Explicitly teaching paraphrasing to grade five students in a whole-class setting is more effective in improving the comprehension of underachieving readers than teaching an isolated small group of underachieving readers.

PARAPHRASING: Sequence of lessons

Session One:

Aim:

Introduce the paraphrasing strategy and support students to see how it is useful in understanding what we read.

Resources:

- Original and class-set of photocopies of ‘In Flanders Fields’ by Norman Jorgensen & Brian Harrison-Lever pg’s 1 & 2
- Poster paper and textas

1. Introduce the strategy of paraphrasing by saying ‘I am going to teach you something that will help you remember what you read. It is called paraphrasing. It works like this – after you have read a sentence, you stop, think about it, and then you say the sentence in your own words.’

2. Make a poster to illustrate the strategy of paraphrasing:
   
   **PARAPHRASING**
   
   Read a sentence
   
   Change as many words as you can while keeping the meaning the same
   
   Say the sentence in your own words.

3. Teacher reads aloud the first sentence from ‘In Flanders Fields’. Early on Christmas morning the guns stop firing. Teacher writes the sentence on the whiteboard, and re-reads the sentence aloud.

4. Teacher then paraphrases the sentence aloud – It is early hours of Christmas morning, and no more gun shots could be heard. The new sentence is written under the original one on the whiteboard.

5. A student is chosen to read the next sentence aloud – A deathly silence creeps over the pitted and ruined landscape. Another 3 students are asked to paraphrase the sentence. Record all 3 new sentences, and check as a group that the sentence has maintained its original meaning.

6. Students break into pairs to paraphrase the following sentence: For many soldiers the sound of exploding shells and the chatter of machine-guns continues in their heads; their minds damaged by the weeks of deafening noise. Come back together as group to share some of the new sentences.

7. As a whole group review the poster made earlier in the session. Revisit how paraphrasing works, and why it is a helpful strategy when trying to understand what we read.
Session Two:

Aim:

Give students practise in paraphrasing single sentences.

Resources:

- ‘In Flanders Fields’ by Norman Jorgensen & Brian Harrison-Lever, pg 3
- Sentence strips containing each sentence from pg 3.

1. Review previous session’s poster on paraphrasing, and ask for student input into why paraphrasing is useful.

2. Teacher and students read the following paragraph together – *Men step down from the raised firing boards into the slush of the trench and drink strong scalding tea. Their tin cups shake uncontrollably in the cold morning air. Mail has been delivered and is handed out. Sadly, many letters and parcels have to be returned to the mail sack.*

3. Teacher and students take turns in paraphrasing each sentence in the paragraph aloud.

4. Teacher hands out the sentence strips to pairs of students. They must paraphrase their given sentence changing as many words as possible whilst maintaining the original meaning.

5. Review the paraphrased sentences as a whole class. Did they maintain meaning?

6. As a class, add to the poster made in session one. Encourage students to verbalise why paraphrasing is useful. In a different coloured texta, add:

   **PARAPHRASING**
   
   Read a sentence
   
   Change as many words as you can while keeping the meaning the same
   
   Say the sentence in your own words.

   Paraphrasing helps us to understand what we are reading. We can change tricky words and sentences to help us feel confident and work out what any text is saying.
Session Three:

Aim:

Give students practice in paraphrasing pairs of sentences.

Resources:

- ‘In Flanders Fields’ by Norman Jorgensen & Brian Harrison-Lever, pg 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

1. Teacher and students read the following text aloud together- But one young soldier remains peering through a periscope over the top of the trench. Way out in no-man’s land, he sees a small red shape moving on the barbed wire. A brightly coloured robin is trapped. One wing is flapping helplessly. The bird is unable to free itself from the tangle of deadly barbs. Reluctantly, the young soldier turns away. He walks down the trench to get his mail and warm himself by the small fire. From home they have sent him a Christmas card and a white silk scarf. A letter brings news of his family, school friends and neighbours in a world that seems years away.

2. Students are instructed to use a coloured pencil/texta to underline the first two sentences green, the second two sentences red, the third two sentences blue, the fourth two sentences yellow, and the last sentence of the paragraph brown.

3. Teacher and students paraphrase each pair of sentences together. Teacher writes old and new sentences on the whiteboard. Discuss together – after we paraphrased each pair do they still mean the same thing? If not, alter the paraphrased sentences.

4. Teacher and students read pgs 7 & 8 aloud together. In pairs or small groups, students paraphrase each single sentence.

5. Come together as a group at the end, and record the single paraphrased sentences. Teacher asks the students to reflect on the following questions:

“Does changing the words in sentences help us to better understand what we read?

If so, why is that?

Will you use this new skill you’ve learned in other lessons at school, or when you’re at home?

How?”
Session Four:

Aim:

Give students practice in paraphrasing pairs of sentences.

Resources:

- ‘In Flanders Fields’ by Norman Jorgensen & Brian Harrison-Lever, pg 9,10,11,12,13
- Posters with each pair of sentences from pages 9-13 written in texta at the top.

1. Students read the text on pages 9-13 aloud as a group without the teacher.
2. As a group, teacher and students paraphrase pairs of sentences together.
3. Students are arranged into pairs or groups of 3. They are given three minute intervals to move around the classroom, and paraphrase each sentence pair, onto the bottom of the poster paper. Once they have written their sentence, they fold the paper up to obscure their sentence from the rest of the groups. Continue until each group/pair has paraphrased all six pairs of sentences.
4. Teacher unfolds each poster, one at a time. Together as a group read the paraphrased sentence pairs and discuss if meaning was maintained.
5. Teacher chooses one pair of paraphrased sentences from each poster. Students are asked to close their eyes and listen as the teacher reads all of the chosen sentences in sequence. Discuss – can we still follow the story even though each of the sentences has been changed into our own words?
Session Five:

Aim:

Give students practise in paraphrasing whole paragraphs.

Resources:

- Pocket Money – A duty? A Right? Unnecessary?

1. Students are given time to read the whole article quietly to themselves.

2. Students are asked to read the first paragraph aloud together.

3. Teacher and students paraphrase the whole paragraph together. Teacher requests lots of student response, and checks that everyone is happy that each paraphrased sentence maintains the original meaning before recording it on the whiteboard.

4. Students are asked to read the second paragraph aloud together. In pairs or groups of three they then break off to paraphrase the paragraph, and record their new paragraph.

5. Come back together and revisit the class paraphrasing poster from sessions one and two. Ask for student input into how they feel about the paraphrasing strategy. When feedback is positive, record the sentence “I/we like paraphrasing because...... “It is helpful to paraphrase when... Ensure you are writing the student’s names beside their comment on the poster. See below:

PARAPHRASING

Read a sentence

Change as many words as you can while keeping the meaning the same

Say the sentence in your own words.

Paraphrasing helps us to understand what we are reading. We can change tricky words and sentences to help us feel confident and work out what any text is saying.

We like paraphrasing because...

It is helpful to paraphrase when...
Session Six:

Aim:

Give students practise in paraphrasing whole paragraphs.

Resources:

- Pocket Money – A duty? A Right? Unnecessary?
  
  1. Students are asked to read the third paragraph aloud together, without teacher input.

  2. Teacher and students paraphrase the whole paragraph together. Teacher requests lots of student response, and checks that everyone is happy that each paraphrased sentence maintains the original meaning before recording it on the whiteboard.

  3. Students are asked to read the fourth paragraph aloud together. In pairs or groups of three they then break off to paraphrase the paragraph, and record their new paragraph.

  4. Students then join another pair/group of three to share their paraphrased paragraphs. Each group must check that the original meaning of the paragraph was maintained.

  5. Review as a whole group. Choose one group to share their paraphrased paragraph and as a whole group review whether the meaning was maintained.
**Session Seven:**

**Aim:**

Students are scaffolded to have a go at paraphrasing sentences individually.

**Resources:**

- Pocket Money – A duty? A Right? Unnecessary?

1. Students read the fifth and sixth paragraph aloud together **without teacher input.**

2. Remaining as a whole group, students are chosen to verbally paraphrase the paragraphs just read aloud, one sentence at a time.

3. Students then go off and individually write a paraphrase of each sentence in paragraphs five and six. They are encouraged to read over each sentence, think about how to change some words, and then write it down. Students must check each paraphrased sentence as they complete it to check that it has kept its original meaning.

4. Come back together as a whole group and share some students’ new paragraphs. Revisit class paraphrasing poster, and add any new feelings/discoveries about the strategy.
Session Eight:

Aim:

Students are scaffolded to have a go at paraphrasing paragraphs individually.

Resources:

- Pocket Money – A duty? A Right? Unnecessary?

1. Students read the seventh and eighth paragraphs **silently to themselves**.

2. In the whole group, students are then chosen to paraphrase each paragraph aloud. Teacher records as the students are paraphrasing so the whole group can review whether meaning was maintained.

3. Students break into pairs or small groups to write their paraphrased version of paragraphs seven and eight.

4. Come back together as a whole group to share some examples of the paraphrased paragraphs.

5. Teacher seeks students’ feelings about the paraphrasing strategy, and their confidence and willingness to use it without being told to. Ask – when can you use the paraphrasing strategy? How do you plan to use it this coming day/week?
Session Nine:

Aim:

Students are scaffolded to have a go at paraphrasing paragraphs individually.

Resources:

- Pocket Money – A duty? A Right? Unnecessary?

1. Students read the ninth and tenth paragraphs silently to themselves.

2. In the whole group, students are called upon to paraphrase each paragraph aloud.

3. Students are then asked to individually write a paraphrase of each sentence in paragraphs nine and ten.

4. Students are then asked to join with another person and share their new paragraphs together. As a pair they must check that each sentence maintains its original meaning.
Session Ten:

Aim:
Students paraphrase paragraphs individually.

Resources:

- Pocket Money – A duty? A Right? Unnecessary?
  1. Review ‘paraphrasing’ poster. Check if anybody would like to add any feelings about the strategy to it.
  2. Students read the eleventh and twelfth paragraphs silently to themselves.
  3. Each student is given time to paraphrase each of the paragraphs silently.
  4. Students are asked to write down the paraphrased paragraphs that they just formulated in their heads.
  5. Come together as a whole group. Ask students to individually think about paraphrasing as a strategy. Encourage reflection through the following prompts:
    - What is paraphrasing?
    - How do we do it?
    - Is paraphrasing a useful strategy?
    - What makes it useful? What does it help us to do?
    - When can we use the strategy of paraphrasing?
    - How do you plan to use paraphrasing in the future?