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Activate

FACILITATOR GUIDE



A professional learning resource to help teachers and leaders promote self-regulated learning

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Published by Crown House Publishing Ltd
Crown Buildings, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 5ND, UK
www.crownhouse.co.uk

and

Crown House Publishing LLC
PO Box 2223, Williston, VT 05495, USA
www.crownhousepublishing.com

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Printed in the UK by
Charlesworth Press, Wakefield, West Yorkshire

Why Activate?

It's widely recognised that self-regulated learners are more effective learners. For example, in England, the Education Endowment Foundation suggests that 'metacognition and self-regulation' are among the most impactful things a school can focus on, providing 'very high impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence' (Education Endowment Foundation, n.d.). However, teachers and leaders are often unsure precisely what 'metacognition and self-regulation' means – or what these ideas look like in practice.

Clearly, if it's possible for teachers to 'activate' children and young people to become the drivers of their own learning, then there's a strong case for doing so. This resource has been designed to enable time-pressed teachers, leaders and support staff to understand the theory and practice of self-regulated learning in an accessible way. Working your way through the activities in this professional learning resource will increase your ability to realise the potential of these powerful ideas to improve outcomes for children and young people while enhancing the development of your own self-regulated learning.

What is Activate?

Activate is a card-based professional learning resource which supports teachers, leaders and support staff to promote self-regulated learning. The resource has been developed by specialists at the UCL Centre for Educational Leadership, in conjunction with colleagues from the global schools group, Cognita. Drawing on research into self-regulated learning, professional learning and leadership, **Activate** helps schools to explore the following questions:

- What do the terms metacognition, self-regulation and self-regulated learning mean – and what do they look like in practice for teachers, leaders and pupils?
- How can teachers develop their teaching practice so that pupils become more effective, proactive, self-regulated learners?
- How can leaders support teachers to try out new approaches in collaboration with others?
- How can teachers and leaders evaluate the impact of changed practice on pupil learning?
- How can teachers and leaders develop their own self-regulated learning?
- How can teachers and leaders refine their practice and embed professional learning so that it is shared and sustained over time?

In this guide, we begin by exploring what we mean by self-regulated learning and its relationship with metacognition and self-regulation. Next, we introduce you to the **Activate** resource and the professional learning process that underpins it, and explain how you can use **Activate** to promote self-regulated learning among teachers, leaders and pupils in your school(s). In the Annexes, we include an extended explanation of the conceptual framework that underpins **Activate**, some examples of particular techniques

for developing aspects of self-regulated learning, and further details about our approach to professional learning and learning conversations. We also include references and a bibliography of key articles and texts in the field.

Self-regulated learning

Activate is designed to help teachers, leaders and pupils become more confident, proactive, self-regulated learners. In order to understand self-regulated learning, we need a clear understanding of two key concepts: metacognition and self-regulation. We define these terms as follows:

Metacognition: Monitoring and controlling your thought processes.

Self-regulation: Monitoring and controlling your feelings and behaviours.

We can see that these ideas mirror one another in that they both involve monitoring and controlling. We define monitoring and controlling as follows:

Monitoring: Paying attention to your thoughts, feelings and/or behaviours. This can involve noticing, observing or tracking over time. Through developing self-awareness, you learn how to control your thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

Controlling: Managing your own learning – for example, by setting goals, managing distractions or trying new strategies. Learning to control your thoughts, feelings and behaviours is essential to becoming a more confident, self-regulated learner.

The difference between metacognition and self-regulation is that metacognition is about monitoring and controlling your internal thought processes, whereas self-regulation is about monitoring and controlling how you interact with the external world through your feelings (physical or emotional) and behaviours.

Because they are related to thoughts, feelings and behaviours, it is clear that metacognition and self-regulation are broad concepts that extend beyond learning. To apply these powerful ideas to education, we use the concept of self-regulated learning. We define this as follows:

Self-regulated learning: Applying metacognition and self-regulation to your learning.

Figure 1 shows how these ideas relate to one another.

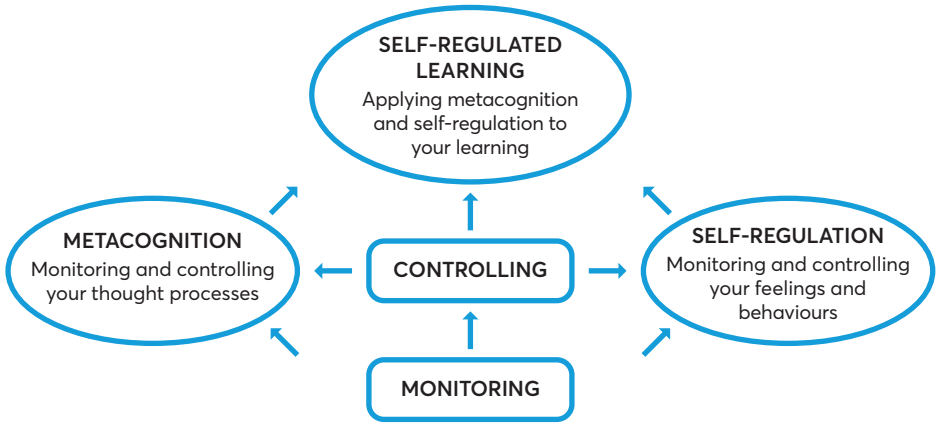


Figure 1. Metacognition, self-regulation and self-regulated learning

Here, we can see that the process of self-regulated learning begins with *monitoring* your thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Through doing this, an individual can gain an increasing awareness of how they respond to certain situations – and of the choices they can make in *controlling* how they respond to those situations in the future.

As with all models, the scheme outlined in Figure 1 is a simplified version of reality. Additional factors influence the extent to which a pupil is willing or able to regulate their own learning. In **Activate**, we suggest that there are five enabling factors that help pupils to become more confident, proactive, self-regulated learners. These are:

- Knowledge:** This can include knowledge of tasks, strategies, self and others, as well as knowledge of subjects. Connected knowledge leads to deep understanding.
- Self-efficacy:** Believing that you can be successful when carrying out a specific task, studying a particular topic, or developing the habits and skills of self-regulated learning.
- Motivation:** Being enthusiastic about doing something. Motivation can be intrinsic (coming from within you) or extrinsic (inspired by external rewards or consequences). Self-regulated learners are skilled at motivating themselves to learn.
- Oracy:** Speaking and listening effectively in a range of contexts. This includes having productive dialogue in pairs and small groups, as well as being confident and articulate in different situations.
- Agency:** Taking ownership over your own learning. It is linked to ideas of autonomy, independence and choice. By definition, self-regulated learning requires a degree of learner agency.

Pulling together these ideas, you can see a visual representation of the **Activate** conceptual framework in Figure 2.

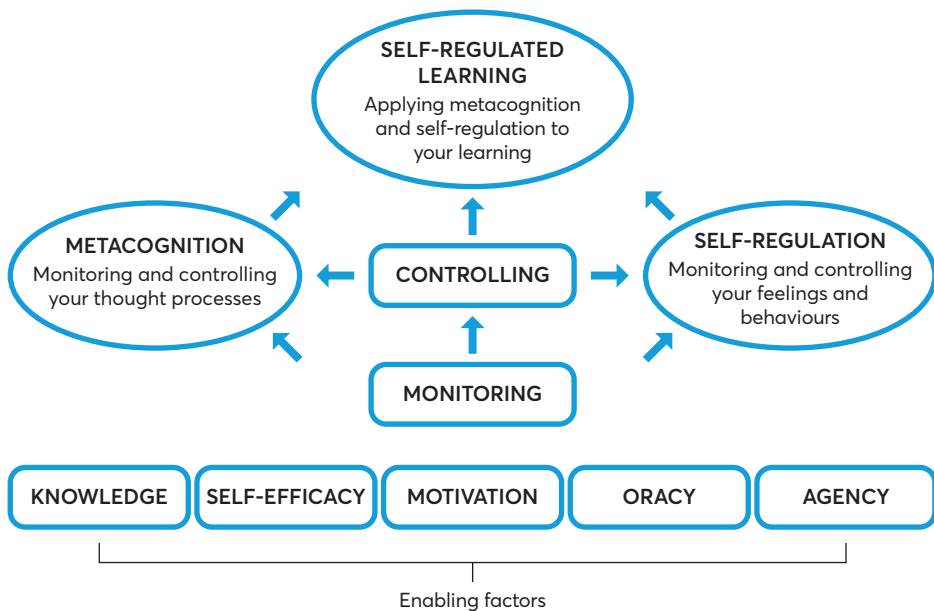


Figure 2. The **Activate** conceptual framework

The **Activate** resource is designed to help young people become more effective, self-regulated learners through learning how to monitor and control their thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

In addition, **Activate** is intended to help young people develop the five 'enabling factors' that underpin self-regulated learning. In particular, learning about the theory and practice of self-regulated learning enables and encourages young people to:

- Deepen their understanding of subjects, self-regulated learning and themselves (knowledge).
- Believe that they can become more confident, proactive, self-regulated learners (self-efficacy).
- Become more energised and enthusiastic about leading their own learning (motivation).
- Communicate their thoughts, feelings and behaviours with their teachers and peers (oracy).
- Make meaningful choices about what they learn, when and how (agency).

In Annex 1, you will find a more detailed explanation of the conceptual framework that underpins **Activate**.

How **Activate** helps pupils regulate their thoughts, feelings and behaviours

When using **Activate**, a pupil might notice that they tend to engage in negative self-talk about maths – that they will 'never be any good' at it, or that they 'hate' it (feelings). They might notice a tendency to catastrophise about what might happen if they raise their hand to answer a question – that 'I'll probably get it wrong' or that 'everyone will laugh at me' (thoughts). As a consequence, that pupil never raises their hand in maths lessons, and averts their eyes whenever the teacher asks a question (behaviours).

Through noticing patterns about their thoughts, feelings and behaviours, the pupil can start to change how they relate to maths as a subject. For example, they might undertake a 'reframing' activity, in which they 'flip the script' and start to tell themselves a different story – that they will be good at maths one day, as long as they are prepared to take risks and learn from their mistakes.

Through this process, the pupil will be able to make different decisions about how they behave in maths lessons in the future. If they notice that they are engaging in negative self-talk again, they can 'flip the script' and remind themselves that a different story might actually be true. They might start to answer questions in maths lessons. If they get something wrong, they might find that it isn't so bad – nobody laughed at them, and they learnt from the experience. And if they receive positive feedback, this will provide evidence that the different story they told themselves is coming true. This in turn will further influence their thoughts, feelings and behaviours about maths in the future.

Promoting self-regulated learning through **Activate**

The **Activate** theory of change

The design of **Activate** is underpinned by a theory of change. A theory of change is a diagram showing your theory – or story – of how you plan to bring about change: an explanation of why certain things happen (see, for example, Taplin and Clark, 2012; Harries et al., 2014). The diagram maps the final intended impact you want to have – your ultimate outcome. It also sets out what changes are necessary for this impact to come about – your intermediate outcomes, as well as the actions you are taking to promote these outcomes. The **Activate** theory of change (see Figure 3) emphasises the importance of focusing professional learning on both teachers and leaders in bringing about successful schoolwide change related to self-regulated learning.

Looking at it sequentially, working left to right, the **Activate** theory of change is as follows: using **Professional Learning** and **Leadership Learning** cards, teachers and leaders will develop research understanding and learning processes that will change their beliefs, knowledge and understanding, and behaviours (sometimes described as intermediate outcomes). This in turn will enable pupils to become more confident, proactive, self-regulated learners. An extended description is available as a downloadable resource.

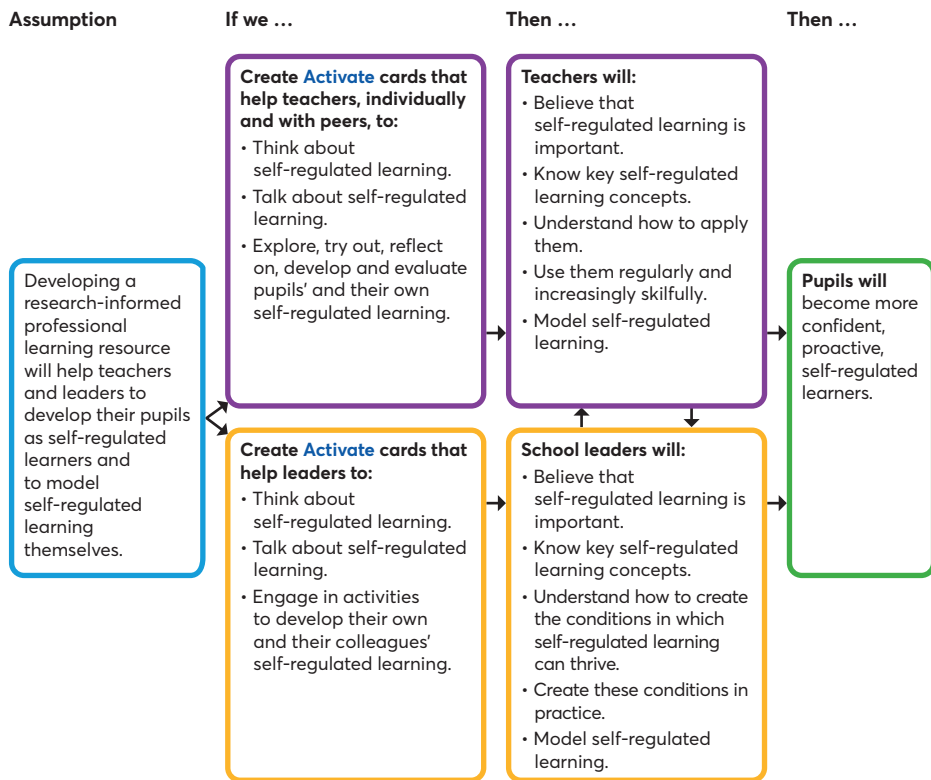


Figure 3. The **Activate** theory of change

The Activate cards

There are six sets of cards connected to different aspects of the **Activate** theory of change. These are grouped into two sets of three cards.

Self-regulated learning cards (smaller)



- **Key Concept** – these turquoise cards define the key concepts involved in self-regulated learning, as outlined in the conceptual framework (Figure 2 on page 6). There are five *overarching concepts* – metacognition, self-regulation, self-regulated learning, monitoring and controlling – and five *enabling factors* – knowledge, self-efficacy, motivation, oracy and agency.
- **Pupil Action** – these green cards exemplify the characteristics of self-regulated learners and are framed using the types of questions that they will ultimately ask themselves.
- **Teacher Action** – these purple cards suggest a number of tried and tested techniques and strategies that teachers can use to promote self-regulated learning. Some of these cards also refer to fuller descriptions found in the downloadable resources.

Professional learning and leadership learning cards (larger)



- **Professional Learning** – these purple cards contain activities using the small **Key Concept**, **Pupil Action** and **Teacher Action** cards to help teachers learn how to promote and model self-regulated learning.
- **Leadership Learning** – these gold cards contain activities using the **Key Concept**, **Pupil Action** and **Teacher Action** cards to help leaders learn how to develop the conditions

that promote self-regulated learning and how to model self-regulated learning themselves.

- **Teacher Scenario** and **Leadership Scenario** – these cards provide examples of learning experiences that promote self-regulated learning, and outline some of the challenges faced by teachers and leaders in trying to develop self-regulated learning.

The **Activate** professional learning cycle

In using **Activate**, you will follow a professional learning cycle, shown in Figure 4. Starting with familiarising yourself with the concepts underpinning self-regulated learning, this inquiry cycle draws on extensive research (by the authors and others – see Annex 2 and References and bibliography) into professional learning, the leadership of professional learning and the practice of teaching.

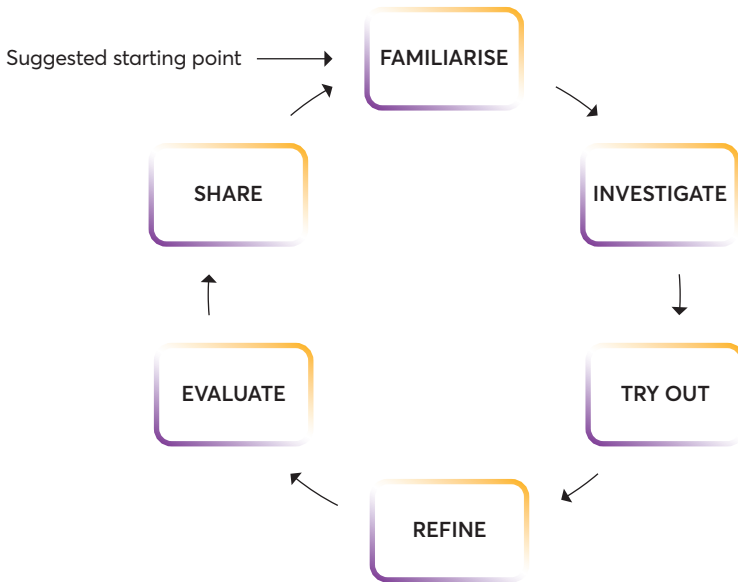


Figure 4. The **Activate** professional learning cycle

For each phase of the inquiry cycle there is one **Professional Learning** and one **Leadership Learning** card, except for **FAMILIARISE**, which has two **Professional Learning** cards and one **Leadership Learning** card. Each card contains several activities. These can be completed in any order, although we sometimes make suggestions to help sequence learning. The **Professional Learning** and **Leadership Learning** activities model the principles of self-regulated learning, enabling teachers and leaders to engage with the **Key Concept** cards and consider how to bring these to life using the ideas from the **Teacher Action**, **Pupil Action**, **Leadership Scenario** and **Teacher Scenario** cards.