

Explicit Instruction Cuing Students for the Instruction

The following script can be used for showing teacher candidates how to decompose explicit instruction (HLP#16) when it is used to teach cognitive strategies (HLP#14). It is an example of how you may cue, or prepare, students for the simulated interaction in cognitive strategy instruction, specifically *the paraphrasing strategy*. The text should be adjusted depending on the grade level of the students.

Before beginning the demonstration, remind candidates that they will play the role of K-12 fourth-grade students.

CUE

Review prior content

Instructor: We have been learning about paragraphs and finding the main ideas in paragraphs. Who can tell me some of the characteristics of a paragraph?

Teacher candidates: The first sentence is indented.

Instructor: Yes, that's right. Thank you for getting us started. Let's hear some more characteristics of a paragraph. How do we know something is a paragraph?

Teacher candidates: A paragraph is a group of sentences.

Instructor: A paragraph is a group of sentences. Tell me more about those sentences. Can a paragraph be made up of a group of random sentences?

Teacher candidates: No, the sentences have to be about the same thing.

Instructor: Tell me more.

Teacher candidates: All of the sentences in a paragraph are about the same topic.

Instructor: I see. And how do we know what that topic is?

Teacher candidates: There's a topic sentence, and then all of the sentences add to the topic.

Instructor: OK. You all are sharing very helpful information about paragraphs. Can someone recap what we have said about paragraphs?

Teacher candidates: Yes. A paragraph is made up of a group of sentences that are all about the same topic. And one sentence tells what the main topic is, and the rest support it.

Instructor: Well done! And you said that one sentence tells what the main topic is. What do we call that sentence?

Teacher candidate: It's the topic sentence, and it states the main idea.

Preview

- **What will be learned**

Instructor: Excellent. So we know quite a bit about paragraphs and main ideas. Today, we are going to learn a strategy that will help us build on that knowledge and remember the important information in paragraphs as we read. Specifically, we are going to learn the paraphrasing strategy, which has three steps. Does anyone know what the word *paraphrasing* means?

Teacher candidates: I think it means to put something in your own words.

Instructor: That's right. Paraphrasing does mean to put something into your words. And it's important because paraphrasing something helps us to remember it. So, we will be learning the paraphrasing strategy. And we are learning it because it will help us summarize and remember what we have read. And we're going to work together on learning the steps of the strategy. We will have many opportunities to practice the steps. And eventually, we will try out the strategy with important information that we are reading. Before we move on, turn and talk to your neighbor about what you think we're about to learn and why it is important.

Teacher candidates turn and talk to each other. When finished, they share their thoughts with the instructor.

Instructor: Now, I have some text from a story we read, and I'm displaying it on our smartboard. Let's do a quick check. How many paragraphs are on the screen?

Teacher candidates: Three

Instructor: How do you know there are three paragraphs?

Teacher candidates: Because there are three places that a sentence is indented.

Instructor: Great. I am sure that you all are ready to learn this strategy.

Instructor: Let's get started learning the paraphrasing strategy. We've already talked about paragraphs. You have said that a group of sentences is a paragraph, and all of the sentences in a paragraph are about the same topic. Did I miss anything that we discussed about characteristics of paragraphs?

Teacher candidates: Paragraphs should have a topic sentence. The first sentence is indented.

Instructor: Excellent. Thank you for that reminder. Now, I'm going to share with you the steps of the paraphrasing strategy and some important information about the steps. We will review this information as we move along, so don't worry if the information seems like a lot. What you need to do right now is to pay attention, ask any questions you might have, and follow along on the documents you have. The purpose of the strategy is to help us remember the main ideas and important details of information that we read. Do you all ever need to remember things that you read?

Teacher candidates: Yes.

- **Why it is important and how it will be learned?**

Instructor: Good. What are some examples of times when you have to remember what you read?

Teacher candidates: Reading a story, reading our science book, reading directions, etc.

Instructor: These are great examples. So, remembering what we read is an important skill that we need. This strategy has helped many, many students, probably thousands, to remember the main ideas and important details of what they read. And they can do so because they learn and use these three steps: (1) Read a paragraph, (2) Ask yourself what the main idea and two important details are in the paragraph, and (3) Put the main idea and details into your own words. You already know how to do the first step. And we have started working on the second step. Take a moment to talk to your neighbor about what you remember about main ideas and details. Specifically, you might talk about the difference between a main idea and a detail, where you might find the main idea, how you tell an important detail from an unimportant detail. (pause) Let's share what you discussed.

Teacher candidates: Main ideas are like the big ideas. The other sentences are about the main idea. The main idea is usually repeated. The topic sentence is sometimes the first sentence. Sometimes, it's the last sentence.

Instructor: Great. You all are really thinking. How about the important details? How do you know that a detail is important enough to remember?

Teacher candidates: It might be asked on a test. It's something that matters or is unique. It might be bolded or italicized on the page.

Instructor: These are great ideas. I can tell that you are feeling a little unsure, so we will work on the details as we move along. Right now, the important thing for you to know is that finding the main idea and two important details is the second step of the strategy. And the third step is to put the main idea and important details into your own words. And those are the three steps of the paraphrasing strategy: Read a paragraph, ask yourself what main idea and two important

details are, and put the main idea and important details into your own words. Notice the three steps start with the letters R-A-P. We can use the word RAP to remember the steps. Now, let's see what this strategy looks like when we use it.

DO

In this phase of explicit instruction, the instructor describes the strategy and models how he or she thinks while using the strategy. Before reading the paragraph, the instructor has made sure that the students (in this case, teacher candidates) know what a forest fire is like and understand certain vocabulary that may be unfamiliar (e.g., nutrients, extinguished, decay). The instructor has also reminded students about what an expository text is and discussed why being able to summarize is important. At this point, the instructor is ready to introduce the describe and model/think-aloud steps of the strategy.

As candidates participate in the simulation, have them notice how you, the instructor, engage the students (i.e., teacher candidates) in the strategy.

The instructor will use the following paragraph to describe and model how to use the paraphrasing strategy (RAP).

Controlled Burns: How Do They Help the Forest?

Can you imagine setting a fire on purpose? I know it is hard to believe that someone would set a fire on purpose. Yet, it is exactly what forest rangers and other trained professionals do to help the forest. Under the right weather conditions, they set and extinguish well-managed fires called controlled burns. These fires are not like the destructive forest fires that you often hear about in California and other states. These fires are important for managing the forest and reducing the risk of forest fires.

Controlled burns protect and improve the forest by reducing the amount of flammable material on the forest floor. Over time, branches, leaves, and dead insects and animals collect on the floor of the forest. As these dead materials decay, they can bring nutrients to the forest soil. They can also catch fire and burn out of control. Controlled burns reduce the amount of these dead materials so they do not pile up and create a massive forest fire. Controlled fires also speed up the decay process, bringing nutrients to the forest soil. When conducted by trained forest rangers and other professionals, controlled burns can prevent forest fires and help the forest thrive.

Describe the strategy

Instructor: So, we have talked about why summarizing is important. (Turns to one of the teacher candidates and asks him or her to repeat for the class why summarizing is important). Now, we are going to learn a strategy that will help you summarize what you read by paraphrasing or putting the main ideas in your own words. Class, what do you need to be doing

while I show you the new strategy? (Reviews expectations with students, such as listen, answer questions, and work with a peer if asked to do so.)

Instructor: The strategy we are going to learn is called the RAP strategy. What is it called class?

Teacher candidates: The RAP strategy

Instructor: The RAP strategy has three steps. Read the paragraph, ask yourself what the main idea and two important details are, and put it in your own words.

In the first step, or the R step, you read the paragraph so you can learn what the paragraph is about. What do you do in the first step class? (Instructor signals for choral response.)

Teacher candidates: Read the paragraph.

Instructor: Yes, read the paragraph. In the second step, you ask yourself what the main idea and two important details are. These two details should be related to the main idea. What do you do in the second step class? (Instructor signals for choral response.)

Teacher candidates: Ask yourself what the main idea and two important details are.

Instructor: Yes, ask yourself what the main idea and two important details are. In the third step, you put it in your own words. Now, you take the main idea and the two related details and put it in your own words to form a summary of the paragraph. What do you do in the third step? (Instructor signals for choral response.)

Teacher candidates: Put it in your own words.

Instructor: Yes, you put it in your own words. In this step, you have to make sure that your summary is short, about 10-12 words, and that it incorporates the main idea.

Instructor then goes through the steps again and has the teacher candidates repeat them chorally.

Model the strategy

Instructor: OK, now, I am going to show you how I use the RAP strategy to summarize by thinking aloud as I use each step. What do you need to do while I am thinking aloud? (Instructor reviews expectations with teacher candidates.)

Instructor: OK, my teacher gave me this interesting paragraph to read about forest fires. She said I had to paraphrase it for my peer. Oh dear, I am not so good at paraphrasing, but she said if I used the RAP strategy and tried hard, I should be able to do it. I am going to do just that. Here I go:

Hmm. . . The first thing I need to do is what, class? (Instructor lifts hands to signal choral response.)

Teacher candidates: Read the paragraph

Instructor: Right, I need to read the paragraph. OK, so I am going to read the title and the first paragraph, but I want you to help me by reading along quietly. (Instructor reads the title and the first paragraph aloud.). Now that I am done reading the paragraph, what do I need to do, class?

Teacher candidates: Ask yourself, “What was the main idea and two important details?”

Instructor: Yes, I need to ask myself, “What was the main idea and two important details?” OK, well, the title is usually a good clue to the main idea when it is an expository text, so this paragraph seems to be about controlled burns and how they help forest fires. Now, class, what do I have to do next?

Teacher candidates: You have to find two important details.

Instructor: OK, two details. One detail is that controlled burns are fires that forest rangers set on purpose to help the forest. I like that detail because it supports what I think is the main idea. Class, give me a thumbs up if you think that detail supports the main idea.

Second, the paragraph told me that these fires help manage the forest by reducing the risk of forest fire. Wow, I think I have two details that support the main idea. OK, class, what do I have to do next?

Teacher candidates: Put it in your own words.

Instructor: Well, the paragraph is about controlled burns, and the details suggest they are fires that are set on purpose to manage the forest by reducing the risk of forest fire. So, I am going to write this summary: This paragraph is about controlled burns and their use in managing the forest. Let’s check to see if this is a good summary. Class, is it about 10-12 words? (Teacher candidates respond.) Yes, it is 13 words, so that is close. (Count the number of words with the students.) Yes, is the phrase controlled burns in the title of the passage? (Ask the class to give a thumbs up or thumbs down if it is not in the title.) Do the details talk about why controlled burns are helpful? Turn and talk to your neighbor about the details. Ask teacher candidates for their responses and where they see evidence to support their responses in the paragraph.

Instructor: OK, so my paragraph is close to 10-12 words, and the details tell us why controlled burns are helpful to the forest. I think this meets the criteria for a good summary.

Now, let's try the next paragraph. Note: When you are teaching the strategy to your K-12 students, you may choose to do another model if they do not have a good grasp of the concepts.

Practice with feedback (gradual release of the strategy)

Instructor: This is the point at which you help the students in your classroom learn to take control of the strategy and make it their own. Follow along with me as if you were upper elementary students.

Instructor: We are going to use the second paragraph to practice using the RAP strategy. I am going to be relying on you more to help me show how to use the strategy. What is the first step you are going to do? (Instructor asks for choral response.)

Teacher candidates: Read the paragraph

Instructor: OK, I am going to read the paragraph, and you will follow along. (Instructor reads the paragraph or has students read the paragraph with their partner.) We have finished the first step; what do we do next?

Teacher candidates: Ask yourself what the main idea and two important details are.

Instructor: OK, ask myself what the main idea is. What are some things I wrote on the whiteboard that you can do to find the main idea?

Teacher candidates: Read the title. Read the first sentence. Look for repeating ideas.

Instructor: Right. You can read the title, read the first sentence, and look for the repeating ideas. This second paragraph doesn't have a title, but it should still be about controlled burns. Before we read the first sentence of the second paragraph, I want to ask if anyone has heard the word flammable before (instructor takes a minute to define the word with students). OK, so now we can read the first sentence. (Instructor calls on a candidate.)

Teacher candidate: *Controlled burns protect and improve the forest by reducing the amount of flammable material on the forest floor.*

Instructor: Do you think this paragraph is about why controlled burns protect the forest by reducing flammable material?

Teacher candidate: Yes.

Instructor: Why? Turn and talk to your partner to see if you can determine if the paragraph is about why controlled burns protect the forest by reducing flammable material. OK, can I have

one group tell me if the main idea is about why controlled burns protect the forest by reducing flammable material?

Teacher candidate: Because the paragraph talks about how all these dead materials gather on the forest floor, and controlled burns help to reduce them so they don't catch fire and make them decay faster, which helps the forest.

Instructor: Great, you just gave us some hints for completing the next part of the second step. What are two important details?

Teacher candidate: Dead materials build up on the forest floor. Controlled burns reduce the materials and help them decay faster.

Instructor: Great, now we have to do the last step. What is the last step class?

Teacher candidates: (Choral response) Put it in your own words.

Instructor: Right. Now, you will turn and talk to your partner about how to take these details and main idea and put it in a sentence using about 10-12 words. (After a minute or so, ask candidates to share.)

Teacher candidates: Controlled burns help the forest by reducing dead materials and speeding up decay.

Instructor: Thank you for that sentence. Now let's evaluate it to see if it is a good paraphrase. How many words is it?

Teacher candidates: 13

Instructor: Yes, it is 13 words. That is a bit long, but does it capture the main idea and some of the most important details?

Teacher candidates: Yes, it tells us that controlled burns are helpful and how they are helpful.

Instructor: Great