



Assessing the knowledge gap for progress

While learning remotely, some of your learners will have made more progress than others. As they return to school it is important for you to take the opportunity to assess and consolidate their learning.

While school was closed, your learners will have absorbed knowledge in different ways and will need to revise some areas. Although you may have asked your learners to submit work online, it may have been challenging to deliver feedback online. These suggestions are aimed at helping you understand and address any gaps in your learners' knowledge.

- Both teachers and learners need to assess gaps in knowledge. Learners should be able to reflect and identify where they need to revise their learning.
- Provide opportunities for learners to look back at their work by asking them to make a list of the topics and concepts they have already learnt. Then ask them to identify areas they feel confident about.
- You could also ask learners to reflect on their work and identify a piece that they feel particularly proud of. This will help to build their confidence in their own ability and knowledge.
- Remember that learners must be able to *apply* their knowledge. Quizzes with short-answer questions are a good first step but remember to allow time for learners to apply this knowledge. Make quizzes that develop in difficulty or allow learners to practise a range of skills as the answers will be useful for you to plan your next steps.
- Use self-assessment techniques with your learners to understand gaps in their knowledge, while also reminding them what they *do* know.
- Your learners may be concerned that they have missed out on learning so ask them to create a 'Things I know' checklist or self-assessment. Scaffold this by asking them to rank their confidence on a list of topics, or create a class mind-map of all the concepts or topics that you have learnt together.
- Remind your learners that revision is a process that can help improve memory. When teaching a new topic, it can be helpful to return to concepts, topics or skills that you have taught before and include them as starters, plenaries or as part of homework. This helps learners to recall and revisit content.
- Revision allows learners to make connections *between* topics and can encourage higher-order thinking skills. Remind learners of concepts that they have described,



analysed or calculated before, and get them to explain the differences. Frame a new topic by asking a range of questions about it to show the application of skills.

Research skills

As you transition back to the classroom, you may like to prepare your learners by giving them the opportunity for 'flipped learning' where they find the content that forms the basis of the lesson. Not only is this a good opportunity for learners to develop their research skills, but it can also promote resilience.

When learners have varying levels of confidence and knowledge it is important that they can reflect on any areas where they need to develop and build independent learning strategies.

- To help learners research a topic, model how they can approach finding out key information. Direct them to specific websites, chapters and sources. Encourage independence by providing a checklist that they can use to verify their sources.

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- Structure a research task to help learners approach it. Show them a topic or question and then guide them through how you would find ideas, quotes, extra research and resources to use.
- Allow learners to formulate their own questions. This helps them to identify and direct their research to areas they need to develop. For example, a learner may understand the content of something but have a question about how to analyse it.
- One way for learners to assess gaps in their research is to encourage them to be reflective about topics or concepts that they feel confident about.
- Take time to celebrate when learners have tried hard or performed well in a task. This will help to boost confidence and encourage learners to be proud of their research. Make this even more effective by asking them to share what made them successful in that piece of research with the class. This fosters metacognition and a collaborative classroom.
- Ask learners to share the most effective ways they have learnt content or skills and why these worked. Encourage them to write a reflective journal on their successes and challenges, which could form the basis of their revision. Or ask them to write a letter to their future selves in which they identify what strategies work for them and how they intend to use these.
- Formative assessments are a valuable way for learners to practise skills that they feel they would like to work on. Be flexible in the design and provide a range of ways that learners can submit their responses rather than prescribing a 'one size fits all' approach.
- Learners have had more opportunities to engage with learning technologies and e-learning. Encourage your learners to discuss the most useful strategies, and allow learners to use them both in and out of the classroom in independent work or homework.
- Allow learners to teach each other, to foster peer collaboration and to solidify their own learning. Invite them to share techniques and strategies that they would recommend to their peers and give them time to practise these independently.

Learning to learn

One of the challenges of returning to the classroom is that the routine of school is different from the one that learners had at home. Allow learners to reflect on topics, strategies and ways of working that they enjoyed before or that they found beneficial while working remotely.

