

Creating active learners and apprentices

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LXPSkills
LXPTalent



Who am I?

Hollie Barnes-Lomax

- Lover of creating spaces and resources for **all** teachers and students/apprentices to collaborate, learn & thrive!
- Teaching and Learning Excellence Manager at FE college
- Teacher Training lecturer (L3 AET/L5 DiT/PGCE)
- Deputy Chair for SFEC Committee at English Association
- Education Quality and Standards board member for ETF

In this session we will ...

- Explain the importance of active learning in supporting learner and apprentice progress.
- Identify strategies that encourage participation, questioning and practice.
- Adapt teaching activities to increase learner and apprentice thinking and engagement.



Let's get started...



What does active learning look like in your sessions?

(This could be in a practical session, a theory lesson, or a 1:1 review)

Pop an answer in the chat

“All genuine learning is active not passive. It involves the mind, not just the memory. It is a project of discovery in which the student is the main agent, not the teacher”

–Adler (n.d.)

Importance of Active Learning

Why active learning works: the brain perspective

Attention matters

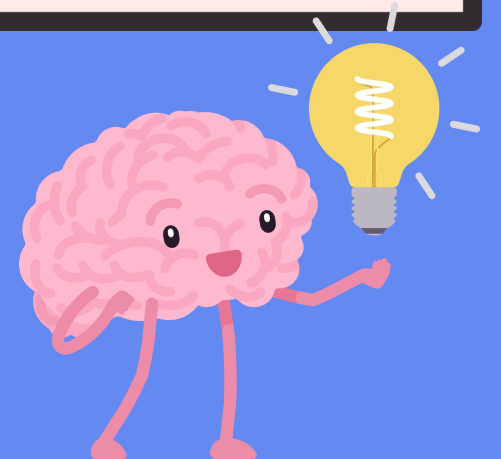
- We only learn what we focus on
- Active tasks keep learners engaged

Working memory is limited

- Too much input = overload
- → Active learning breaks content into manageable chunks

Memory strengthens through use

- Thinking, discussing, and practising helps information stick
- Passive listening leads to forgetting





Why is active learning important?

- Retention improves
- Deeper understanding
- Application to real work
- Increased motivation
- Builds independence



Passive Learning	Active Learning
Listening	Thinking
Receiving	Doing
Forgetting	Remembering

Over to you...



When does didactic teaching work well—and when might it limit learning?

Pop an answer in the chat.

Didactic teaching can have it's place

Positives

- Efficient for delivering key information
- Ensures consistency of context
- Supports novice learners/apprentices



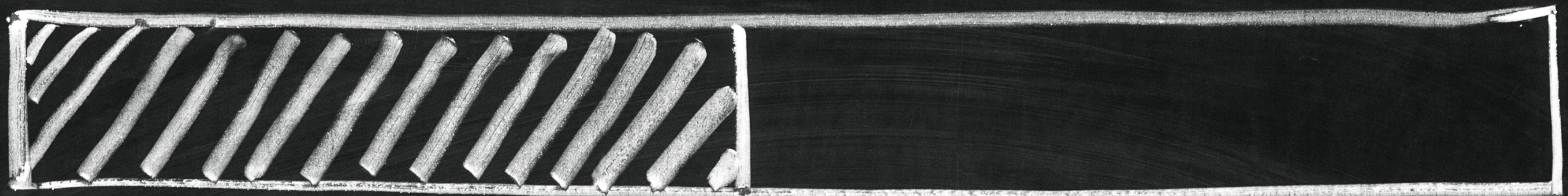
Limitations

- Learners/apprentices can become passive
- Understanding is not always checked
- Easy to overload working memory
- Learning is often forgotten quickly

PROGRESS...

- Makes progress visible in the moment
- Enables immediate feedback and adaptation
- Encourages learners to think for themselves
- Engaged learners make more progress
- Supports transfer of skills
- Promotes higher-level thinking
- Ensures appropriate challenge

“If learners aren’t actively involved, progress is limited”



**Strategies that encourage participation,
questioning and practice.**

Over to you...



Reflecting on your current practices and what you have just learnt, what active learning strategies do you currently use?

Pop an answer in the chat.

Strategies that encourage active learning

- Cold calling
- Think time
- Mini whiteboards / chat responses
- Question stems
- Retrieval quizzes
- Case studies
- Role play
- Demonstration + immediate practice





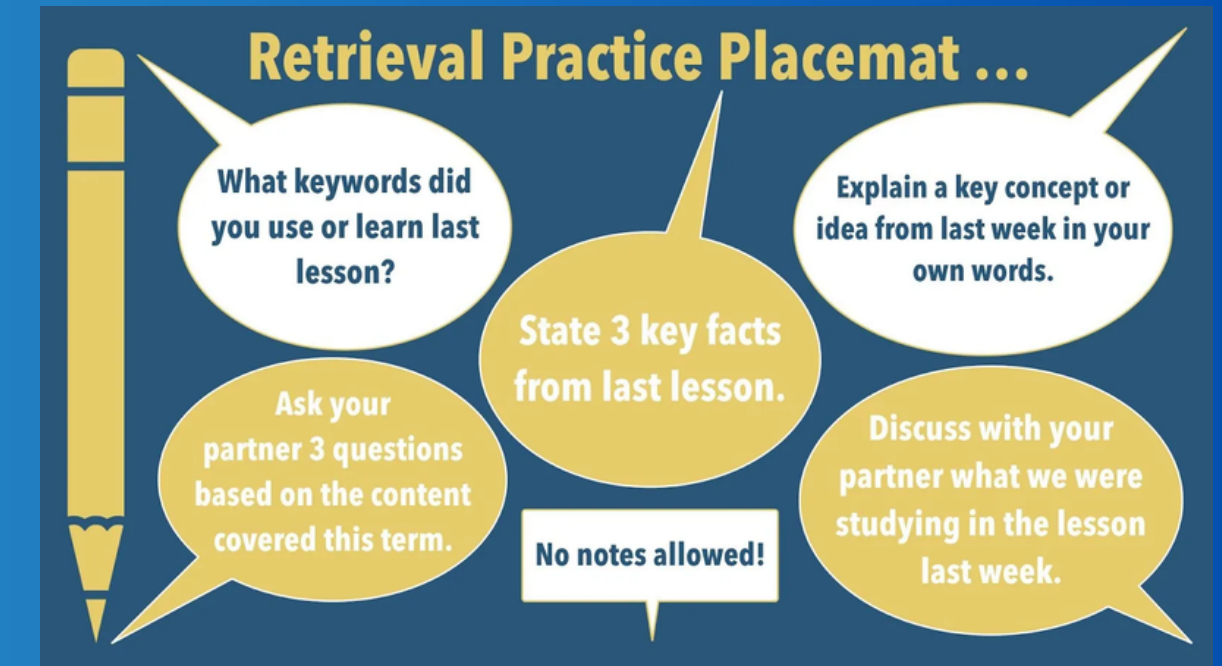
No-Opt Out

- Use chat responses or mini whiteboards
- Ask all learners to respond at the same time
- Use quick polls or show of hands



Using Retrieval Practice – Kate Jones

- Start with a recap of previous learning: Retrieval Mats
- Ask learners to recall key points (no notes)
- Use quick quizzes or questions e.g. Retrieval Grid
- Revisit and build on prior knowledge e.g. Retrieval Clock

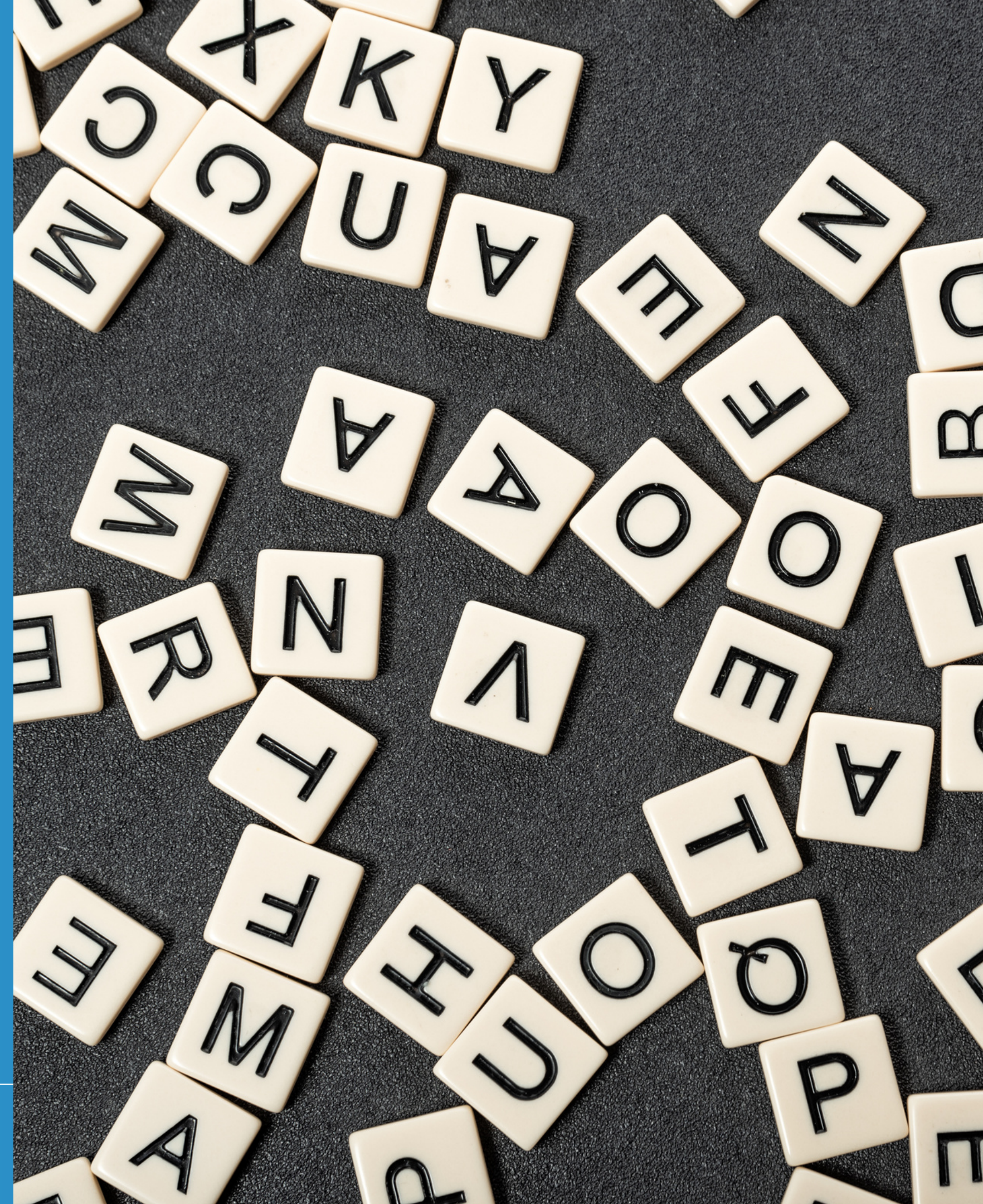


Retrieval Practice Challenge Grid			
Insert question from further back	Insert question based on content from last week	Insert question based on content from two weeks ago	
Insert question based on content from two weeks ago	Insert question from further back	Insert question based on content from last week	
Insert question based on content from last lesson	Insert question based on content from two weeks ago		Insert question from further back
Insert question from further back	Insert question based on content from last week	Insert question based on content from last lesson	
One Point - Last lesson	Two Points - Last week	Three Points - Two weeks ago	Four Points - Further back

Kinaesthetic Practices

Hands-on tasks and practical activities:

- Tarsia's
- Scrabble Tiles
- Role Play
- Move and Respond e.g. 4 corners.



Adapting

Over to you...



“Trainer teaches all the content first, then gives one task at the end.”

What changes would you suggest to ensure learners/apprentices are actively thinking?

Pop your ideas into the chat

Quick Wins

- Break input into short chunks (3–5 minutes)
- Ask questions throughout, not just at the end
- Build in thinking time before responses
- Use chat or quick responses to involve everyone
- Include short practice tasks after each section
- Check understanding regularly (recap/retrieval)
- Ask learners to explain ideas in their own words
- Use examples or scenarios to apply learning



Key Takeaways

- **Active learning is how the brain learns best:** Thinking, questioning and practice are what make learning stick.
- **Progress depends on what learners/apprentices do—not what teachers say:** The more learners engage and apply, the more they improve.
- **Learners/apprentices are more motivated when they are active:** Participation increases enjoyment, confidence and willingness to learn.



Pause and Reflect

What is your one key takeaway from today?

Pop an answer in the chat

**Thank you for your
time**

We'd value your feedback



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References and Further Reading

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