

**Teaching Year Three / Four students to use synonyms as part of paraphrasing,
improves their reading comprehension level.**

Procedure

The activities implemented with each group were as follows:

Session 1: Teacher and children discussed what a synonym is and listed synonyms for words such as big, little. Children played a teacher devised synonym game using words from their guided reading text.

Children matched and shared synonyms and teacher listed on a chart. Any further words the children could think of were added.

Session 2: Teacher revised synonyms with children and added any others the children had thought of to the chart. Teacher presents sentence from Session 1 text to children, breaking it into meaningful parts. As a group children come up with synonyms for each part. Link the synonyms into a statement and say the synonyms in a sentence. Check meaning and repeat with a number of other sentences.

Session 3 and 4: Children share any synonyms they have come up with since last session and teacher lists on a chart. Teacher presents children with a small number of words underlined. Children list some synonyms for these words. Together, look at one sentence at a time, segment it into meaningful parts and link the synonyms into a sentence. Say it another way so it means the same thing. Have children verbalise the steps – Read the sentence, Break it into parts, Write synonyms for as many words as possible, Say the sentence another way so that it means the same think. Have children verbalise what they did and how paraphrasing helps them.

Session 5 and 6: Children verbalise the steps they go through when they paraphrase. Children read aloud a different passage each from guided reading text. Each child is given a sentence, in which they have to follow the paraphrasing steps. Each child reads their original sentence and then their paraphrased attempt. Group discusses whether each sentence retained the original meaning. Share thoughts on the sessions and what was helpful.

Session 7: Students begin by sharing what they do when they paraphrase. Teacher gives each child a 'challenge sheet', where they are required to paraphrase 5 sentences individually. On completion, each child takes turns to read their paraphrased sentence. As a group, decide which sentence is the closest in meaning to the original sentence. Repeat with all sentences and share thoughts on the lesson.

Sessions 8 and 9: Students verbalise what they do when they paraphrase. Each child takes turns to read aloud a short passage from the guided reading text. Using two sentences each, the children follow the steps to paraphrase. They then read the original sentences and then their paraphrased sentences and discuss as a group whether or not the meaning was retained and whether there were any other synonyms, which could have been used. Share thoughts on the sessions.

Session 10: Students verbalise what they do when they paraphrase. Each child reads a paragraph and has an attempt at paraphrasing the paragraph, writing it down and then sharing it with the group. Discuss whether the meaning was retained. Discuss what they have learnt over the 10 sessions and how they can use paraphrasing to assist them when they read.

TEACHING OUTLINES

The following lessons were undertaken with a group of four Grade 3 /4 students. The students were withdrawn and had three to four 30- minute sessions per week.

Lesson 1

Teach Synonyms:

- Discuss what a synonym is.
- Ask children to suggest synonyms for words such as little and big. List on a chart.
- Play teacher devised synonym-matching game from words taken from the groups' guided reading text 'Shosun's Mistake' by John Lockyer. (Level 23)
- Hand out an equal number of words to each child. The matching synonym for each word is spread out on the floor. Children take turns to find the matching synonym for their words. Each child takes turns to read aloud the word and the synonym. Teacher lists on chart. (Hurried-rushed, track-path, yell-shout, faster-quicker, hurry-rush, looking-gazing, afraid-scared, shouted-yelled, jumped-leaped, woods-forest, ask-question, strange-odd, harm-hurt, started-began, blur-fuzz, help-assist)
- Group discusses any further words, which can be added to these synonyms eg: afraid- scared, frightened

Lesson 2

- Revise synonyms from lesson 1. Add any other synonyms that children have thought of to the chart.
- Teacher presents a sentence from the text from Lesson 1 to the children with the sentence segmented into meaningful parts.
- As a group, the children come up with some synonyms for each of the parts. 'Paulo / hurried / along the track
- Have the children link the synonyms into a statement and say the synonyms in a sentence. Eg: Paulo rushed down the path.
- Check that it means the same as the original sentence.
- Repeat these steps with another sentence from the text.
- Ask children to try to find some synonyms in books they are reading during silent reading time.

Lesson 3

- Share any synonyms children have come up with from silent reading. List on synonyms chart.
- Teacher presents children with a small paragraph from the text with a number of words underlined.
- As a group the children list some synonyms that can be used to replace the underlined words.
- Take one of these sentences at a time and segment it into meaningful parts.
- As a group, have children link the synonyms into a sentence. Ask children to work out how they can say the sentence another way so that it means the same thing,
- Check that it retains the meaning of the original sentence.

- Discuss the steps used: - Read the sentence
Break it into meaningful parts
Write synonyms for as many words as possible
Say the sentence another way so it means the same thing
- Repeat these steps with the following sentences in the paragraph.

Lesson 4

- Teacher presents children with a small paragraph from the text with a number of words underlined.
- Individually, children list some synonyms that can be used to replace the underlined words.
- Share them with the group; discuss whether the word fits with the meaning of the text and list on a chart.
- Take one sentence at a time and as a group break it into meaningful parts.
- Individually, have children link the synonyms into a sentence. Ask children to say the sentence another way so that it means the same thing.
- Share sentences and discuss whether each sentence retains the same meaning as the original sentence.
- Have children explain what they did when they paraphrased and comment on how it helps them read better.

Lesson 5

- Have students begin by sharing what they do when they paraphrase. Eg: 'I will read the sentence, break the sentence into parts, write synonyms for as many words as I can and then say it another way so that it means the same thing.
- Using the group's guided reading text, 'What a Haircut!' by Patricia Gray, (Level 23), take turns or reading aloud a short passage.
- Give children a different sentence each and ask them to use the following steps to paraphrase. – Read the sentence again

Break it into meaningful parts

Write synonyms for as many words as possible

Say it another way so that it means the same thing

- Ask each child to write the paraphrase of their sentence.
- Each child takes turns to read their original sentence and then their paraphrased attempt.
- Discuss as a group each sentence retained the original meaning.
- Children share their thoughts on today's lesson. Was it helpful? Why? How can you use it in the classroom?

Lesson 6

- Have students begin by sharing what they do when they paraphrase. Eg: 'I will read the sentence, break the sentence into parts, write synonyms for as many words as I can and then say it another way so that it means the same thing.

- Using the group's guided reading text, 'What a Haircut!' by Patricia Gray, (Level 23), take turns or reading aloud a different passage from Lesson 5.
- Give children a different sentence each and ask them to use the following steps to paraphrase. – Read the sentence again

Break it into meaningful parts

Write synonyms for as many words as possible

Say it another way so that it means the same thing

- Ask each child to write the paraphrase of their sentence.
- Each child takes turns to read their original sentence and then their paraphrased attempt.
- Discuss as a group whether each sentence retained the original meaning.
- Children share their thoughts on today's lesson. Was it helpful? Why? How can you use it in the classroom?

Lesson 7

- Have students begin by sharing what they do when they paraphrase. Eg: 'I will read the sentence, break the sentence into parts, write synonyms for as many words as I can and then say it another way so that it means the same thing.'
- Hand out a 'Challenge Sheet' to children. They have to paraphrase 5 sentences individually and then share it with the group.
- Each child takes turns to read its paraphrased sentence.
- As a group decide which is the closest in meaning to the original sentence.
- Repeat with the remaining sentences.
- Children share their thoughts on the lesson. Today I learnt... found...

Lesson 8

- Have students begin by sharing what they do when they paraphrase. Eg: 'I will read the sentence, break the sentence into parts, write synonyms for as many words as I can and then say it another way so that it means the same thing.'
- Using the group's guided reading text, 'Frank and Sam's Summer at Aramoana', (Level 25), take turns or reading aloud a short passage
- Give each child two sentences and ask them to use the following steps to paraphrase. – Read the sentences again

Break it into meaningful parts

Write synonyms for as many words as possible

Say it another way so that it means the same thing

- Ask each child to write the paraphrase of their sentences.
- Each child takes turns to read their original sentences and then their paraphrased sentences.
- Discuss as a group the sentences and decide whether the meaning was retained. Were there any other synonyms that could have been used?

- Share thoughts on their learning and how they have been using paraphrasing in the classroom.

Lesson 9

- Have students begin by sharing what they do when they paraphrase. Eg: 'I will read the sentence, break the sentence into parts, write synonyms for as many words as I can and then say it another way so that it means the same thing.'
- Using the group's guided reading text, 'Frank and Sam's Summer at Aramoana', (Level 25), take turns or reading aloud a short passage
- Give each child two sentences and ask them to use the following steps to paraphrase. – Read the sentences again

Break it into meaningful parts

Write synonyms for as many words as possible

Say it another way so that it means the same thing

- Ask each child to write the paraphrase of their sentences.
- Each child takes turns to read their original sentences and then their paraphrased sentences.
- Discuss as a group the sentences and decide whether the meaning was retained. Were there any other synonyms that could have been used?
- Share thoughts on their learning and how they have been using paraphrasing in the classroom.

Lesson 10

- Have students begin by sharing what they do when they paraphrase. Eg: 'I will read the sentence, break the sentence into parts, write synonyms for as many words as I can and then say it another way so that it means the same thing.'
- Using the group's guided reading text, 'Frank and Sam's Summer at Aramoana', (Level 25), take turns or reading aloud a few pages.
- Give each child a paragraph and ask them to use the following steps to paraphrase. – Read the sentences again

Break it into meaningful parts

Write synonyms for as many words as possible

Say it another way so it means the same thing

- Ask each child to write the paraphrase of their paragraph.
- Each child reads their original paragraph and then their paraphrasing of the paragraph.
- Discuss as a group whether the meaning was retained.
- Share thoughts on their learning of paraphrasing and discuss how they can use paraphrasing to assist them when they read.