NSW Centre for Effective Reading

Middle Years

Comprehension – Fix-up Strategies

Reread or use fix-up strategies – self monitoring

Introduction

Marie Clay has said that readers who don't know how to **self-monitor** make very few **self-corrections** and retain very little information from what they have read.

So, unless students are self-monitoring while they read, they cannot effectively comprehend the text. Self-monitoring involves 'metacognitive awareness', which is 'knowing when what one is reading makes sense by monitoring and controlling one's own comprehension' (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 153).

Self-monitoring is an important metacognitive tool for improving reading comprehension by developing the student's internal dialogue or self talk.

Active readers, as they read, monitor how well they understand what they are reading. When reading difficult material, these students engage in self-monitoring strategies such as rereading portions of the text, or reading more slowly and trying to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words important to the understanding it. Even realising that repeated readings of a passage will make it significantly easier to recall its important content, can be of benefit to many students.

When students self-monitor they need to:

1. be aware when meaning breaks down,

2. identify what it is they do not understand (word, sentence, paragraph), and

3. use appropriate strategies to "fix-up", to restore meaning.

Purpose

Students will self monitor their reading so that they know when they fail to understand and they can employ fix-up strategies to resolve this problem.

Teaching Steps

1. Teacher develops personal knowledge of:

a. The sequence of skills in self monitoring

Steps of Strategy	Skills needed – S*tudents can*	Cut back / Adjustments – *Teachers will*
Visual examples of : • What's wrong? • What's missing? • Is there anything wrong?	Have a picture in their mind of the correct, or, intact illustration. Determine what is wrong or missing. Verbalise what is wrong or what is missing. Determine if something is correct or wrong or if something is missing.	Demonstrate a correct picture and change it to make it silly. Demonstrate complete pictures and remove a part e.g. jig-saw puzzles. Provide other ways to indicate what is wrong e.g. pointing, actions.
Visual examples: • What would come next, after this? • What would come before this?	Logically sequence events in time or cause and effect. Understand before and after.	Give practice sequencing cause and effect and events in time. Teach 'before' and 'after'.

Verbal examples – sentences:
 	
 • What's wrong with the sentence? (silly sentences)
 • Can you follow the directions:
 	
   - a statement not a direction
   - an incomplete direction,
   - an unclear direction,
   - a direction involving difficult words,
   - a direction that is too long.
	Listen and understand sentences given.
	
	 Determine when something is incorrect or a problem.
	
	 Indicate in some way that a problem exists.
		Teach good listening skills.
		
		 Teach students explicitly to listen for inconsistencies mentioned e.g. can't be done, unknown word, too long to remember.
		
		 Give students cue cards to hold up to indicate '✓' for o.k., '?' for something wrong.

Paragraphs
 Words may be:
 	
   - difficult to decode
 	
    (teach fix up decoding strategies)
 	
   - difficult to understand
 	
    (teach fix up strategies to determine meaning)
 	
 Text:
 	
   - question meaning of paragraph
   - link new ideas to prior knowledge
	Attend for prolonged periods to text reading.
	
	 Understand that reading has to make sense and when it doesn't, we need to do something to improve meaning.
	
	 Understand that it is o.k. to question.
	
	 Understand that it is good to reread and read more slowly.
	
	 Ask questions that relate to decoding, vocabulary and meaning in general.
		Ensure that each area is taught explicitly and systematically:
		
		   - decoding (at the student's level),
		   - vocabulary in reader friendly terms.
		
		 Teach fix-up strategies for word attack:
		
		   - sound out,
		   - separate into syllables and sound out,
		   - reread/read on to decide what would make sense,
		   - look for word parts- prefix, affix, root words,
		   - ask someone.
		
		 Teach students how to ask questions, especially self monitoring questions e.g.
		
		   - Do I understand this?
		   - What bit don't I understand?
		   - What can I do to help me understand?
		
		 Teach background knowledge then make the link explicitly.

Sections of text:
 	
Determine the purpose for reading:
 	
  - Why am I reading this?
 	
Preview text by looking at title, headings, graphics, layout.
 	
Use these self questions:
 	
  - What sort of text is this?
 	
  - What do I already know about this topic?
	As above
	
	Determine when things are not understood.
	
	Understand the reason for reading e.g. to locate specific information, to get an overall picture, for enjoyment.
	
	Understand text type features e.g. narrative structure, procedure, etc.
	
	Activate prior knowledge.
		Ensure that each area is taught explicitly and systematically:
		
		  - Why am I reading this?
		  - What sort of text is this?
		
		Teach students features of relevant text types.
		
		Teach background knowledge relating to the text and then make the link explicitly between this knowledge and the topic.
		
		Give practice in activating student's background knowledge on various topics using brainstorming and mind mapping.

Text reading using all fix-up strategies:
 	
  - Did I understand that word?
 	
  - Did I understand that sentence?
 	
  - Did I understand that paragraph?
 	
Incorporate fix-up strategies:
 	
  - Reread,
  - Read slowly (adjust rate),
  - Read aloud,
  - Read on,
  - Look at visuals and text layout,
  - Make connections,
  - Make predictions from prior knowledge of topic and text layout,
  - Ask questions,
  - Create a picture in your mind
  - Ask for help.
	Understand that knowing the meaning of words is important.
	
	Recognise the difference between 'words', 'sentences' and 'paragraphs'.
	
	Remain engaged while reading.
	
	Realise when they don't understand and stop at that point and work out what to do.
	
	Remember a series of fix-up strategies to try – use a 'fix-up bookmark'.
	
	Adjust their reading rate to suit the information e.g. slow down as meaning is challenged. (see Appendix)
	
	Activate their background knowledge and connect with information in the text.
	
	Locate contents, visuals, read captions and understand visuals.
	
	Skim text for visuals, layout, headings and subheadings etc.
		Teach each fix up strategy separately, ensuring mastery.
		
		Start with working on words, then sentences and finally paragraphs.
		
		Teach students to adjust their reading:
		
		  - Initially reread (repeated reading),
		  - Adjust rate, so read again slowly,
		  - Read aloud,
		  - Read sentence before and after,
		  - Read on.
		
		Teach students to activate their prior knowledge about the topic and the text layout and then use this to:
		
		  - Make predictions,
		  - Ask themselves questions,
		  - Make a picture in their mind.
		
		Teach students it is good to ask for clarification. This is the sign of a good reader.

1. Teacher develops personal knowledge of:

    b. Students - through observation, assessment and asking questions determine where your students are up to in this series of skills. This is important especially for your students with learning difficulties, who may need to work at an earlier level of strategy development to the rest of the class.

    c. The text to be used for modelling

2. State the purpose of the lesson:

- Discuss the strategy and what it means –

Teacher:

Fix-up strategies require the reader to self-monitor. Self–monitoring is when readers are aware of their own mistakes. They listen to their own voice and analyse what they are reading for meaning and correct pronunciation of words. It usually involves rereading to get it right. It is important for students to learn 'fix-up strategies' to use when they find themselves not engaged with or not understanding the text they are reading.

- Explain the benefits of this strategy –

Teacher:

Today we will learn how to how to use fix-up strategies to improve our reading comprehension. Self-monitoring and self correcting are skills used by good readers. If you monitor your own reading, your understanding of what you read will improve. Sometimes when you read you come to road blocks that stop you from going on. We'll look for ways to remove those blocks or make detours that let you get back on track with your reading.

3. Model and teach the strategy:

- Teacher preparation –

Familarise yourself with the text.

Work out what 'think alouds' you will use to demonstrate your monitoring of understanding the text.

Cut post-it notes into small sections marked with a question mark.

- Model –

This is giving practice in at the level: Text reading using all 'fix – up strategies' (Did I understand that word?, Did I understand that sentence?, Did I understand that paragraph?), incorporating fix-up strategies of rereading, reading slowly (adjusting rate), reading aloud, reading on, looking at visuals and text layout, making connections, making predictions from prior knowledge of topic and text layout, asking questions, creating a picture in your mind and asking for help.

This is the text we will read. It is about ....

Begin by brainstorming aloud what you already know about the topic.

Now I will read this whole text to you first and then I will read it explaining to you the parts I had difficulty with the first time I read it through.

Read the text the second time modelling the strategy for the students. Include all your thinking in the 'think alouds' so that students can witness the entire thought process.

Make sure you comment on each of these areas:

- o *Before I read I need to think about what I already know about this topic and I need to remember why I am reading it. Do I need to find out something? Do I want to get an overall picture in my mind? Is it a story or am I looking for information?*

- o *I'm not sure what the word ... means – I can read to the end of the sentence and see if that helps. Now I can reread the paragraph, that might help. I will put in the word ..., which I think it means. Did that make sense? If not, I can ask someone or use a dictionary to help. I'll put this word in my reading log and mark it with a post-it in the text.*

- o *I don't understand what that sentence means – I'm going to go back and read it slowly, I can try reading it aloud and see if that helps. Now I need to stop and think about what I have read. Can I understand now? I'll mark this sentence with a post-it.*

- o *I don't get that paragraph at all – I'll reread it and read more slowly, that will help. I should also look at the visuals and check to see if they help me understand this paragraph. Maybe I already know something about this. Will that help me? I'll mark this paragraph with a post-it. Maybe when I read on I'll understand and I can give this paragraph a tick.*
  - o *I've lost my concentration. I started thinking about something else. I'll need to go back and reread that page, so I can see if I understand what it's about.*
- Continue through the passage referring to the prompt guide for 'fix-up' strategies.
- Provide additional modelled support to students who require it.

4. Memorise the strategy:

Use the visual prompt card (see Appendix) for memorising the process:

> Read the title and preview the text.
>
> What do I know about the topic?
>
> Why am I reading this text?
>
> If I don't understand a word or a sentence or a paragraph, I'll stop and think.
>
> How can I fix up these bits?
>
> Did I use my fix-up strategies?
>
> Do I understand the text now?

Use visual cue card for 'fix-up' strategies (see Appendix).

Use self monitoring key card to help students maintain engagement with the text (see Appendix).

5. Guided practice - support the strategy collaboratively:

- Refer to the students' handout of visual prompt card for recalling the process and their 'fix-up' strategies bookmark.
- Give out copies of text to be read, read the title and briefly brainstorm prior knowledge.
- Ask students why they are reading the text; what is their purpose for reading. It will be to learn how to self monitor, as well as learn about the content.
- Read the whole text to the students.
- Start by modelling a 'think aloud' for a tricky word or sentence. Work through the 'fix-up' strategies.
- Read on, encouraging students to hold up their 'question card' (see Appendix) if they want clarification. On each occasion work through the 'fix-up' strategies.
- If students fail to point out areas of concern, the teacher should add other examples.
- Provide additional guided practice for students who require it.

6. Independent practice – use the strategy by yourself:

- Student work in pairs on a suitable text, using the visual prompt card to guide their thinking, their visual cue card for 'fix-up' strategies and self monitoring key card.
- Students read the text aloud, alternating for each paragraph. Each student gives the 'think alouds' for a difficult word, sentence or paragraph and then both discuss the process.

- Gather the group together to reflect on the process. Discuss the roadblocks that stopped them and how they overcame these blocks.

- Provide additional independent practice for students who require it.

7. Generalisation:

Although students with learning difficulties can be taught to use self-monitoring techniques, it is considerably more difficult for these students to generalize these skills, or apply them to other reading situations. They will require reminders in all subject areas of the need to 'self monitor' to assist with comprehension.

References

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Harvey, S., & Goudvis, A. (2000). *Strategies that work.* York, ME: Stenhouse.

Reid, R. & Lienemann, T. O. (2006). *Strategy Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities,* The Guildford press: New York.

Harris, T., & Hodges, R. (Eds.). (1995). *The literacy dictionary: The vocabulary of reading and writing.* Newark, DE. International Reading Association.

http://ohiorc.org/adlit/strategy/strategy_each.aspx?id=10#skill (retrieved 12/12/11)

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Appendix

- Visual prompt card for memorising and checking the strategy of self monitoring

- Question cards for guided practice lessons

- Visual cue card for 'fix-up' strategies - a bookmark.

- Self monitoring key card
  When students are reading and come to a section that confuses them or that they do not understand, they can put a Post-it note with a question mark on the top half. Stopping briefly at that point to add the note does two things. It helps the students fix in their mind a question or point of confusion for which they will seek an answer as they continue to read. It also provides a place holder that will help them readily locate the point in the text so they can find it later. As the students read on, they may find the answer. At that point, they can remove the Post-it note, drawing a light bulb or placing a tick on the bottom half of the Post-it note. Once the students have completed their reading, they can discuss—as a class, with partners, or in small groups—the answers or confusions that were cleared up and those, represented by "active" Post-its, that still remain.
 *Taken from 'Knowing When You Do Not Know' (Based on Harvey & Goudvis, 2000) http://ohiorc.org/adlit/strategy/strategy_each.aspx?id=10#skill (12/12/11)*

- Question prompt card for guided practice lessons

- Adjusting reading rate chart – adapted from Cameron, S. (2009), p.48

- Self monitoring questions for before, during and after reading

Visual prompt card for memorising and checking

SELF MONITORING	
Questions	**✓ / X**
• Have I read the title and previewed the text?	
• Have I thought about what I know about the text?	
• Have I read the text and thought about the bits I don't understand?	
• Have I marked these with a post-it?	
• Have I read aloud, slowly, the bits I'm not sure of?	
• Did I use fix-up strategies for these?	
• Have I reread the bits I was unsure of?	
• Now, do I understand most of the text?	

Question cards for guided practice lessons

**Visual cue card for 'fix-up' strategies - bookmark**
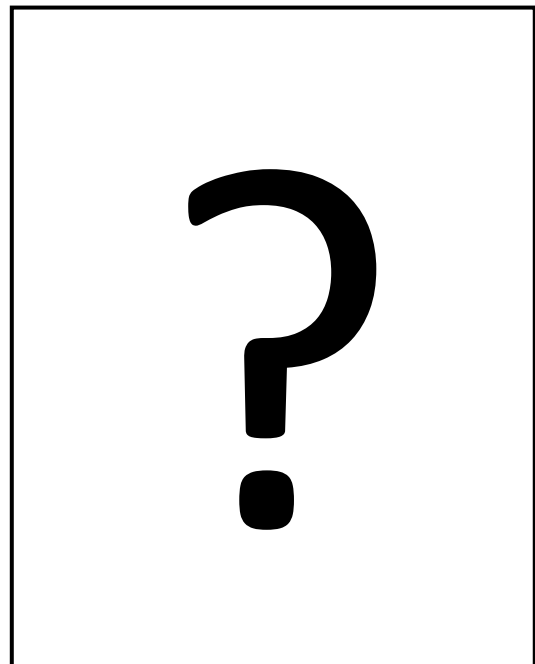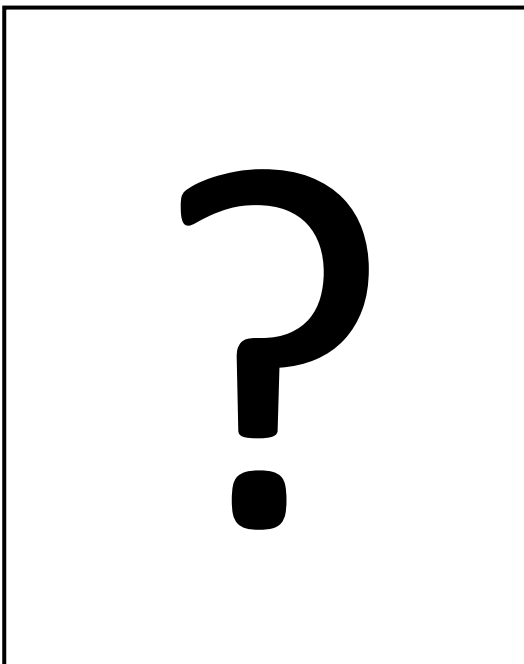
FIX–UP STRATEGIES

When I come to a roadblock I can …

- Reread
- Read ahead
- Read more slowly
- Read aloud
- Stop and think
- Predict
- Make connections to my own knowledge
- Look at visuals – pictures, charts etc
- Find out what unknown words mean
- Ask myself questions
- Create a picture in my mind

FIX–UP STRATEGIES
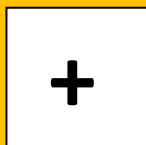
When I come to a roadblock I can …
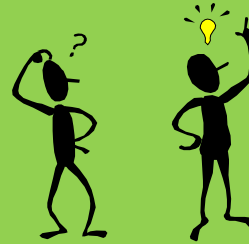
- Reread
- Read more slowly
- Read aloud
- Read ahead
- Stop and think
- Predict
- Make connections to my own knowledge
- Look at visuals – pictures, charts etc
- Find out what unknown words mean
- Ask myself questions
- Create a picture in my mind

Self monitoring key card

KEYS TO SELF MONITORING

Use post-it to mark sections of text that …

|	
?	I didn't understand
+	is new information
!	is really interesting
✓	I do understand now

Question prompt card for guided practice lessons

Question prompts demonstrate what students must ask themselves in the comprehension process if self-monitoring procedures are to be effective.

| Self Questions	Skills	Answers
• Why am I reading this?	Define purpose	
• Have I previewed the text?	Skim text	
• What do I already know about the topic?	Activate prior knowledge	
• Does it make sense as I'm reading?	Self monitor	
• Am I using fix-up strategies?	Use repair strategies	
• Were there any words I was unsure of?	Seek clarification	
• Am I adjusting my reading rate to suit the information?	Self monitor	
• What am I learning as I read? • What have I learned?	Self monitor and recall	

Adjust your reading rate

Follow the read speed signs and read at the right rate!

SPEED LIMIT
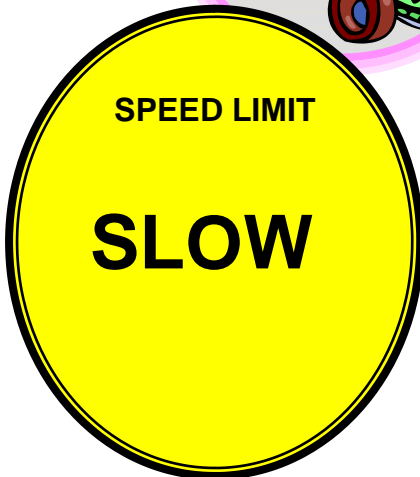
SLOW

Read **slow**ly when:

- You don't know much about the topic.
- The text is hard to understand.
- You are rereading a part to help you understand better.
- There are hard tables and charts etc that you need to think about.

SPEED LIMIT
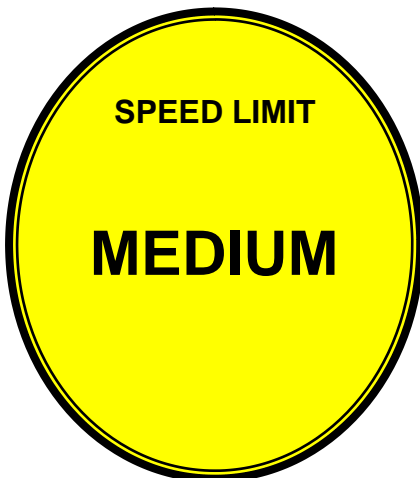
MEDIUM

Read at a **medium** pace when:

- You know something about the topic.
- The text is hard to understand.
- You are rereading a part to help you understand better.
- There are lots of tables and charts.

SPEED LIMIT
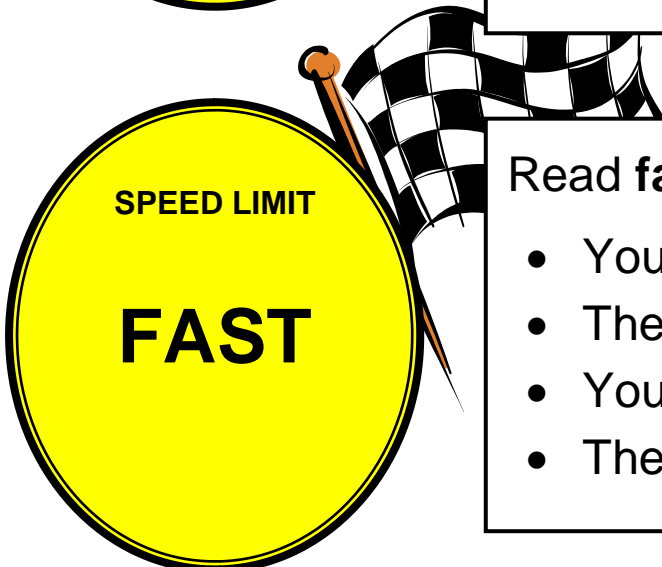
FAST

Read **fast** when:

- You know a lot about the topic.
- The text is easy to understand.
- You are skimming or scanning.
- There are no tables and charts etc.

Self-Monitoring Questions for Before, During and After Reading

Before Reading: PLAN	During Reading: MONITOR	After Reading: REFLECT
What is this text about?	Am I achieving my purpose?	Did I learn what I was supposed to learn?
What do I know about this topic? About this author?	How do I know I'm learning what I'm supposed to learn?	Has what I knew about this topic before I started changed? How?
How is this text organised? What features can I see?	Is the text structure helping me to understand the author's purpose?	Can I put what I've learned in my own words?
What am I supposed to learn? What is my purpose?	What are the important ideas? How do I know?	How can I use what I've learned?
What do I predict I'll learn from this text?	How is what I'm reading related to what I already know?	Do I need to learn more about this?
What are some key words (vocabulary) I need to understand about this topic?	Are my predictions being confirmed?	How can I do this better next time?
What comprehension strategies should I use?	If I'm not understanding, what should I do?	
How much time should I spend on this?	Do I need to adjust my reading rate?	

Adapted from University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency, (2004, 2003, 2002), Handout 6.