisible processes of expert learners visible. For instance, you might say, "I'm rereading the question to check I understand it fully," modelling how to monitor understanding and make decisions.

Scaffolding

Model the use of scaffolds and error correction
By demonstrating how to use scaffolds and how to improve work, you show pupils how to become independent learners. For instance, you might model using a checklist to edit a paragraph or deliberately correct an error in front of the class to show the improvement process.

Successful and Unsuccessful Examples

By showing both strong and flawed examples, you help pupils recognise quality and understand common mistakes. For example, you could compare two pieces of writing and guide pupils to identify which meets the success criteria and why.

SEND

By carefully adapting your modelling, you ensure that pupils with SEND can fully access and understand new learning. You might break the process into even smaller steps, provide pre-teaching of key vocabulary, use additional visuals or concrete resources, or repeat and rehearse key stages before moving on. Where appropriate, you can provide partially completed examples or sentence stems to reduce cognitive load. For further strategies tailored to individual pupils' needs, staff are encouraged to speak with the SENCO

Tools to support effective modelling...

Digital Tools

- **iPads / Tablets** – Interactive modelling, videos, apps; can mirror to a screen
- **Showbie** – Share lessons and model answers; pupils can annotate asynchronously.
- **Explain Everything** – Record step-by-step explanations for maths, writing, or science.
- **Maths Apps** – The Maths Learning Centre, Numberblocks, DoodleMaths; model maths digitally and with manipulatives.

Physical Tools

- **Mini-Whiteboards** – Pupils try examples immediately; useful for maths, spelling, and writing.
- **Manipulatives** – Numicon, Base-10 blocks, counters, tangrams, money sets for maths concepts.
- **Sentence / Word Strips** – Model writing and grammar; words can be rearranged.
- **Play-dough / Clay / Loose Parts** – 3D modelling in art, maths, and science.

Other Resources

- **Video Modelling** – Pre-record explanations for repeated review.
- **Anchor Charts / Visual Aids** – Displays of modelled strategies, e.g., story structure or maths methods.
- **Widgit Symbols** – Visual support for SEND; sentence building, instructions, timetables.
- **Timers / Visual Schedules** – Model routines or structured activities. routines or structured activities, especially for SEND pupils.

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Questioning
Teaching and Learning

Deep Thinking Through Hinge Questions
(e.g. "How do you know?")

Hinge questions are planned checks at key points in a lesson to decide whether pupils are ready to move on. Follow-up questions such as "How do you know?" or "Can you prove it?" push pupils beyond surface answers and promote reasoning and justification.

Effective hinge questions help you decide whether to move on, model again, reteach, or adapt the task.

Low-Stakes Quizzes

Low-stakes quizzing is regular retrieval practice used to check understanding without pressure. It strengthens memory, supports long-term retention and informs teaching.

These quizzes are short, focused, carry no formal consequences and are used diagnostically.

Used consistently, low-stakes quizzes help identify gaps early and revisit learning before misconceptions become embedded.

Plenaries to Inform Next Steps

Plenaries are purposeful opportunities to review learning and guide future teaching. Rather than simply summarising, effective plenaries help you decide what needs to happen next.

They may include exit tickets, self-assessment against success criteria, mini quizzes, partner explanations or correcting a deliberate mistake.

Used diagnostically, plenaries ensure that next steps are based on evidence rather than assumption.

Varied Response Strategies
(Whiteboards, partners, cold calling)

Use varied response strategies to ensure all pupils are thinking and participating.

- **Whiteboards** allow you to see every pupil's response instantly and address misconceptions immediately.
- **Partner talk** gives pupils time to rehearse ideas and strengthens vocabulary and confidence.
- **Cold calling** ensures equitable participation and maintains high expectations for all.

These strategies create accountability and provide real-time assessment information.

Continuous Assessment and Adaptive Teaching

Continuous assessment involves gathering information about pupils' understanding throughout the lesson and responding in real time. Adaptive teaching is how you act on that information — by modelling again, providing scaffolds, increasing challenge, regrouping pupils or adjusting pace as needed.

This approach ensures learning remains responsive and inclusive rather than fixed or predetermined.

Structured Questioning:
Pose - Pause - Pounce - Bounce
Pose a clear question to all pupils.
Pause to provide thinking time.
Pounce by selecting a pupil to respond.
Bounce the answer to another pupil to extend or challenge thinking.
This approach increases engagement, improves the quality of responses, and promotes deeper discussion.

Questioning for Children with SEND

Questioning should be adapted so pupils with SEND can fully participate and show understanding. This may include pre-teaching vocabulary, using visuals, breaking questions into smaller steps, allowing extra thinking time, or providing sentence stems.

Targeted questioning builds confidence while maintaining high expectations. Staff should seek guidance from the SENDCo to tailor strategies to individual needs.

Tools to support effective questioning...

Here are a range of simple tools you can use to make questioning more inclusive, engaging, and effective in the classroom.

Mini whiteboards & pens – pupils write answers and show them instantly.

Thumbs up/down or hand signals – quick check of understanding.

Think-pair-share – pupils discuss answers with a partner before sharing.

Question cards – pupils select or write questions to ask peers.

Visual prompts – images, diagrams, or objects to support comprehension.

Sentence stems – structured prompts to help pupils frame answers.

Cold calling sticks / popsicle sticks – randomly select pupils to answer.

Exit tickets – short written responses at the end of the lesson, which can also be collected via Apple Schoolwork.

Digital tools – apps like Showbie or Microsoft Forms for interactive questioning; Apple Classroom screen share can be used to display everyone's responses to the class.

These tools make questioning inclusive, engaging, and provide clear assessment information in real time.

Explanation

Teaching and Learning

Connect and contextualise learning

Link new learning to pupils' prior knowledge and real-life experiences to make lessons meaningful and easier to understand. When children see how learning connects to the world around them, they are more engaged and able to make links between concepts. Recapping previous learning also strengthens memory and supports retention.

For example:

- Start a maths lesson on measurement by asking, "How might we measure ingredients when baking at home?"
- Begin a science lesson with a quick recap question: "What do we already know about plants?"

Break learning into manageable steps

Present information in small, sequenced steps to avoid overloading pupils' working memory. Emphasise key vocabulary and use minimal slides to keep focus on what matters. This approach helps all pupils, particularly those with SEND or EAL, to process and retain new knowledge.

For example:

- Teach addition by first showing tens and ones visually, then moving to written sums.
- Highlight key words on the board, such as evaporation or multiply, to support understanding.

Make concepts tangible and engaging

Use visual, practical, or active methods to make abstract ideas easier to grasp. Engaging multiple senses supports understanding and keeps lessons interesting for all learners.

For example:

- Use counters or Numicon to model addition and subtraction.
- Show a short video or act out a historical event to bring the concept to life.

Encourage pupil articulation

Provide regular opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and express viewpoints. This develops language skills, reasoning, and confidence, while encouraging deeper understanding.

For Example:

- Ask pupils to explain how they solved a maths problem to a partner.
- Structure a discussion about a story character's choices using sentence stems like, "I think... because..."

Supporting pupils with SEND

For children with SEND, lessons may need additional scaffolds to ensure full participation and understanding. Strategies include pre-teaching key vocabulary, using visual prompts, breaking tasks into smaller steps, providing sentence starters, and allowing extra thinking time. Targeted support helps these pupils access the lesson, engage confidently, and achieve success alongside their peers.

Tools to support effective explanation...

Visual and practical aids

- **Objects and manipulatives:** Counters, Numicon, cubes, or real-life objects help make abstract concepts tangible.
- **Diagrams and charts:** Simple labelled diagrams, story maps, or flowcharts support understanding.
- **Acting out or role play:** Pupils can physically act out events, processes, or concepts to reinforce learning.

Structured talk and language support

- **Sentence stems and prompts:** Help pupils articulate answers clearly, e.g., "I think... because..."
- **Voice 21 strategies:** Use structured talk, discussion frames, and talk partners to develop reasoning and communication skills.
- **Key vocabulary reminders:** Visual word mats, flashcards, or posters to reinforce essential terms.

Digital tools

- **Widgit Online:** Create symbols, visual supports, and visual timetables to support comprehension.
- **Showbie:** Collect and share pupil responses, annotate work, or provide instant feedback.
- **Microsoft Forms:** Quick quizzes or surveys to check understanding.

These tools and strategies make explanations accessible, interactive, and engaging, helping all pupils—especially those with SEND or EAL—grasp new concepts confident

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Challenge
Teaching and Learning

High expectations for all

Maintaining ambitious goals for every pupil signals that you believe in their potential. High expectations motivate learners, set a positive classroom culture, and prevent lower aspirations from limiting achievement.

Example: In a Year 2 writing lesson, all pupils, including those with SEND, are expected to write a full sentence using a capital letter and full stop, with scaffolds available for support.

Provide healthy struggle (avoid panic zone)

Tasks should be challenging enough to require effort and thinking, but not so difficult that pupils become anxious or disengaged. This "productive struggle" develops problem-solving skills and perseverance.

Example: During a maths lesson on fractions, provide a problem slightly above current level, allowing pupils time to reason it out, with hints if they get stuck.

Encourage resilience & risk-taking

Encourage pupils to try new strategies, experiment, and learn from mistakes. This builds confidence, adaptability, and lifelong learning skills.

Example: In a writing lesson, pupils are encouraged to edit and improve their own work, experimenting with ambitious vocabulary, even if it means making errors initially.

Offer alternative routes to challenge (equity)

Different pupils may need different approaches to achieve the same learning goal. Offering varied methods allows all children to engage meaningfully and demonstrates that challenge isn't "one size fits all."

Example: In a maths lesson, some pupils solve problems with counters or drawings, while others use abstract numbers, all working toward the same outcome.

Challenge within the curriculum

Extend learning through more complex questions, deeper reasoning, or enrichment activities, while staying aligned to curriculum goals. This ensures that challenge is meaningful and relevant.

Example: In a science lesson on plants, ask, "How might different amounts of sunlight affect growth?" instead of just identifying parts of a plant.

Celebrate success to build confidence

Recognising effort, progress, and achievement reinforces motivation and encourages pupils to take on further challenges. Celebrations should focus on learning behaviours as well as outcomes.

Example: Highlight a pupil who persisted with a tricky puzzle, praising their strategy and perseverance, not just the correct answer.

Tailored next steps

Use assessment and observation to identify what each pupil needs to progress, then provide personalised challenges that stretch them appropriately without overwhelming them.

Example: After a guided reading session, provide comprehension questions at varying levels: some pupils analyse inference, while others focus on literal understanding, all linked to the same text.

SEND and Challenge

Pupils with SEND can be challenged effectively when tasks are carefully scaffolded and adapted to their needs. Challenge should remain ambitious but achievable, using visual supports, step-by-step instructions, manipulatives, or alternative methods to access the same learning goal. Encouraging resilience, allowing extra thinking time, and providing sentence stems or guided prompts helps pupils take risks and persevere without frustration. Tailoring next steps ensures that SEND pupils experience meaningful challenge alongside their peers, building confidence, independence, and a sense of accomplishment.

Tools to support effective challenge...

Differentiated resources

- Provide tiered worksheets, problem sets, or tasks that vary in difficulty to stretch all learners.
- Use manipulatives, diagrams, or visual supports for pupils who need concrete representations.

Open-ended questioning

- Ask questions with multiple possible answers to encourage higher-order thinking.
- Use "What if...?" or "Why do you think...?" questions to push reasoning.

Structured group and peer work

- Think-pair-share or small group discussions can encourage pupils to explain and extend their thinking.
- Peer challenges: pupils create problems or questions for classmates.

Scaffolding for risk-taking

- Sentence stems or writing frames help pupils attempt more ambitious responses.
- Step-by-step prompts allow pupils to work through challenging tasks without overload.

Digital tools for challenge

- Microsoft Forms – quizzes can include extension questions or adaptive branching to challenge pupils individually.
- Apple Classroom screen share – display pupil responses to model high-quality answers or inspire others.
- Widgit Online – create visual supports or problem-solving tasks for more complex ideas.

Feedback

Teaching and Learning

Identify who needs immediate feedback

Actively observe pupils during the lesson to spot those struggling, making errors, or showing partial understanding. Providing timely feedback ensures misconceptions are corrected before they become entrenched and keeps all pupils progressing. Strategies include circulating the classroom, using mini-whiteboards, quick questioning, or exit slips to check understanding in real time.

Create a safe environment for questions

Foster a classroom culture where pupils feel comfortable asking questions, sharing ideas, and making mistakes. This encourages participation, engagement, and risk-taking, which strengthens learning. You can achieve this by allowing sufficient think time, using talk partners, modelling how to ask questions, and explicitly celebrating mistakes as learning opportunities.

Conferencing, live marking, and verbal feedback

Offer personalised, immediate feedback through one-to-one conferencing, live marking, or verbal comments during lessons. This allows pupils to understand what they are doing well, identify areas for improvement, and apply suggestions immediately. For example, while pupils are completing a writing task, provide guidance on sentence structure, vocabulary, or spelling in real time.

Address misconceptions quickly

Correct misunderstandings as soon as they appear to prevent confusion and maintain lesson momentum. Use targeted questioning, modelling correct approaches, or mini-plenaries to clarify concepts. This ensures pupils are building on secure foundations and reduces the need for repeated reteaching later.

Self and peer assessment

Encourage pupils to reflect on their own work or assess a peer's work against clear success criteria. This promotes metacognition, critical thinking, and independence, while helping pupils internalise expectations. For example, after a maths problem, pupils can check their own answers against a model, or in writing, they can use a checklist to ensure punctuation and structure are correct.

Model improvements and record responses

Demonstrate how work can be improved and provide structured opportunities for pupils to act on feedback. Purple pen responses, corrected drafts, or extended answers reinforce learning and make progress visible. Modelling "before and after" examples of improved work helps pupils understand exactly how to apply feedback and achieve higher standards.

SEND and Feedback

For pupils with SEND, feedback should be clear, specific, and delivered in a way that is accessible and supportive. Breaking feedback into small, manageable steps helps avoid overload and ensures pupils understand exactly what to improve. Visual prompts, modelling, sentence stems, or live verbal feedback can make next steps explicit and achievable. Allowing additional processing time and checking for understanding ensures feedback is meaningful rather than overwhelming. When tailored carefully, feedback builds confidence, reinforces success, and supports sustained progress alongside peers.

Tools to support effective feedback...

Live marking & verbal feedback
Circulate during lessons to give immediate verbal feedback and correct misconceptions in real time. Use simple prompts such as "Check your capital letters" or "Can you explain your reasoning?"

Conferencing
Short, focused one-to-one discussions to review work, clarify misunderstandings, and set clear next steps.

Success criteria checklists
Provide checklists for pupils to self-assess or peer assess against clear expectations.

Editing time
Allocate dedicated improvement time where pupils respond to feedback, edit work, or extend answers so progress is visible.

Worked examples & model answers
Share modelled responses or "what a good one looks like" examples to clarify expectations and support improvement.

Showbie
Annotate pupil work, leave voice notes, and provide instant written feedback directly on submissions.

Apple Classroom
Use screen share to review pupil work live, celebrate strong examples, or address misconceptions collectively.

Apple Schoolwork
Assign tasks and exit tickets digitally, review responses quickly, and provide targeted feedback.

Widgit Online
Create visual feedback prompts or symbol-supported instructions for pupils who need additional accessibility.

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Practice

Teaching and Learning

Repeated, Varied and Spaced Practice

Repeated practice strengthens memory and builds automaticity, particularly in foundational skills such as phonics, spelling, number facts and handwriting. Varying the format of practice (oral rehearsal, written tasks, practical application, quizzes) ensures pupils can apply knowledge flexibly rather than recalling it in only one context. Spacing practice over time—rather than teaching a concept once and moving on—supports long-term retention. Regular retrieval tasks, short recap starters, and revisiting previous units prevent forgetting and help embed learning securely.

Interleaving and Linking Concepts

Interleaving involves mixing related concepts rather than practising one skill in isolation for an extended period. This strengthens pupils' ability to discriminate between strategies and apply the correct method independently. Linking tasks to core curriculum concepts ensures that practice remains purposeful and deepens understanding rather than focusing on surface features. For example, mixing addition, subtraction, and multiplication problems requires pupils to think carefully about which strategy to use, strengthening reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Modelling with Worked Examples and Concrete Materials

Worked examples clearly demonstrate the steps required to complete a task successfully. By explicitly showing the process—including thinking aloud—you reduce cognitive load and clarify expectations. Concrete materials such as manipulatives, diagrams, number lines, and visual representations make abstract ideas accessible, particularly in mathematics and science. This approach builds conceptual understanding before moving to abstract or independent practice, ensuring pupils are secure in both method and meaning.

Gradual Release for Fluency (I Do → We Do → You Do)

The gradual release model supports pupils in developing confidence and fluency. First, explicitly model the skill or concept (I Do), demonstrating both the process and reasoning. Next, practise together with guided support (We Do), allowing pupils to apply learning with scaffolding. Finally, pupils complete tasks independently (You Do), consolidating understanding and building independence. This structured progression ensures pupils are not asked to work independently before they are ready.

Explicit Strategy Instruction (e.g., SRSD in English)

Explicitly teaching strategies—such as Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) in writing—helps pupils understand not just what to do, but how and why. Strategy instruction supports planning, organisation, self-monitoring, and evaluation. In English, this might include structured approaches to planning a paragraph, organising ideas, or editing work systematically. Teaching strategies explicitly promotes independence, metacognition, and improved outcomes in extended tasks.

Targeted Fluency and Foundation Practice

Strong foundational skills underpin success across the curriculum. Dedicated practice in phonics, handwriting, arithmetic fluency, and spelling ensures pupils can access more complex learning without being hindered by gaps in basic skills. Pre-teaching vocabulary prepares pupils for upcoming lessons, while Fluency Bee sessions, project books, and targeted booster groups provide structured repetition and consolidation. Securing these core skills improves confidence, independence, and overall attainment.

SEND and Practice

For pupils with SEND, practice should be structured, scaffolded, and carefully paced. Repetition, pre-teaching of vocabulary, visual supports, and concrete resources help secure understanding and build fluency. Short, focused sessions with regular review ensure learning is embedded while maintaining confidence and motivation.

Tools to support effective practice...

Classroom Retrieval and Fluency Tools
Mini whiteboards, Flashback or Do Now activities, and project books help pupils regularly revisit prior learning. Worked examples and manipulatives such as Numicon or base ten support repeated practice, building accuracy and automaticity over time.

Oracy and Articulation
Structured talk routines, such as Voice 21 strategies, sentence stems, discussion frames, and talk partners allow pupils to rehearse thinking aloud and deepen understanding through verbal practice. Regular opportunities to explain reasoning, debate ideas, and build on others' responses strengthen vocabulary, confidence, and critical thinking across the curriculum.

Writing for Pleasure and Craft Development
Writing toolkits, modelled and shared writing, editing stations, and dedicated improvement time provide opportunities for pupils to practise structure, vocabulary, and authorial choices. Encouraging choice, creativity, and reflection supports sustained engagement and helps pupils develop both fluency and enjoyment in writing.

Digital Tools for Practice and Feedback
Digital platforms enhance repeated, adaptive practice. Showbie enables teachers to share worked examples and provide voice-note modelling. DoodleLearning provides personalised practice to reinforce fluency. Apple Classroom and Apple Schoolwork allow tasks to be set, monitored, and reviewed efficiently.

These tools ensure practice is purposeful, varied, and responsive, strengthening retention, fluency, and confidence for all pupils.

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Cognitive Load

Teaching and Learning

What is Cognitive Load?

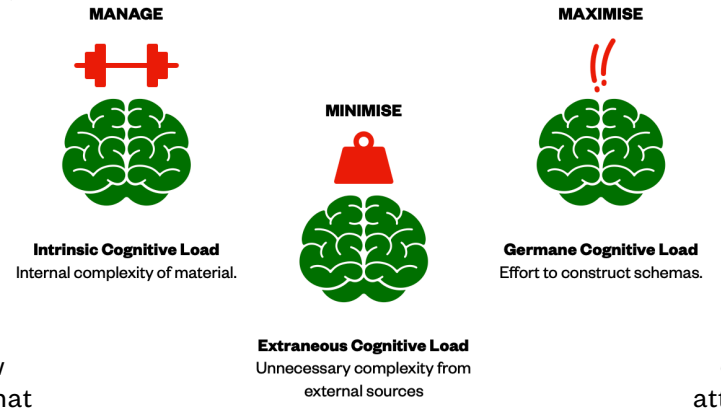
Cognitive load refers to the amount of mental effort being used in working memory at one time. Working memory is where information is actively processed, but it has a limited capacity and can easily become overloaded. Learning only happens when pupils attend to information and successfully process it, leading to a lasting change in understanding or capability. If too much information is presented at once, pupils may struggle to retain it, and learning is lost.

What Causes Cognitive Overload?

Pupils experience cognitive overload when working memory becomes overwhelmed. This can happen through distractions, trying to hold too much information at once, or completing demanding tasks without secure prior knowledge. When overloaded, pupils may forget instructions, miss parts of tasks, make mistakes, become frustrated, or give up completely. Once information is lost from working memory, it often needs to be reintroduced, making learning less efficient and increasing pupil stress.

Working Memory and Long-Term Memory

Memory can be understood as two connected parts: working memory and long-term memory. Working memory is the temporary 'mental workspace' where pupils hold and process new information, while long-term memory is the store of knowledge built over time. Learning happens when new information connects to what pupils already know and becomes organised into 'mental models' or schema. Strong prior knowledge helps pupils manage new learning more successfully because it reduces pressure on working memory.



Cognitive Load and SEND

Cognitive load is particularly important for pupils with SEND, as working memory may be more limited or become exhausted more quickly. Pupils with autism, speech and language difficulties, ADHD, sensory needs, or processing difficulties may use significant mental effort simply managing communication, sensory input, or attention before learning even begins. Tasks that appear simple, such as following multi-step instructions, can therefore feel highly demanding. Reducing cognitive load through adaptive teaching improves access, independence, and engagement.

The Three Types of Cognitive Load

Cognitive Load Theory explains that there are three types of load: **intrinsic, extraneous, and germane.** Intrinsic load relates to the difficulty of the task itself and how much prior knowledge a pupil has. Extraneous load is caused by distractions or poor lesson design, such as cluttered slides, unclear instructions, or too much teacher talk. Germane load is the useful thinking pupils do to make sense of learning and build stronger mental models. Effective teaching aims to reduce extraneous load and support productive thinking.

Why It Matters for Teachers

Understanding cognitive load helps teachers make better decisions about planning, teaching, and assessment. Breaking learning into smaller steps, using clear routines, modelling tasks, revisiting prior knowledge, and reducing unnecessary distractions all help pupils focus on what matters most. Managing cognitive load is not about making learning easier—it is about making thinking more effective. When lessons are carefully structured, pupils are more likely to understand, remember, and apply new learning successfully.

Tools to support effective practice...

Visual Timetables and Now/Next Boards
Using visual timetables helps pupils understand the structure of the day and reduces the mental effort needed to remember routines or anticipate what is coming next.

Worked Examples and Modelling
Showing pupils exactly what success looks like reduces uncertainty and prevents overload. Live modelling, completed examples, and step-by-step demonstrations help pupils focus on learning rather than guessing what to do.

Chunked Instructions
Giving one instruction at a time instead of several at once helps protect working memory. Short, clear language and asking pupils to repeat instructions back can improve understanding.

Retrieval Practice Tools
Low-stakes quizzes, mini whiteboards, flashcards, and quick recap starters help strengthen long-term memory. Digital tools such as Showbie Quizzes make retrieval simple and engaging.

Speech-to-Text and Accessibility Tools
Tools such as Microsoft Immersive Reader and speech-to-text functions reduce barriers for pupils with reading, writing, or processing difficulties.

Checklists and Success Criteria
Simple checklists and visual success criteria reduce the need for pupils to remember multiple expectations at once, increasing independence and confidence.

Consistent Classroom Routines
Predictable routines for tasks, transitions, and equipment reduce unnecessary decision-making and help pupils focus their attention on learning.