

PGCE **Activate Prior Knowledge**

This week’s Top 10 Evidence Based Teaching Method, Marzano et al (2001) is the use of strategies to **Activate Prior Knowledge.**

Cues and questions can be used to activate prior knowledge by helping learners make connections between the known and the unknown. Teachers need to understand the importance of activating prior knowledge as it:

* Sets the stage for learning by finding out what students already know
* Then connect new ideas to students’ existing knowledge base
* Creates a framework that helps learners focus on what they are about to learn.

Using cues and questions

* Ask questions as you introduce new content will not only tell you what students already know but also whether they have misunderstandings.
* Ask questions and give hints/prompt learners’ replies using cues that can effectively guide learners’ learning.
* Ask “higher level” questions with wait time to produce deeper learning as well as conversation among learners.
* Ask questions that focus on the important points that help to guide learners towards the big picture.

Use cues and questions to **activate prior knowledge** and deepen student understanding.