

LEARNING STRATEGIES

Comprehension Monitoring: Click, Click, Clunk

Click, Click, Clunk serves as a learning strategy that students can use to signal comprehension difficulties to themselves and others. Students simply read silently and then say “click” for each word they understand (and again for each sentence or passage) and clunk whenever they encounter a word, phrase, sentence or passage that they don’t fully understand.

What is the purpose?

Research indicates that self-monitoring of comprehension and becoming aware of what it takes to make meaning can help students who have difficulty reading. Click, Click, Clunk is a self-monitoring strategy that helps students pinpoint where comprehension breaks down so they can go back and try to “fix up” their lack of understanding. Used in a class with a group of students who quietly go click or clunk, the strategy signals teachers where students are getting stuck. Students can use the strategy on their own as well to pinpoint difficult passages to check that they captured the meaning of a text. The strategy encourages students to think as they read and, when combined with “fix up” strategies designed to clarify meaning and recover understanding, gives them another tool to increase their understanding.

How does it work?

Select a reading passage that students need to understand and are likely to find challenging. Use this passage with this class after you have modeled the strategy with a number of sentences that help students understand how to use the strategy.

Model the strategy.

1. On the board, write a short passage that has several words that none of the students are likely to know (Example: “Everyone has a cell phone these days. They are ubiquitous. Their use in movie theatres and restaurants is disconcerting”)
2. Do a quick think-aloud, saying something like “Mhmm, Let me read this. There are several words here, I don’t recognize. Let me try a new strategy, called Click, Click, Clunk.
3. Go through the sentence, saying “click” at the familiar words, and “clunk” at the unfamiliar words. (You can also use “click” at the end of a sentence when you understand and “clunk” at a sentence that has a challenging word and then go back to identify the difficult word with a clunk.)
4. Write a sentence containing a non-sense word on the board and have students try the strategy as a group. (Example: “Street racing is lawunful and very dangerous”). Tell students that “clunks” are important signals that tell them that a sentence doesn’t make sense to them. “Clunks” tell us when we should reread a sentence and what we should pay attention to.
5. To demonstrate passage clunks, write a text on the board that contains words that students know but that don’t make sense in the context of the passage (Example: “The firemen rushed to the scene in their tricycles. On the scene of the fire, they pulled out the big houses from the truck and extinguished the fire.” Ask students to try the strategy, explaining what to do one more time, if necessary. Move your finger under the words and ask students to say “click” or “clunk” after each word. Then stop after each sentence and ask “Is this sentence a ‘click’ or a ‘clunk’? Ask students to identify why some sentences are clunks (they don’t make sense), and highlight that sometimes we may know all the words in a text and we still can’t make sense out of what we read. Sometimes the

difficulty is due to lack of clarity on the part of the writer and other times it is lack of knowledge on the part of the reader.

6. Highlight the point of the strategy: Click, click, clunk allows us to identify where we are having difficulties and it allows us to pinpoint what we don't understand. It is a signal to reread and think about a sentence or a text a bit more to try to discern what the writer may have meant. It is also a signal to identify difficult words and to highlight them so they can be looked up and studied.
7. After a break of a day or two, return to the strategy, using a somewhat difficult text that ties in with what students are studying at the time. Ask students to read silently, but verbalize the click, click, clunks to themselves and mark the clunks with a pencil. Walk around and observe students as they mark their pages.
8. Bring back the entire class and debrief the "clunks". Include words, sentence, and passages. Ask students to re-read sentences with clunks to see if meaning can be clarified. If you have covered "comprehension fix up" strategies, such as using context clues to make meaning, repeat and reinforce them at this point.
9. Continue using the strategy anytime students indicate that a text was too difficult or that they did not understand any of it.