

Red Light, Yellow Light for Truth

A routine focusing students on signs of puzzles of truth.

http://visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03f_TruthRoutines/RedLightYellowLight/RedLightYellowLight_Routine.html

Red Light, Yellow Light thinking routine is about becoming more aware of moments that offer signs of possible non-truths. Using red lights (something that makes you stop and doubt its accuracy) and yellow lights (something that might make you slow down and question its truth) helps students develop how to see the falsehoods and how to handle them. This strategy can be used in many different ways to increase awareness of possible non-truths in topics, claims, ideas, and conclusions.

1. Identify a source or range of experiences to investigate, e.g. the editorial page, a political speech, a pop science source, rumors on the playground.
2. Students look there for “red lights” and “yellow lights,” specific moments with signs of a possible puzzle of truth, like sweeping generalizations, blatant self-interest.
3. Round up students’ observations. Make a list of specific points marked R for red or Y for yellow with the sign (see sample chart). Also, ask students to identify “red zones” and “yellow zones,” whole areas that tend to be full of red or yellow lights. Write them on the board in circles.
4. Ask: What have we learned about particular signs that there could be a problem of truth? What have we learned about zones to watch out for?

Red light, Yellow light only identifies potential issues of truth. You may want to go on to some other truth routines to dig into a couple of the issues.