



Salford Priors CofE Academy

Pedagogy at Salford Priors CofE Academy

Document Date: September 2025

Together, pursuing life in all its fullness



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ROOTED in love and faith
GROWING in hope and courage
THRIVING in light and harmony

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Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract

Jerome Bruner's **Concrete–Pictorial–Abstract (CPA) approach** is an instructional framework that helps learners build deep, lasting understanding across the curriculum. The model is based on the idea that pupils learn best when they move gradually from hands-on, practical experiences (**concrete**) to visual or representational forms (**pictorial**) and finally to more symbolic or abstract thinking (**abstract**). This gradual progression reduces cognitive overload, supports conceptual understanding, and allows learners to make secure connections between ideas.

The CPA approach is valuable across all subjects. In literacy, children might first act out a story with puppets (concrete), then sequence pictures (pictorial), and finally retell or write the story in words (abstract). In science, pupils can handle real objects during an investigation, represent findings with diagrams or charts, and then use scientific vocabulary or formulas. By moving through these stages, teachers ensure that learners of all abilities, including those with additional learning needs, can access new concepts at their own pace.

Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction

Rosenshine's *Principles of Instruction* offer a clear, research-informed framework for effective teaching that strengthens understanding, retention, and progress for all pupils. The principles emphasise explicit teaching, modelling, and the introduction of new learning in small, manageable steps to reduce cognitive overload. Regular review and retrieval practice help pupils connect prior knowledge to new content, reinforcing memory and supporting long-term mastery. Teachers provide guided practice with high levels of scaffolding and questioning, gradually releasing responsibility as pupils gain confidence and independence.

Central to Rosenshine's approach is the consistent checking for understanding and responsive adjustment of instruction. Through effective questioning, feedback, and revisiting misconceptions, teachers ensure that all learners are secure before moving forward. This structured yet flexible approach aligns closely with the Concrete–Pictorial–Abstract (CPA) model. For example, by beginning with concrete experiences, teachers reduce cognitive overload and build on what pupils already know; through pictorial representations, they



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provide scaffolding and multiple examples; and at the abstract stage, they encourage independent practice and retrieval of knowledge.

Adaptive Teaching

Adaptive teaching is a responsive and flexible approach that ensures every pupil can access learning effectively, regardless of their starting point. It is grounded in the principle that while all pupils are working towards the same ambitious goals, the journey they take may differ.

Teachers continually assess understanding, diagnose misconceptions, and make informed adjustments—such as varying the level of support, pace, or mode of presentation—to ensure that learning remains challenging yet achievable for all. Adaptive teaching does not mean creating multiple lesson plans, but rather using informed professional judgement to adjust instruction dynamically, ensuring that all pupils can make strong progress.

This approach promotes inclusivity by recognising and valuing the diverse needs, backgrounds, and learning preferences within the classroom. Through adaptive teaching, lessons become bespoke to the individual—supporting those who need more structure and scaffolding, while extending those ready for deeper challenge. It fosters equity by providing each learner with the right level of access to the curriculum, ensuring that no child is left behind. In doing so, it nurtures confidence, engagement, and a sense of belonging, which are vital foundations for lifelong learning.

Moreover, the strategies underpinning adaptive teaching are not only evidence-based but are also drawn from the accumulated wisdom of experienced practitioners who have refined these methods through years of classroom practice. They are tried, tested, and demonstrably successful in improving outcomes for pupils across a range of contexts. The consistent use of such approaches—alongside the CPA model and Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction—creates a research-informed, practitioner-led framework that ensures high-quality teaching and learning for all. It exemplifies Salford Priors’ commitment to inclusive excellence, professional integrity, and sustained pupil achievement.



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Coherency in Approach

Together, the Concrete–Pictorial–Abstract (CPA) approach, Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction, and Adaptive Teaching form a coherent, research-informed framework that promotes deep, secure, and transferable learning. CPA ensures that pupils build understanding from tangible, concrete experiences through visual representation to abstract reasoning, reducing cognitive overload and strengthening conceptual grasp. Rosenshine’s principles provide the structural backbone—explicit instruction, guided practice, and regular review—that underpins this journey, ensuring that learning is carefully sequenced, modelled, and reinforced. When combined, these approaches empower teachers to make learning visible, scaffold understanding, and create opportunities for deliberate practice and retrieval, supporting both mastery and independence.

This unified pedagogy is also rooted in inclusivity and responsiveness. Adaptive Teaching ensures that CPA and Rosenshine’s principles are applied flexibly to meet the diverse needs of every learner—extending, scaffolding, or revisiting stages as appropriate. It acknowledges that high-quality teaching is dynamic, shaped by continual assessment and professional judgement. The synergy of these approaches results in classrooms that are purposeful, inclusive, and aspirational—where evidence-based strategies and practitioner expertise converge to deliver exceptional outcomes for all pupils. This integrated model reflects Salford Priors’ commitment to nurturing resilient, reflective learners who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive.



Embedding CPA, Rosenshine's Principles, and Adaptive Teaching

- i. Begin with a short review**
 - Revisit prior knowledge to connect with the new concept (reducing cognitive overload).
- ii. Introduce the concept concretely**
 - Use real-life objects, artefacts, role-play, or practical experiences to make the idea tangible.
 - Allow pupils to explore and manipulate materials to build initial understanding.
- iii. Model the learning explicitly**
 - Demonstrate how to use the concrete materials, thinking aloud and breaking it into small steps.
- iv. Use questioning to check understanding**
 - Ask probing, open-ended and questions while pupils work with concrete materials to ensure accuracy and engagement.
- v. Move to pictorial representation**
 - Provide opportunities for pupils to draw, sketch, or use images, diagrams, to represent their learning.
 - Model how concrete experiences can be represented visually.
- vi. Encourage links between stages**
 - Explicitly show how the concrete activity relates to the pictorial version.
 - Reinforce connections by revisiting earlier stages if needed.
- vii. Transition to the abstract**
 - Introduce symbols, written language, once pupils are confident with pictorial representations.
 - Scaffold learning carefully, ensuring pupils understand the meaning behind abstract representations.
- viii. Provide opportunities for independent practice**
 - Gradually reduce support, encouraging pupils to work independently with abstract ideas.
 - Provide opportunities to apply learning in new contexts.
- ix. Differentiate and revisit**
 - Recognise that some pupils may need more time in the concrete or pictorial stages.
 - Revisit earlier stages if misconceptions arise, ensuring secure understanding before progressing.
- x. Review and reflect regularly**
 - Use retrieval practice, feedback, and low-stakes questioning to consolidate learning across concrete, pictorial, and abstract levels.