ADJUSTING READING RATE

DESCRIPTION

This activity teaches students to monitor the relative difficulty of text, and to adjust their reading rate to support comprehension of text at various levels of difficulty. The activity allows students to practice metacognition and self-monitoring, and the process of adjusting reading rate can ultimately become automatized so that students are better equipped to process text at any level of difficulty.

LEARNING STRATEGIES	Metacognition
LESSON PLAN STAGE	Investigation
SKILLS	Close Reading, Metacognition, Interacting with the Text

PREPARATION

- Identify a set of short texts that represent a variety of topics (some familiar, some unfamiliar), writing styles, and levels of complexity. Or, select a single longer text that includes diverse sections representing distinct levels of difficulty.
- Gather red, green, and yellow highlighters, markers, pens, or sticky tabs.

	ACTIVITY STEPS	TEACHING TIPS
1	Teacher introduces the idea of adjusting reading rate, and discusses how students can adjust it to promote comprehension of texts of various levels of difficulty.	• You will want to model this process by reading aloud, and adjusting your reading rate as you go. Think aloud, commenting on how difficult the text is, how you can tell, and how you will change your reading rate accordingly. • Discuss different factors that contribute to text difficulty: complex sentence structure, difficult or unfamiliar content, unusual form, unfamiliar vocabulary, dense content, archaic language, or an unfamiliar dialect.
2	Teacher distributes green, yellow, and red highlighters and models how to read and mark text with green to indicate a fast rate, yellow to indicate an intermediate rate, and red to indicate a slow rate.	As you model this, you again want to think aloud about how you can tell the level of difficulty of a text. It will be obvious to many students, but you may want to make explicit the analogy with traffic lights: green means go ahead full speed, yellow means be careful and slow down a little, red means slow down a lot, possibly stop and reread or apply reading strategies to aid comprehension.

	ACTIVITY STEPS	**TEACHING TIPS**
3	Teacher distributes the text(s). Alone or in pairs, students read the text(s), and mark each line or section with the appropriate color highlighter to indicate the level of difficulty, and the correspondingly appropriate reading speed.	As students are working you can circulate among them and ask them about how they are choosing to mark the text, and how they are making their choices. Ask them to justify their decisions by referring to some of the factors that affect text difficulty.
4	In pairs, students take turns reading text aloud, adjusting reading rate according to their markings (fast for green, medium for yellow, slow or even stopping and repeating for red).	Encourage students to discuss their choices of reading rate with their partner, and to revise their rate as appropriate.
5	Students reread texts silently, adjusting reading rate as they read in their heads.	Explain to students that eventually the process of adjusting rate of reading to difficulty level should become automatic, and should be applied when students are reading silently and aloud.
6	Alone or in groups, in conversation or in writing, students reflect on their learning process.	Students respond to questions including: • How does slowing down affect your comprehension of a text? • What makes a text challenging for you? What makes a text easy for you? • How does adjusting reading rate affect your efficiency in reading a text? • How does it affect your enjoyment of a text?