

The explicit teaching of a paraphrasing strategy to year three and four students who have comprehension difficulties, will improve in their overall literal and inferential comprehension.

Paraphrasing Sessions as adapted from John Munro’s Teaching a paraphrasing strategy (2006) Teacher dialogue in *italics*.

Session 1 Text: The Jaguar: A great cat

This lesson went for about 80 min due to the fact that it was the first session and thorough explanation was required.
 About 30 min was spent on oral language work and about 50 min on paraphrasing in groups.

Discussion on text- *What do you think this text will be about?
 What kinds of words are we likely to find in it?
 What do you know about this topic?*

Make a list of vocabulary and discuss the meanings.

Introduce the strategy: *We are going to learn a way of helping us to remember what we read. This is called paraphrasing. It’s what we did in the pre paraphrasing test, where we read certain sentences and then we tried to put them in our own words without changing the meaning.*

We will begin doing this first with sentences and then with paragraphs.

We are going to read about some of the big cats, like lions and tigers that live around the world. It is a factual text.

I will read the first paragraph aloud and then I will ask some people to reread certain sentences.

After the first paragraph has been read twice, then the teacher demonstrates how each sentence is paraphrased. Have a few sentences written on the board as an example.
 Then invite children to offer their attempts at paraphrasing the same sentences until they get the idea.

Sentence read	Teacher paraphrases	Students paraphrase
This text is about some of the big cats, like lions and tigers that live around the world.	This is a story about some of the big cats that inhabit the Earth.	
When you hear the word ‘cat’ you probably think of the pets you have at home.	Hearing the word ‘cat’ might cause you to see in your mind the animals that live with us.	

Teacher reviews the action: *What did we do? Did saying the sentence in another way help you to understand it? Students give their responses. Now you are going to have a go at paraphrasing in pairs or small groups. You can select your own group or partner. Talk to your partner or group first before you do any writing.*

Give students the opportunity to practice in pairs or small groups. Give each group a paragraph to paraphrase and have written the number of sentences next to each paragraph to assist them. Encourage them to use the list of vocabulary that the class suggested to help with word substitutions. Students have a go at writing the suggested paraphrase. Tell them that we will be sharing some of these at the end of the session.

The ten children in the intervention group are asked to come to the front to do this task with teacher guidance.

I would like my group to come out to the front and we will try this together. Let's read the sentence all together. Can you tell me some of the important words in that sentence? Have a chat to your partner about changing some of the words. Let's see if any of these words we want are on the board. Who would like to have a go at paraphrasing the first sentence? Can we say it another way?

Sharing time: Gather all students and share different paraphrases, especially so that intervention group can hear good responses.

Reflection: *Let's discuss what steps we used to paraphrase.* Ask students to express what we did.

Have students write down what we do when we paraphrase, as follows:

1. The first step in paraphrasing is to read a sentence.
2. The second step is to change as many words as you can while keeping the meaning the same.
3. The third step is to say the sentence again in your own words,

Sessions Two-Thirteen

All sessions followed the format below:

Activity	Task Description
<p>Text Retelling Text from previous session Read the three paraphrasing steps. Revise synonyms from previous text.</p>	<p>Students retell passage from the previous session. They revise what actions we do when we paraphrase.</p>
<p>Text Reading Teacher reads entire text to the class As a class different students are asked to read from the text.</p>	<p>Students read new text and discuss concepts and vocabulary.</p>

Activity	Task Description
Vocabulary and synonym work. Display these on the board.	Children use dictionary and thesaurus to find substitute words for the text. They can work in pairs or small groups.
Paraphrasing Writing new sentences	Students reread the text and then attempt their own paraphrasing. Students are given a proforma to fill in. the sentences to be paraphrased are written in one column and they have a space to write next to it.
Intensive focus for Intervention Group	Intervention group come out on the floor and work together with the teacher. They can pair up to do the written work. Each sentence is reread and discussed. What are some words that we can change? Use synonym list. Paraphrase some sentences orally. Ensure all students have a go.
Sharing time Revise paraphrasing steps and how paraphrasing helps with reading.	Gather students together to discuss findings and share paraphrasing.

Session	Text
1	The Jaguar: A great Cat
2	It's not a rat, it's not a cat, it's a ...
3	Our forests have gone to keep us warm
4	Gave all my class a synonym test to gain insight into which students could substitute words effectively. They got a point for each correct response. John Munro (2005) Synonyms task.
5	The animals that live in the Earth's coldest areas ~half of text
6	The animals that live in the Earth's coldest areas ~ other half of text
7	The energy we use: Fossil fuels or renewable energy
8	Energy from fossil fuels(first four paragraphs)
9	Energy from fossil fuels(last four paragraphs)

Session	Text
10	Other types of energy(down to energy from the sun)
11	Other types of energy(down to wind power)
12	Wind power
13	Biomass energy

I found that the students especially in my intervention group, were finding the concepts in the texts quite difficult to grasp, therefore it was more practical to do some texts over two sessions. I also found it easier to give students a worksheet consisting of the sentences/paragraphs to be paraphrased. They were given a copy of the entire text to read first.

The scores of the Synonym task for the intervention group are as follows:

Student	Year	Score
A	3	23
B	3	32
C	3	10
D	3	18
E	3	12
F	4	34
G	4	27
H	4	32
I	4	43
J	4	14

There seems to be a correlation between synonyms, paraphrasing and comprehension. This also sheds some light for student J, who didn't make significant gains in post paraphrasing and comprehension scores. Implications for future teaching are to ensure that work on synonyms be incorporated in literacy sessions.

In comparison to the rest of the class, most of the other students had scores ranging from 20-62. Scores for the grade fours were mostly in the mid thirties to the score of 62, therefore student J from the intervention group scored very low compared to her peers in the class.