

The hypothesis to be investigated is: The Teaching of paraphrasing, with a focus on synonyms, will improve comprehension at the sentence level in non fiction texts.

TEACHING OUTLINES

Lesson 1

Introduce students to their books prepared for the ensuing 10 lessons and ask them to turn to the first page.

“I read it, but I don’t get it.....”

A female of the Homo Sapiens species was the possessor of a small, immature ruminant of the genus Ovis, the outermost covering of which reflected all wavelengths of visible light with a luminosity equal to that of a mass of naturally occurring, microscopically crystalline water. Regardless of the translational pathway chosen by the Homo Sapiens female, there was 100% probability that the aforementioned ruminant would select the same pathway.

Strickland, Ganske, Monroe,2002.

The above passage is a text, that when deciphered, becomes:

“Mary had a little lamb.”

This text is used to show students that without background knowledge and knowing the meanings of many words in the text, being able to comprehend this passage would be nigh on impossible.

Brainstorming activity – What problems do they find when reading.

Teacher to list reasons on the whiteboard.

Explain to students that in the next 2 lessons they will be working on a relevant text to their inquiry unit. In this text we will try and use synonyms for as many words as possible.

Games with synonym cards.

Students will be directed to the text:

“First Buildings”

Looking at the first sentence:

“The tents and improvised shelters put up during the first days ashore were adequate in fine weather.”

9 words have been highlighted in this sentence and students are asked to suggest synonyms/words with a similar meaning, for the 9 words. This is done as a group activity. Children write the words in their book and write the synonyms next to each word.

Once all words have appropriate synonyms next to them, children will be asked to try and re-create the given sentence, maintaining the meaning. Children will share their sentence with the class and will write in on a sentence strip to be displayed.

Re-cap on the lesson – making sure that children know what a synonym is.

Re-read the sentence from the text and ask for someone to re-tell the sentence in their own words, orally, using some of the synonyms discussed during the 1st session.

The next 2 sentences can be approached in a similar manner and completed for homework if time runs out.

Lesson 2

Start with a game of synonyms.

Recall previous lesson. Have children verbalize what they did with the text.

Check on the 2 sentences that children were asked to work on.

Write down synonyms next to words in a book.

Make sure that the meaning has not been changed.

Move onto next sentence employing same process as before. This time let children decide what words can be changed.

Encourage children to work in pairs to find suitable synonyms. Make sure that children are paired appropriately i.e. that they can work well together but one is not to dominate.

Have children reconstruct the passage by assembling the sentence strips in correct order.

Lesson 3

Revise the process

- Read the sentence
- Decide what words we can change – use synonyms
- Change as many words as we can
- Write the sentence making sure it keeps it's meaning

Children to write the process in their books.

Now we are going to read a paragraph that has 6 sentences in it.

We will look at the first 3 sentences to see if we understand them. Then we will choose the words that we need to change and list them in our books.

Now, find synonyms for the chosen words.

Try and combine the first 3 sentences into 1 new sentence.

“The builders had trouble from the start because, although the area had plenty of trees, the wood was so hard that their implements kept breaking and finally they had to use explosives to get the trees out of the earth to make way for housing.”

“A sailor named Henry Brewer, who had previously worked in designing buildings, came up with a simple design for a single space for living which became prevalent in the early years of life in Australia.”

Lesson 4

Revise the paraphrasing from previous lesson.

Children to work on next 3 sentences and repeat the process from previous lesson.

Lesson 5

Synonyms – worksheet

Revise paraphrasing from previous lesson

Put on sentence strips and display in room.

Lesson 6

Last paragraph in text.

Teacher reads, student reads, student marks words that need to be changed.

Children work individually on paraphrasing.

Each table is to come up with 1 sentence.

Lesson 7

Text: “Brewer’s Simple Cottage Design”

Teacher reads text and children highlight words they do not understand the meaning of.

List to be compiled on the whiteboard.

Discussion of words on list - referring to drawing besides the text.

Children to write in meaning of list words in their own words.

Lesson 8

Review previous text – as above.

Children to work independently and choosing synonyms for chosen words, paraphrase the text.

Children to check that they have all key words covered and main ideas included.

Lesson 9

Revise last paraphrasing activity.

Introduce new text – “Better Buildings”

Working individually, children try to distinguish the difference between:

“Better Buildings” and “Brewer’s Simple Cottage Design”

The use of T charts are encouraged.

Children are to share their findings.

Lesson 10

Read a completely different text to children and set them a task of underlining words that they think they can change. Going sentence by sentence have children paraphrase the passage in their own words and hand up for assessment.