

# Teaching the *RAP Strategy* of paraphrasing does improve levels of comprehension

## TEACHING SESSION OUTLINES

The aim of the teaching sessions was to improve upon paraphrasing strategies while reading, to enhance sentence level comprehension. Paraphrasing enables students to engage in the text and gain a greater understanding at the sentence level. Synonyms were taught to assist and improve the paraphrasing strategy. Throughout the earlier sessions the teacher modelled the use of synonyms and the paraphrasing strategy.

The focus for sessions 1 – 4 was to explore and develop the use of synonyms. The students were encouraged to develop a list in which they could refer to when required. A shared reading strategy was adopted to help scaffold the learning. Texts were matched to the Grade Three level according to the Fry's Readability Scale. Synonyms were identified both in and out of the context of a narrative, using simple sentences and then gradually building up to more complex sentences and eventually two to three paragraphs during the last two sessions. The focus for sessions 5 – 10 was to teach the RAP strategy to improve paraphrasing. Using both the knowledge of synonyms and the RAP strategy at the sentence level the students were asked to **R**eread the sentence, **A**sk themselves what it was about (the main ideas) and **R**etell using their own words. The students were encouraged to check that the sentences still maintained the original meaning and main ideas. To continue to scaffold the learning, the students worked in a group of three before individually, when paraphrasing a paragraph. The final two sessions required the students to incorporate the skills and knowledge taught to paraphrase two to three paragraphs of a narrative text. At the end of all sessions the students were asked to reflect on their learning and articulate their understandings and thoughts.

The session outlines are as follows:

This paraphrasing strategy was adapted from Munro 'Teaching Comprehension – Paraphrasing Strategy', taken from the 2007 'Literacy Intervention Strategy' notes. The teaching of these sessions incorporated the Collins Model of Teaching and Learning (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989).

**Comprehension Lesson Outlines Sessions 1-4 Synonyms**

| <b>Activity</b>                                | <b>Task Description</b>  | <b>Time</b> |
|--|--|-------------|
| <b>Synonyms Review and Games</b>               | Students play synonym matching games, where synonyms are written on flashcards and distributed to the students and then bundled together according to meaning. These synonyms are chosen by the teacher and taken out of context of a narrative.   | 5 mins      |
| <b>Synonym Defining</b>                        | Students define words chosen by the teacher from the children's thesaurus, ensuring that meaning is maintained.  | 5 mins      |
| <b>Synonym identification (Shared reading)</b> | Students read shared text chosen by the teacher and matched to a Grade 3 level using the Fry's Readability Scale. Teacher models retelling a sentence by using and changing synonyms in that sentence. Students asked to identify synonyms within the passage. Teacher then identifies particular synonyms within sentences and asks students to offer suggestions for the synonym, ensuring that meaning is maintained within the sentence. | 10 mins     |
| <b>Text Retelling</b>                          | Teacher models paraphrasing of text listing synonyms used. Sentence by sentence. Students retell the text sentence by sentence as a group in their own words.  | 5 mins      |
| <b>Reflection</b>                              | Synonyms recalled from the session are listed on a poster. Students articulate new learning for the session and reflect on what they now know that they didn't know before. Students are then asked, "How could we use this learning in another way?"  | 5 mins      |

**Comprehension Lesson Outlines    Sessions 5 – 10 Paraphrasing**

| <b>Activity</b>                     | <b>Task Description</b>  | <b>Time</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------------|
| <b>Text Retelling</b>               | Students retell the text from the previous day in their own words.   | 2 mins      |
| <b>Synonyms</b>                     | Teacher and students review synonyms from previous session, as listed on poster. Teacher introduces new synonyms that will be encountered in the shared / independent reading text.  | 3 mins      |
| <b>Text Reading</b>                 | Students read the text: (Shared Reading for sessions 5 & 6)<br>(Independently for sessions 7 – 10)   | 5 mins      |
| <b>Sentence/paragraph retelling</b> | Teacher identifies a sentence for sessions 5-6, paragraph for sessions 7 - 8 to be read and retold. Sessions 9 – 10 students to retell 2 – 3 paragraphs. Students are cued to paraphrase and then say what they did. (Refer to RAP strategy)<br>Teacher encourages students to choose a sentence to paraphrase. Teacher continues to model paraphrasing of various sentences within the text to scaffold the learning, then encourage students to retell as a group and finally independently. As a group revise and discuss the main ideas and details of the text. | 5 mins      |
| <b>RAP Strategy</b>                 | Using same text, students use the RAP strategy on the cue card to <b>Re</b> -read, <b>A</b> sk themselves questions about the main ideas and details, <b>P</b> ut the ideas into their own words, trying to change as many words as possible.<br>Sessions 5 & 6 group task<br>Session 7 – 10 pair/individual task – to scaffold the learning.  | 10 mins     |
| <b>Reflection</b>                   | Students articulate new learning for the session and reflect on what they now know that they didn't know before. Students are then asked, "How could we use this learning in another way?"   | 5 mins      |

# **RAP**

## **Paraphrasing Strategy**

**Read the Text.**

**Ask yourself questions about the main idea and details.**

**Put into your own words. Try to change as many words as you can.**

## MODEL OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

A model of teaching that considers the nature of the learning process that could be applied to intervention with students who have oral language difficulties is that developed by Collins, Brown & Newman (1989). This model has six principles of instruction, three which are the responsibility of the Teacher and three that are the responsibility of the student. The principles are as follows:

|                                      |                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| <b>Responsibility of the Teacher</b> | Modelling            | Teacher models the actual task and how it is to be completed   |
|                                      | Coaching             | The teacher guides, prompts and provides feedback as the student engages in the task. This support is required on an ongoing basis.  |
|                                      | Scaffolding & Fading | The teacher provides some cues to assist the student to recall how to complete the task. These cues occur less often and are faded out as the student is able to increasingly complete the task independently. |
|                                      |                      |  |
| <b>Responsibility of the Student</b> | Articulation         | Student explains what they have learned (ie. knowledge / process strategy) and when they can use what they have learned.   |
|                                      | Reflection           | Students reflect on what they have learned focusing on identifying what they know now that that they did not know before.  |
|                                      | Exploration          | Students are encouraged to consider how they can use what they have learned (ie. knowledge / process strategy) in new tasks and contexts.  |

Collins, A., Brown, J.S. & Newman, S.E. (1989) Cognitive apprenticeship: teaching the crafts of reading, writing and mathematics. In L.B. Resnik (ed.) *Knowing, learning and instruction: Essays in honour of Robert Glaser*. Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.