

Using Fix-Up Strategies

Notice when you stray from an inner conversation with the text. Use fix-up strategies to get back on track.

One of the biggest problems facing strivers is their tendency to space out when reading and lose track of meaning. They run their eyes over the words, but don't think about them. Strivers also tend to lose their way when the text is too hard. So, after we have taught them to construct meaning by listening to their inner voice while reading, we teach them to notice when they stray from meaning and how to "fix up" the problem and reconstruct meaning.

Preparation. Choose a text that you are currently reading, one written for adults, so that you can share your own process with the kids. Create a two-column think sheet with "Problem" at the top of the left-hand column and "Fix-Up Strategy" at the top of the right-hand column. Each student needs a pencil, a clipboard, and a copy of the think sheet.

1 Connect and Engage

Gather the kids in front of you, on the floor. *Today I have brought in a book that I am reading at home. Page through the text, share the cover, mention what the book is about, and so forth. This book has been a bit hard for me. You might be surprised by this, but even adults get confused when they are reading. Sometimes reading goes well and other times, not so much. . . .*

Share how sometimes you space out when you read; for example, when you are reading at night in bed. *Sometimes, I'll read my book, put my bookmark in, and go to sleep. The next night when I go back to my reading, I go to where I left off, but I may have no idea what I was reading. So I need to go back to a slightly earlier spot and start from there. In this case I think I lost track because I was too tired to keep reading the night before. Jot down the reason you strayed from meaning and share it. Explain how you "fixed up" the problem by rereading the text the next night. Jot down the problem you had on an anchor chart and what you did to fix it. Has anything like this ever happened to you? You are reading along and then have no idea what you are reading? Have kids turn and talk.*

2 Model

Okay, I am going to read a few paragraphs from this text and stop and share with you when I am no longer making meaning, not listening to my inner voice, or when the text is too hard and I am confused. I will try to fix up the problem if I can. Read a paragraph aloud and stop at a spot to make a connection. Share that connection enthusiastically and then keep reading. Stop at the end of a subsequent paragraph and explain that you have no idea what you read in that paragraph because you were thinking about your connection. Connecting to the text is a good thing, but sometimes our connections can distract us from meaning, that's what happened here. Now I need to go back to where I had that connection and then focus on not thinking too much about it, but rather paying attention to the words in the text. Reread the paragraph and tell kids you now understand what it says. I'm going to add this problem to the anchor chart in the first column and what I did to fix it in the second column.

Keep reading and stop at a confusing part. I was going to keep reading but I realized that I was not making any sense because I don't understand this word or idea. Since I don't know this word, I am going to have to try to infer the meaning of the word. I need to think about what I know and use clues to make sense. If I read right before and after the word, I might be able to make sense of it.

3 Guide

Hand out clipboards, think sheets, and pencils. Ask kids to think about times they spaced out when they were reading or times they quit reading because the text was too hard. Have them jot one example in the left-hand column of their think sheet and what they did to fix up the problem in the right-hand column. Then invite volunteers to share some of the problems and fix-up strategies. This is particularly valuable for striving readers, because they see that problems occur not only for you, but also for all their classmates. They are not alone! Jot their responses on the anchor chart and guide a discussion on problems and fix-up strategies.

4 Practice

Now it's time for you to practice in your own reading. Each of you can take this two-column think sheet back to your spots. When meaning does break down, jot the problem with the page number and think about how you can fix it. Check out the anchor chart for some suggestions, but once you have done your reading today, we will probably have more solutions to the problems we have when we read. I will come around and confer with some of you while you are reading.

5 Share

After about 30 minutes practice, invite kids back to the circle and have them turn to a classmate and talk about their reading, since the content of the reading and their thoughts about it are important. You might prompt students by asking, *What surprised you? What do you wonder? What did you learn? What confused you?* (The final question is particularly important to this lesson.) Then invite them to share a problem they had and the fix-up strategy they used. As they share these, jot them on the chart. *Look at this chart! We have all of these problems and useful strategies to fix the problems. We will keep adding to the chart as we discover new problems and ways to solve them.*