Self-Monitoring
(In-the-Head Strategies)

Why?

• Prompts the reader to use fix-it strategies when encountering difficult or confusing passages or words.
• Students can readily identify, confirm and think about what is understood and what is confusing (thinking about thinking).
• Empowers emergent readers to become independent and to read for meaning.
• Elicits self-correction at miscues.
• Focuses struggling readers' attention toward meaning and proper syntax.

How?

• Excellent resources are available for the novice or to assist with young at-risk readers: Reading Recovery: A Guidebook for Teachers in Training (Marie Clay) and Apprenticeship in Literacy (Linda Dorn, et al.).
• Laura Robb's Teaching Reading in Middle School, chapter 6, outlines explicit methods to use to develop strong, self-monitoring readers.
• Model self-monitoring in a whole class setting through a think-aloud or a read-aloud. Teachers make an intentional miscue and stop to ask, “Did that make sense?”
• Explain and demonstrate reasons for using metacognition to problem solve in reading: unknown or difficult words, confusing passages, pausing to recall and reflect while checking for understanding, and questions that the reader may have after reading.
• Model fix-it strategies for each: context clues, reading ahead, rereading, etc.
• Use individual prompts with struggling readers to facilitate the development of self-monitoring.
• Offer enough guided practice that self-monitoring and fix-it strategies become habituated and a natural part of reading.
• Observe and monitor self-monitoring during reading conferences: discuss how students recognize when things make sense and what they do when they don't.
• Praise a child who uses self-correcting to repair faulty comprehension. This occurs when they recognize an error without being prompted and use an assortment of strategies to correct the miscue.
• Keep a tally of fix-it strategies that your younger students use during a guided reading session. Talk about possible problems they may encounter during their reading, review solutions, and after they have read, discuss strategies that they actually used. Circulate while they are reading the new book independently and listen for self-correcting.