0.1 Pacing

Another advantage we had during the pilot versions is that we were defining the expectations as to what could be covered in a semester, and so automatically lived up to them. Now that there are norms for the course, there is pressure to keep up with them. If you find you're going "too slowly", it's worth figuring out why, but you should resist the temptation to hurry. If you start lecturing, forcing ideas on the students, letting the fast ones serve as surrogate expositors, and so forth, their rate of learning will go down, not up. Instead, consider the following alternatives. (1) Perhaps you've got a slow class. In this case you should probably go at the pace they need and cover less. They'll be better off in the long run. But if this happens to you again the next time, try a different tack! (2) You may be underassigning homework. If you ask them more often to finish trying to understand a problem sheet on their own at home and hand it in for a writeup, they will do it. You'll have to be careful to stay in touch with their needs, but if you assign the homework for a date that allows them to come back and ask for more class time or office hour time if needed, they should be able to handle the responsibility. (3) You may be covering the material more thoroughly than intended. When I write a worksheet, I often include extra, more difficult problems at the end that I plan to use only if time permits (which it seldom does). Use your judgment as to what portion of a worksheet is "par for the course" and compare with other instructors. (4) Your efforts to be Socratic might be too extreme. Deciding whether you're telling the students too much or too little can be like figuring out whether a plant is over- or under-watered. You'd best check with an expert.

As in proper questioning, a good worksheet needs to be nontrivial. If they're going through entire worksheets ahead of schedule, then they're probably not being challenged enough (although this is a great morale booster when it happens occasionally). If you're constructing a significant amount of new material for your course, recognize the warning signs of too easy material, since they're subtler than warnings about the opposite. A general loss of interest, low variance in homework scores, a lack of good places to begin class discussions, all indicate that either your materials are not meaty enough or that

you're doing too much of the students' work for them in class.