

Small Group Reading Strategy Lesson: *Monitor for Meaning*

Essential Question

What strategies can I use when I don't understand what I read?

MSDE Indicators

1.2.E.3 Use strategies to make meaning from text (during reading)

Time

Two sessions of 15 minutes each

Materials

- Monitoring for Meaning Fix It handout
- Instructional level text
- Sticky notes or sticky flags

Teacher Information

- Students who are strong in comprehension are active, engaged readers. They think about the text as they read and use strategies to monitor for meaning and consolidate their thinking. When they lose focus or meaning breaks down due to lack of understanding, proficient readers stop and pull from a repertoire of actions (reread, slow down, read on, check the pictures, restate in own words) and strategies (make connections, visualize, infer, determine importance, question, predict, summarize, synthesize) to re-engage with the text or repair their understanding.
- We can teach students how to monitor their comprehension and use fix-up strategies. We begin with teacher modeling through think-aloud as we explain our own thinking when meaning is interrupted. We then provide guided practice as students are provided the opportunity to engage in monitoring using instructional level texts. Then we continue to support proficiency, either through continued guided practice or through independent practice. It is recommended that you teach students the first five actions/strategies on the Monitor for Meaning handout before the next three strategies.
- It is suggested that this lesson be taught over two days. On day one, introduce self-monitoring strategies and the accompanying handout. Explain the reading assignment and have students read independently at their seats. On day two, meet with this group again to discuss their strategy use from the previous day and set expectations for continued sustainability of self-monitoring.

DAY ONE

Before Reading

- Tell students that reading is all about thinking and understanding. Say, "Sometimes when I am reading I come to a part of the text that confuses me. It just doesn't seem to make sense. I might get confused about who is speaking or a sentence just doesn't sound right. Let me give you an example of how this might happen."
- Give a personal example of a time when you were reading and meaning was lost. You might talk about a time when you were reading a book with several characters and the

pronouns were confusing. Maybe you had difficulty assigning the pronouns and the actions to the different characters. Explain that when you are reading and you become confused, you need to stop and do something to fix your understanding. There is no reason to keep on reading to the end of the story or passage if you aren't making sense of the text.

- Briefly give other examples of things that may cause meaning to break down, such as misreading a words or skipping a part of the text.
- Tell students that there are actions that readers can use to fix up comprehension problems. Explain that you will demonstrate how meaning might break down when reading and what can be done to repair it.
- Give a brief book or chapter introduction (or a summary of what was read yesterday). Tell students that today's purpose for reading is to pay close attention to how we monitor for meaning. Think aloud using the first couple of pages of the students' instructional text. Demonstrate a part where you skip a word or insert a word and meaning is lost. Explain to the students that it doesn't make sense. Put a sticky flag in the book to demonstrate that you need to stop and take an action. Show how rereading accurately solves your problem. Demonstrate a place in the text where you need to read slower, read on, or make a connection to something you already know to understand the text. Again, place a flag in the text and discuss the action you took to regain meaning.
- Distribute the Monitor for Meaning handout. Review the first four (or six) items on the handout. Tell students that they will practice these actions when they are reading today. If they lose meaning while they are reading, they need to stop and put a flag on the page. Tell students to look at the Monitoring for Meaning handout and try the different actions to see which one helps them reconstruct meaning of the passage. They will need to be able to explain what action they took to fix up their meaning.
- Distribute the books and two or three flags per student. Tell students how far you want them to read before meeting with them at the next session.

During Reading

- As students are reading, observe individual students. When you notice a student placing a flag in his/her text, individually discuss the problem that was encountered and the action that the student took to solve the problem. You may need to model again for individual students or prompt them to take an action.
- Allow students time to complete their assigned reading back at their seats.

DAY TWO

After Reading

- Gather students back to the group. Tell them that you want them to share how they monitored for meaning and what steps they took to fix their comprehension when something didn't make sense.
- Have students share their confusions and fix-up strategies with partners. Monitor their discussions and take anecdotal records. You may need to ask clarifying questions as you coach students in understanding the purpose for employing fix-up strategies.

After students have discussed with partners, give each student an opportunity to share with the group one place where meaning was repaired.

- Remind students that the sticky flags were just to make them aware of places where they needed to stop and fix a problem. The handout is a reminder of the actions they can take to fix problems. They can keep this for future reference until the actions become automatic.
- Say, “We will continue to learn what actions and strategies we can use when we lose meaning as we read. There are more steps that we can take in addition to what we did today. Remember, as readers we are in control of our thinking. Even when we lose meaning, we can help ourselves fix our understanding. We need to use this strategy anytime when we are reading, not just in school. If we are reading at home to our baby brother or sister or if we are reading to ourselves, we always need to make sense of our reading.”

Checking for Understanding

- Have the students turn over their handouts and ask, “What are some things that you can do to fix up your reading when meaning is lost?”
- Record student responses on a chart or white board.