Explicit teaching of paraphrasing strategies to Year 3 students improves their reading comprehension of narrative texts.

ABSTRACT

Many students in the middle years of primary schooling display excellent decoding and word recognition skills but experience difficulty with reading comprehension. They can read a variety of texts with accuracy and fluency at an age appropriate level but cannot demonstrate an understanding of what they have read. This is often indicated by an inability to recall key information from the text, to retell the story or answer questions related to it.

The hypothesis of this study is that teaching Year 3 students to paraphrase improves their reading comprehension of narrative texts. Some ways in which paraphrasing is useful to readers include helping them to understand and engage with texts, link new ideas with what they already know, build new vocabulary and retain ideas in short term memory.

This study compares the results of two groups of Year 3 students; an Intervention Group of four students who were taught to use a paraphrasing strategy at the sentence level and a Control Group of four students who received no instruction in the use of the paraphrasing strategy. A series of nine lessons was taught to the Intervention Group. They were given explicit instruction about the paraphrasing strategy and how to use it to assist reading comprehension.

Results indicate that the teaching of paraphrasing as a strategy to improve comprehension is an effective one. When students master the strategy of paraphrasing they can be guided to transfer this skill and knowledge to other areas of their reading across the curriculum. The findings reinforce the importance of using explicit instruction to teach students specific reading comprehension strategies, thereby assisting students to become strategic learners.
INTRODUCTION

Many students in the middle years of Primary schooling (Years 3 & 4) demonstrate age appropriate reading skills in the areas of decoding and word recognition, but experience difficulties comprehending beyond the surface structure of the text. In many cases students have not reached the same ability level in reading comprehension.

They have mastered the technicalities of reading but cannot clearly relate what they have read at a deeper level ie beyond the literal level to inferential and evaluative levels. This deficit in comprehension skills acquisition at this stage has a compounding effect as students move through the middle and upper levels of primary schooling. Without the insight and connection with textual information beyond a superficial level students’ learning can be negatively impacted in many curriculum areas and may impede their opportunities to access information and knowledge.

Effective teaching of reading skills requires an understanding by teachers about the reading process and reading skill development. Munro’s Multiple Levels of Text Processing (MLOTP) Model (Munro, 2002) describes the reading process as operating at the word, sentence, conceptual (links concepts within a text), topic and dispositional (recognises purpose of text) levels. Proficient readers would process text at a variety of these levels simultaneously in order to fully comprehend that which is being read. Less capable readers may exhibit processing difficulties at one or more of these levels (Munro 1995). Inability at any stage of this reading process may be indicated by inaccurate reading, lack of fluency and loss of meaning.

Throughout the P-2 years of primary school texts are generally simple in structure and the focus is on literal understanding to establish that students have acquired basic comprehension, whilst the initial focus is on skilling the readers in word recognition, decoding and self-management strategies to read both fluently and accurately. As children move through school, comprehension is of major importance in a variety of subject areas, as texts are often their main way of learning at higher grade levels. Texts continue to increase in language complexity, text density and structure. Stahl & Hiebert (2005) contend that as children develop as readers, factors such as text complexity and reasoning skills become more important. Readers need to be skilful in their abilities to make connections between prior knowledge and new information and to understand what is read in order to increase knowledge, insight and thinking. Capable reading decoders with poor comprehension skills generally exhibit more passive reading behaviours leading to a further decrease in success as a reader.
Research suggests that textual understanding can be improved through the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies (Parker & Hurry 2007; Katims & Harris 1997). Pressley (2000) suggests that proficient readers use a number of strategies, including activating prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension, generating and answering questions, drawing inferences, visualising, identifying text structure and summarising. Munro (2007, p.11) contends that by teaching students different actions that assist them to link ideas within a text, comprehension skills can be improved. He further suggests “effective readers are able to re-read and question what is written; pause and consolidate while reading and visualise and paraphrase the words and sentences in a text”.

Explicit strategy instruction can maximise comprehension (Parker & Hurry, 2007; Lee & Von Colln, 2003), however students need to be provided with information about the purpose in using a strategy, as well as feedback about their success in effecting the strategy ie students need to understand why paraphrasing is useful, as well as when and how to use this strategy. “Building a culture of learning ... requires teachers and students to jointly engage in teaching and learning that is purposeful, relevant and clearly defined. In contemporary educational media ‘explicit teaching’ has been clearly defined as an effective approach to literacy pedagogy that directly influences literacy learning.” (Edwards-Groves, C. J. 1999). My hypothesis supports this contention and my study includes explicit instruction on paraphrasing to the group of five students.

Teaching students to use self monitoring and think-aloud strategies encourages students to become more efficient and independent in their learning (Ernsbarger, 2002). In this way they can see how to improve their own performance and be motivated to do so. This type of teaching and learning gives students a sense of control over their own learning and increases their self confidence (Houtveen & van de Grift, 2007)

Paraphrasing is a strategy that can assist reading comprehension. Successful paraphrasing conveys the original meaning of the text but in the students own words and phrasing; it externalises the reader’s understanding of the information contained in the text. Fisk & Hurst (2003) contend that paraphrasing for comprehension is an excellent way of reinforcing reading skills and when students are taught paraphrasing techniques to use on text, then “paraphrasing can strengthen comprehension of both fiction and non-fiction”(p 182).

It is a strategy that enables teachers to determine the level of understanding a student has gained when reading. McNamara (2004, p 478) contends that the “difficulties readers experience when paraphrasing a sentence often indicate the presence of a comprehension problem”.

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Teaching students to use strategies such as paraphrasing, using synonyms and retelling assists them in making connections between what they have read and their own experiences and verbalise the meaning of the new material in their own words.

The present investigation aims to extend the earlier research by examining the influence that explicit teaching of paraphrasing has on reading comprehension. The Munro Paraphrasing strategy is used in this study and is focussed at the sentence level. The focus is on improving students’ comprehension at sentence level (dependent variable) through the use of paraphrasing (independent variable).

The hypothesis to be investigated is that explicitly teaching Year 3 to paraphrase will improve their reading comprehension of narrative texts.

METHOD

Design

This study uses a case study OXO (Observe, Treatment, Observe) design. Improvements in paraphrasing ability and reading comprehension following explicit teaching of the paraphrasing strategy are monitored for four Year 3 students. The study compares two groups of four students: an Intervention Group and a Control Group consisting of students from the same classroom. For the purposes of this study students in the Intervention Group are identified as Students A, B, C and D and those in the Control Group are Students E, F, G & H.

The students were selected using results of the PROBE comprehension test administered to all class members at the beginning of the school year. Passages were selected based on an individual student’s reading age. The classroom teacher identified eight students who might benefit from additional instruction to assist with developing comprehension strategies to increase their understanding of texts. The classroom teacher expressed concerns at their difficulties when completing both oral and written comprehension tasks.

Students were pretested to ascertain their paraphrasing ability and comprehension of narrative text. After pre-testing, explicit teaching of the paraphrasing strategy to the Intervention Group took place over a series of nine lessons and student progress was regularly monitored throughout this phase. The Control Group did not participate in any explicit teaching of the paraphrasing strategy for the duration of this study. They continued to participate in the regular classroom program when the Intervention Group was withdrawn for their explicit teaching sessions.
Both groups were then post tested and results analysed for evidence of improvement in reading comprehension and paraphrasing ability.

Table 1: PROBE Results (March 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>AGE AT MAR 2009</th>
<th>PROBE READING AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>9 yrs 1 m</td>
<td>8 yrs -9 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8 yrs 8 m</td>
<td>7.5 yrs - 8.5 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>8 yrs 5 m</td>
<td>8 yrs - 9 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>8 yrs 2 m</td>
<td>7.5 yrs - 8.5 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>8 yrs 5 m</td>
<td>6.5 yrs -7.5 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8 yrs 4 m</td>
<td>8 yrs - 9 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>8 yrs 3 m</td>
<td>8 yrs - 9 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>8 yrs 0 m</td>
<td>7.5 yrs - 8.5 yrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants

Students A, B, C, D, F, G, and H all have average decoding and word recognition skills but demonstrate difficulties in the area of reading comprehension at the literal level. Student D is from an NESB background (2nd generation) but usually speaks English at home. The school is situated in a high socio-economic area with a low percentage of NESB students and relatively low incidence of identified learning difficulties.

Student E reads at Reading Recovery Text Level 25. The other seven participants have been assessed as being accurate decoders beyond Level 28+ Reading Recovery Text Level with a reading accuracy >95%, but have below average comprehension, based on PROBE assessments. The students were chosen after consultation with the classroom teacher who was concerned about the students’ inconsistencies at the literal level of comprehension and their limited ability to retell simple texts without teacher prompting or picture cues.

Student E was involved in the Reading Recovery program in Year 1. He was originally chosen to be part of the Intervention Group but commenced the ERIK (Enhancing Reading Intervention Knowledge) program just prior to the Intervention Group’s explicit teaching sessions. He is withdrawn from the classroom for three ERIK sessions weekly, so it was decided that further withdrawal from the regular classroom program would not take place during this term. Student E became part of the Control Group and Student A was moved into the Intervention Group.

Students A & E both have short term auditory memory problems. Student A has a diagnosed high anxiety level and some stuttering difficulties.
Both the Intervention and Control Groups have a similar spread of average to slightly below average achieving students and contain a mix of gender (two males and two females in each group). The Intervention Group has an average age of 104 months and the Control Group’s average age was 100 months.

Table 2: DATA SET Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Intervent or Control Group</th>
<th>Age in Months</th>
<th>NESB No=0 Yes=1</th>
<th>Earlier Intervention</th>
<th>Learning Difficulty</th>
<th>Reading Text Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Speech Path; Short Term Auditory Memory</td>
<td>28+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>28+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>28+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>28+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Reading Rec(Yr 1) ERIK (Yr 2)</td>
<td>Short Term Auditory Memory</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>28+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>28+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>28+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materials

The following materials were used as pre and post assessment tools:

- **John Munro Paraphrasing Test (2005)**
  This test was administered individually to determine each student’s ability to paraphrase at the sentence level of text. For the purposes of this study the first 11 sentences were used.

- **Torch Test of Reading Comprehension (Second edition)**
  TORCH provides assessment data about a student’s ability to construct meaning from a text. The text is conducted as a cloze reading activity.

The following materials were used in the nine teaching sessions:

- **John Munro Comprehension-Paraphrasing Teaching Strategy (2005).** The paraphrasing strategy was explicitly taught using this model over nine sessions. (Appendix 1)

- **Texts**
Fictional narratives were used in the teaching sessions. (Appendix 2) The texts were chosen from collections of Guided Reading material in the middle school. They were a mixture of Level 22 and above (Reading Recovery levels) texts. The selected texts were chosen for their suitability to students’ reading and interest levels.

**Procedure**

Students were withdrawn from their regular classroom and worked in the quiet environment of the Library or Literacy Room during both testing sessions and for all intervention group teaching sessions. The pre-testing took place over a two week period prior to commencing the Intervention Group teaching.

The TORCH Test of Reading Comprehension “*Lizards Love Eggs*” was administered to the eight students in a group setting as part of the pre-testing procedure. Students were given a 45 minute time limit in which to complete the reading and cloze activity and all students finished in 37 minutes or less. The Comprehension-Paraphrasing assessment was administered individually by the teacher conducting this research. The teacher read the sentences to the student; the child read the sentence independently and then attempted to paraphrase. The students’ responses were recorded by the teacher.

Following this assessment students were selected to be part of an Intervention or Control group. Both groups were organised to be as similar as possible according to the following criteria: Reading age (pre-determined by PROBE assessment), pre-test scores, gender and age

The nine lessons of approximately 35 minutes duration, were conducted over a four week period. Although ten sessions were originally planned, it was only possible to complete nine sessions due to timetabling issues within the Year 3 class. Most lessons took place after morning recess; three sessions were taken in the afternoon. All students in the Intervention Group attended all teaching sessions. Students in the control group continued to participate in the regular literacy activities in the Year 3 classroom.

As a preliminary activity to the paraphrasing teaching sessions two 20 minute sessions were taken with all Year 3 students in their regular classroom to revise the students’ knowledge of synonyms. These sessions involved using big book texts which were read sentence by sentence and students worked in pairs to write synonyms for key words. The class teacher uses this term regularly and expected that the students would be very familiar with this type of activity.

All nine lessons with the teaching group followed a similar format as outlined by John Munro (2005). At the commencement of each lesson the students were explicitly told about the reading strategy focus for that session ie “*Today we will be learning about Paraphrasing*”. 
Students were informed that the paraphrasing strategy would help them to recall what they read and assist their ability to retell the text in their own words to show their understanding. As the teaching sessions progressed, students were encouraged, and then expected, to explain the purpose of using this strategy without verbal prompting by the teacher.

Students were asked to read a paragraph silently and then it was read aloud to the group. The teacher then read one sentence at a time and modelled the paraphrasing technique on each sentence. This was done in order to model the paraphrasing strategy to the students. During the modelling the teacher articulated her thoughts and questions to the students eg “I’m going to paraphrase that sentence”; “How can I say it a different way?”; “What does (word) mean?”; “How can I put that in my own words?”. Paraphrasing attempts were recorded on the Interactive White Board (or paper) to allow all students to reread them.

During the first two lessons students were asked to individually paraphrase the sentence modelled by the teacher. This became easier by the end of the second lesson. Initially students tended to add more words and create more complex sentences which did not assist their understandings. A step-by-step approach was then used where the students were required to change just one word in the sentence. This kept their focus on retaining the meaning of the sentence.

They were then able to move on to changing more words in the text and finally to change the sentence structure whilst still retaining meaning. Students selected each other’s “best attempts” to be recorded and viewed by all students. Other attempts were recorded and corrective feedback given by either individuals within the group or the teacher. The positive nature of this feedback appeared to motivate and encourage each of the students. Student’s abilities were extended to successfully paraphrasing whole paragraphs of texts.

An important part of each lesson was for students to verbalise their understanding of paraphrasing and how they would apply that skill to the task at hand eg “I will say it with my words”; “I will change as many words as I can”. At the end of each session students were required to reflect on what they had learned from the paraphrasing activity and/or how it helped them as readers. Students were more forthcoming with their responses as their paraphrasing skills and understanding improved.

Post-Testing for both Intervention and Control Groups took place one week after the completion of the nine teaching sessions. The TORCH Test “Lizards Love Eggs” was once again administered to the group of eight students in one sitting and the Comprehension-Paraphrasing test administered individually. Pre and Post Tests were administered in the same way to maintain consistency of procedural method.
Comparative data was collected during pre and post testing for all students. Anecdotal notes were taken by the researcher during and immediately after teaching sessions on some occasions.

**RESULTS**

Results indicate support for the hypothesis that teaching Year 3 students to paraphrase text increases their reading comprehension. The comprehension scores of all students in the Intervention Group show improvement on both the TORCH and Paraphrasing assessment tasks. Two students in the Control Group also made gains in the TORCH Post test and three students in this group made gains in paraphrasing.

**Table 3: Student’s Pre and Post Testing Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Para PRE /22</th>
<th>Para POST /22</th>
<th>TORCH Raw PRE /20</th>
<th>TORCH Raw POST /20</th>
<th>TORCH Score PRE /20</th>
<th>TORCH Score POST /20</th>
<th>TORCH %ile PRE</th>
<th>TORCH %ile POST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The improvement in the Intervention Group’s TORCH percentile scores was markedly greater than those of the Control Group. All students across both groups scored similar results in the pre-test for reading comprehension, however the post-test results indicate marginal increases in the Control Group’s scores compared to more significant gains by students in the Intervention Group. The Intervention Group’s median Percentile score increased from 35.25 to 53 compared to the Control Group’s gain from 36.5 to 42.
Figure 1

Figure 2 shows a comparison between the groups’ scores on the Pre and Post Paraphrasing tests. The results of students in the Intervention Group are evidence that the explicit teaching of the paraphrasing strategy had a marked effect on their ability to complete this assessment more successfully. The results obtained from the Control Group show that three students made slight gains in their post-testing performance, but these were less significant when compared to those of the students in the Intervention Group.

Overall the Intervention Group made a gain of 16 points from pre-testing to post-testing compared to the Control Group’s gain of 3 points.

Figure 2
The results recorded in Figure 3 clearly show the gains made by the Intervention Group after being taught the paraphrasing strategy. Students A and B showed marked improvement in their ability to paraphrase. Students C and D showed slight improvement. These results support the view that explicit instruction of a reading strategy such as paraphrasing, does impact positively on a student’s reading comprehension ability.

**Figure 3**

![Intervention Group Paraphrasing Results](image)

In Figure 4 Students E, F and G showed minimal improvement in their paraphrasing ability and Student H made no gains. This seems reasonable given the fact that they had no instruction, explicit or otherwise in the use of the paraphrasing strategy between the pre and post testing periods.

**Figure 4**

![Control Group Paraphrasing Results](image)
It is pleasing to see the gains made by the Intervention Group. This may be an indication that they were able to transfer the strategy learning that took place in the explicit teaching sessions to new contexts, in order to help them gain greater meaning from the texts. Another reason for the gains may be because the testing took place soon after the teaching sessions had been completed and therefore the new learning was easily recalled and applied. Further testing at a later date would confirm whether or not the learning has been sustained.

**DISCUSSION**

The focus of this action research was to explicitly teach Year 3 students to paraphrase on text and subsequently investigate the effects this had on the students’ reading comprehension. The results of this study support the hypothesis that explicit teaching of paraphrasing strategies to Year 3 students improves their reading comprehension of narrative texts. These students have a good knowledge of decoding and word recognition skills as shown by their mostly average reading ages. Reading involves both decoding and making meaning. The challenge is to improve their ability to comprehend what is being read and to maintain those gains.

Paraphrasing, both orally and in writing, using synonyms and answering text related questions are some ways to assist students improve their understanding of what they read. The implications for teachers are that they must have a thorough knowledge of what strategies each student needs in order to improve comprehension levels. In addition teachers must put effort into the careful selection of texts that match a student’s ability level, so that the student can practise the strategies in a meaningful context.

One area that assisted students in this study in their retell abilities was the beginning of each lesson where we reviewed the text from the previous day. This opportunity to revisit “known” text assisted some students to check their understandings and clarify details. Their oral retells showed evidence of an increasing number of synonyms and more detail as the lessons progressed. Student effort will need to be further encouraged in the regular classroom reading environment to maintain gains. Small group literacy teaching will allow for further modelling and practise.

The gains shown by Intervention Group students in the TORCH post-test results may be attributed in part to increased paraphrasing skills, but it could be argued that careful rereading and checking for meaning contributed to the improvements. Strategy training may indirectly assist with other areas of comprehension skill building. For example, during paraphrasing instruction, students were required to reread text and change words without altering the meaning of the text. As a cloze activity, the TORCH test requires students to read on and reread to check that responses maintain the meaning of the passage. In this way there is a positive “ripple” effect that flows from explicit strategy training in one area such as paraphrasing.
The strategy of paraphrasing needs to be studied further and used across different curriculum areas. Students need to be taught to see how they can transfer their skill knowledge to different contexts. This builds their confidence and self-management skills; students need to see that they can control their learning and increase their learning gains by knowing when and how to use their repertoire of strategies. Another area of possible study would be how specific comprehension strategy training directly affects students’ self-efficacy.

In this study Student A displayed visible anxiety during the first three paraphrasing teaching sessions, particularly when asked for synonyms and when required to verbalise a sentence he had paraphrased. However, once he became used to the lesson requirements and procedures his verbal interactions and suggestions increased dramatically. He still experienced difficulty with finding suitable synonyms at times but his openness and confidence in using self-talk and self-questioning indicated a high level of confidence and self-efficacy. His enthusiasm “I get it! I get it!” kept him motivated and on task. The classroom teacher is very keen to introduce strategy training on a regular basis in her small group literacy lessons, so hopefully comprehension strategy training will be ongoing and used in other curriculum areas.

This paraphrasing strategy was proven to be effective when taught to a group of children who are capable decoders. Further studies when working with children who have decoding difficulties could be explored. Familiar or easy texts would be necessary at the teaching stage with students with decoding difficulties so they did not become overloaded trying to use the paraphrasing strategy and decode at the same time. Frustration levels would increase and perhaps impede learning. Once again, teacher preparation is crucial to the success of the teaching and learning.

The results support the research of Katims and Harris (1997), Fisk and Hurst (2003) and Lee and Van Colln (2003) who suggest that the explicit teaching of the paraphrasing strategy will improve students’ reading comprehension. Paraphrasing for comprehension helps students process and comprehend what they are reading and skilled readers comprehend well.

This has implications for teaching practice. Comprehension strategies need to be taught as an ongoing part of classroom instruction and practice (Pressley, 2002). Strategies are most effective when taught in context so it is important for teachers to plan for ongoing, long-term instruction in this area. Students who have comprehension difficulties need opportunities to practice the strategies over and over again to develop automaticity in knowing when to use them, not just how to use them. The level of scaffolding required for individuals to progress differs from student to student; this may need adjustment, even during a teaching session which requires teachers to be skilled in teaching comprehension strategies to meet students’ needs.
REFERENCES


RESOURCES


PROBE Reading Assessment, Second Edition, Triune


APPENDIX 1

TEACHING SESSIONS

The aim of the teaching unit was to improve the students’ paraphrasing ability on narrative texts to enhance sentence level comprehension. Students will learn how to paraphrase at the sentence level by selecting synonyms for key words in a given sentence and then restating the sentence in their own words. They will use their knowledge of synonyms to select words for their own sentences that maintain the meaning of the original text. Students worked as a small group of four, then in pairs and also individually depending on the activity and their paraphrasing skill level. At the end of all sessions students were required to reflect on their learning and articulate their knowledge and understandings related to paraphrasing as a useful reading strategy. The lessons were structured to provide Modelling, Coaching & Scaffolding until students were able to complete tasks independently.

PARAPHRASING TEACHING SESSION: LESSON 1

Introduce the Strategy:
Teacher says:
We are going to learn something you can do to help you remember what you read. It’s called paraphrasing. When you paraphrase you read a sentence and then say it in your own words.

Record Paraphrasing strategy:
Teacher lists steps of paraphrasing strategy on chart to be displayed during each lesson.
1. Read a sentence
2. Change as many words as you can but keep the meaning the same.
3. Say the sentence again in your own words.

Discuss using examples.
Teacher models paraphrasing and cues student activity:
Teacher reads first sentence
Discuss: What is the main idea? Discuss key words and main ideas. Let’s practise changing some of the words
Students brainstorm synonyms for some of the key words and teacher scribes these on whiteboard.
Now we will try saying the sentence in our own words using some of these synonyms.
Teacher models then students practise the strategy. What words did you change? Listen to students’ paraphrased sentences and discuss importance of maintaining meaning.
Teacher records students’ sentences for use in later lessons

Teacher reviews the action:
Let us look at what we did here. We read each sentence and then said it in other ways. How did this help you to understand what the text said? Do you have any questions or comments?

Students practise:
Let’s do this with another sentence.
Students read text and practise paraphrasing

**Review the action:**

*Let's discuss what we did when we paraphrased.*

*Tell me what you know about paraphrasing*

*What steps do you follow to paraphrase a text* (Review strategy steps from chart completed at beginning of lesson)

*Now you are going to practise this again. Read each sentence then try to think of a different way of saying each sentence. Put it into your own words using the synonyms we wrote down earlier. Paraphrase two or three sentences in your books.*

Students practise in pairs (orally) then individually (writing).

**Review of paraphrasing strategy:**

*Tell me what you know about paraphrasing and how you use it? How is this helpful when you read?*

Students articulate responses.
**PARAPHRASING TEACHING SESSIONS: LESSONS 2-9**

Lessons were adapted from John Munro’s Paraphrasing Lesson Plans.

Teacher pre-preparation: Teacher reads new text and notes key words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TASK</strong></th>
<th><strong>METHOD</strong></th>
<th><strong>TIME</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous text retell</td>
<td>Students retell what they remember about the previous day’s text including as many key details as possible.</td>
<td>4 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous text reread</td>
<td>Parts of text are reread and synonyms reviewed. Students paraphrase text as it is read, referring back to written paraphrases if required.</td>
<td>4 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Review | Ask students to explain what they are going to do while reading  
- Read the sentence  
- Change the key words but keep the meaning the same  
- Say the sentence again in my own words  
Have each student verbalise this strategy aloud. | 1 min |
| **PROCESS FOR EACH SENTENCE** | | |
| New text: synonyms | New text is read silently by each student, then paragraph is read aloud by Teacher/Students (modelling)  
Students brainstorm synonyms for key words  
Teacher records (on w/b or paper) | 8 mins |
| Paraphrase | Students read sentences (one sentence at a time)  
Teacher asks “What is another way of saying it? Tell it to someone else in another way.”  
Students say sentence in own words using the synonyms  
Students record their paraphrases in journals  
NB Teacher records on large paper or Int W/Bd if students are having difficulty and need modelling prior to students writing in journals  
Corrective feedback provided where required | 8 mins |
| Assessment | Compare paraphrased sentences to see which one(s) most closely matches the text (not done in every session) | 5 mins |
| Review | Students comment/reflect on what has been learned in the session. Teacher asks “What do you do when you paraphrase a sentence? How does paraphrasing help you?” | 3 mins |
| Game | Use games to reinforce synonyms and paraphrasing, for example  
- “Word Tennis”: tchr/student “serves” a word and other three students “return” a synonym.  
- BINGO with synonyms or sentences. | 3 mins |
## APPENDIX 2

### TEXTS USED IN PARAPHRASING SESSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>TEXT</th>
<th>TEXT LEVEL</th>
<th>GENRE</th>
<th>SERIES</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Perfect Paper Planes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>PM+</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Perfect Paper Planes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>PM+</td>
<td>10-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Stone Soup</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Red Rocket Books</td>
<td>2-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Stone Soup</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Red Rocket Books</td>
<td>8-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tracey and the Sun</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Sails</td>
<td>2-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tracey and the Sun</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Sails</td>
<td>8-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Seawall</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>PM Chapter</td>
<td>5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Seawall</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>PM Chapter</td>
<td>15-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Selection of Lvl 25 texts; students choose own</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>