
The six target students (ages 12 to 18) attended a school within a psychiatric hospital and residential treatment center and were reading significantly below grade level. The individualized tutorial program duration was from 3 to 12 weeks and utilized strategies which included a paraphrasing technique, computer-assisted instruction, journal writing, and use of high-interest low-difficulty reading material. Students showed an increase in main-idea comprehension mastery measured by the pretest/posttest comparison and a per session graphing on a progress chart. Appendices include a copy of a student contract, sample journals, progress charts, and a paraphrasing score sheet. (Contains 17 references.) (DB)
A MULTI-MODAL APPROACH TO REMEDIATING
MAIN-IDEA COMPREHENSION DEFICIENCIES
IN BEHAVIOR-DISORDERED STUDENTS

by

MariceAnn Piquette

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A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Abraham S
Fischler Center for the Advancement of
Education of Nova University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
degree of Masters
of Science.

July/1994
Abstract

A Multi-modal Approach to Remediation of Main-Idea Comprehension Deficiencies in Behavior-Disordered Students.


Descriptors: Learning Problem Students/Behavior Disordered Students/Reading Difficulties/Low Achievement/Reading Difficulties/Comprehension Difficulties/Teaching Methods/Secondary Students

This proposal was developed as a multi-modal approach for remediation of main-idea comprehension deficits with secondary school behavior-disordered students. These students were functioning significantly below grade level in reading comprehension. Students were pretested and posttested using the Brigance Forms A and B respectively. The program was primarily tutorial in nature. Strategies included a paraphrasing technique, computer-assisted instruction, and journals with visual displays for use with high-interest, low-level reading material. Students showed an increase in main-idea comprehension mastery measured by the pretest/posttest and a per session graphing on a progress chart provided by The Paraphrasing Strategy learning curriculum. Appendices include a copy of student contract, journals, progress charts, paraphrasing score sheet, and tee-shirt reward for completion of the project.
Authorship Statement/Document Release

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

[Signature]
student’s signature

Document Release

Permission is hereby given to Nova University to distribute copies of this applied research project on request from interested parties. It is my understanding that Nova University will not charge for this dissemination other than to cover the costs of duplicating, handling, and mailing of the materials.

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student’s signature

[Date]
July 29, 1994
Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title Page</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorship Statement/Document Release</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observer's Verification</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vili</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTERS

I. Purpose
II. Research and Solution Strategies
III. Method
IV. Results
V. Recommendations

Reference List

Appendices

Appendix A: Student Journal
Appendix B: Student Contract
Appendix C: R.A.P. Tee-shirts
Appendix D: Paraphrasing Progress Chart
Appendix E: Paraphrasing Score Sheet
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Reading Comprehension Scores Compared to Age and/or Grade of Targeted Students</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Main-Idea Comprehension Probes</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Paragraph Patterns</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>The &quot;T-line&quot; Approach</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>The &quot;Stick-Person&quot; Approach</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

Purpose

The location of the target school was within a psychiatric hospital and residential treatment center for children and adolescents in central Florida. This was a locked facility that was accredited by the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Hospital Organizations. The facility had 40 beds in the residential treatment center. Students were referred to the facility for psychiatric and/or substance abuse problems. Referrals came by way of court order, Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), a school, parent, therapist, or from acute care providers needing extended services for patients.

The school opened with the facility in October of 1966. There was a psychiatric medical director who supervised the clinical program and an education director who supervised the education program. There were five certified teachers on staff. There was a youth counselor and speech therapist available at the school. The school operated on a multi-disciplinary approach. The teachers were a part of the treatment team meetings.
and ideas were shared concerning the individualized treatment for each student.

The facility noted at the time of its last self-study that the population of the school included 90 percent white, 4 percent Black, and 6 percent Hispanic. The backgrounds of these students were defined by the education level and employment positions held by the parents. The majority of the parents, 51 percent, was managerial. Thirty percent was clerical, 15 percent professional, 8 percent military, and 2 percent unemployed. The director commented that since the facility was now covered under military insurance, the military background percentages had recently increased. Forty-five percent of the parents completed high school, 10 percent had some college without a degree, 25 percent held a bachelor's degree, 8 percent had some form of education after school that was not college, and 8 percent had dropped out of high school at some point. Because students differ in developmental patterns and learning capabilities, the school made every effort to provide the opportunity for maximum growth in the student's emotional, intellectual, and social development.

The students attended a highly structured school for four hours a day. The students were given the
opportunity to increase educational skills and knowledge necessary to assume a place of responsibility within the community. The education program was a required and integral part of the overall treatment plan. The students also had an activity therapy, which promoted leisure skills and team sports. Experiential therapy was part of the daily schedule. This therapy helped with team building, trust, and cooperation. Individual and group therapy were a part of the student’s day. The goal at this facility was to help students find more acceptable outlets for stress and emotions, while ensuring educational continuity.

This practicum writer did not have any formal connections with this facility before this time. This writer has undergone a training process in order to become a paid employee of the facility. The writer’s role has been that of a substitute teacher. This practicum author was the first education intern at the facility. The tutorial work with students to help increase strategies for learning within the context of this setting created new opportunities for all involved. The students at this school experienced emotional problems which result in behavior disorders. The students lacked motivation or sufficient skills or
knowledge to assume responsibility for their actions or education. The students who were a part of this practicum implementation plan were adolescents from grade seven through grade nine. These students were residents of the psychiatric facility for a period of one month to six months depending on the severity of their problems.

The Director of Education (Moody, 1994) noted through records that the students performed significantly below grade level. The "average" student in this facility functioned at a minimum of two grade levels below the assigned grade in school, as indicated in Table 1. The teachers noted through observation that the students lacked motivation, did not complete work, and had comprehension deficits. The poor grades received on an assignment further discouraged the student from try. e.g. Many times the students had been observed by teachers to look in the text for the answers to comprehension questions without reading the text itself. The students often had difficulty finding the main idea within the text. Without full comprehension of the material the students could not participate adequately in discussions, complete assignments, or pass examinations. Students often became discouraged and became truant from class. Poor attendance further
Table 1
A Sample of Reading Comprehension Scores of Targeted Student Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<th>AES*</th>
<th>Instrument**</th>
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*GES/AES Grade Equivalent Score/Age Equivalent Score
**Instrument:
Woodcock Johnson Psychoeducational-WJPB
Wide Range Achievement Test-WRAT
Peabody Individual Achievement Test-PIAT
Test of Adult Basic Education-TABE
complicated the problem since continuity in education would have increased their overall understanding of the subject simply by listening in class.

The students who were part of this practicum project were all classified with dysfunctional families. Beyond this there were other circumstances that contribute to poor academic standing. Student A was a 13 year-old white female in the seventh grade. This student had a history of skipping school. Her grades were failing before she entered the treatment plan at this facility. It was noted by her school that she needed a lot of one-on-one support and had been placed in the Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) class for reading. The student had clinical notes, which indicated treatment for depression, suicidal ideation, and bulimia. The student needed to deal with somatic complaints, her experience of sexual abuse by a step-father, and poor peer relations. The student was tested by the facility's director of education and a low average Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was noted by a score of 81.

Student B was a Black female, aged 14 in the seventh grade. The student had been taken from her home as a toddler by Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) for neglect. The student has had many foster home placements since that time. She had experienced the trauma of
Hurricane Andrew. The student was admitted to the facility for depression, homicidal ideation, conduct disorder, and was being evaluated for anorexia. The student had a history of poor academic progress.

Student C was a 13 year-old, white male in the seventh grade. The student was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity (ADHD) and severe impulsive behaviors. The student was noted as depressed and often explosive. He came from a dysfunctional family and had been in numerous psychiatric facilities. The student had a history of school suspensions. The student was staffed into the Emotionally Handicapped class, and subsequently into a Severely Emotionally disturbed (SED) program. The facility's education director noted a full scale IQ of 80 using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children III (WISC-III).

Student D was a 15 year-old eighth grade SLD student. This white male had falling grades from fourth through seventh grades. The Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised (WJPB-R) showed a full scale IQ of 84. The student had receptive-expressive language impairment deficits, which involved semantics and auditory processing. The student had a history of poor relations with his teachers and had been noted as emotionally immature. There was a history of emotional,
sexual, and physical abuse by this student’s step-father. There was a lack of parental supervision and nurturance on the part of the mother. This student was part of the treatment plan for youth sexual offenders at this facility. It was noted in his charts that a possible biological predisposition may exist, since his father was in prison for stealing and assaultive behavior.

Student E was a 16 year-old, white male in an SLD ninth grade placement. This student has had a history of failing in school and has had a poor attendance history. The student has had multiple school placements. The student has had difficulty following school rules, fighting, accepting authority, and therefore, has had numerous suspensions. Grades were failing in an SLD class in a SED school upon entering the facility. The WJPB-R showed a Broad Reading score of 58, a grade level score of 2.6. Passage Comprehension was slightly higher at a standard score of 65 and a grade level score of 2.8. The student had problems in receptive and expressive language as diagnosed by the speech pathologist at the facility. This student has lived in a number of foster homes after the age of thirteen. There was a history of sexual abuse at a young age. Dyslexia was noted in the forms of difficulty in reading, spelling, and in reversing letters. This student was part of the
treatment plan in the sexual offender's unit at this facility. The student had an early history of substance abuse including gasoline, alcohol, and marijuana. The student's natural father was deceased and the mother's lack of consistent contact and alcohol abuse often left this student living in the streets.

Student F was an eighth-grade, white male, who came from a divorced family. This 14 year-old student had been to several treatment facilities for depression and impulsive behaviors. The student had a history of sexual abuse and poor school functioning. This student was pre-tested by the practicum manager using the Brigance Form A. The student passed at the sixth grade level. This student did not ultimately become part of the practicum project due to his noncompliance in attending school or failure to complete classroom assignments.

This writer has identified that the problem exists due to emotional and behavior difficulties which affect learning. This notion is supported by research cited by Morgan and Jensen (1988), which indicated that significantly more poor readers were maladjusted, antisocial, or neurotic. The problem in this setting is compounded by the fact that many of the students do not want to be in the program. Lack of motivation and
outward aggressiveness toward their treatment program hindered progress.

Therefore, the problem that this practicum writer addressed was to increase reading comprehension deficits in finding the main idea of a text. The students functioned significantly below grade level in reading comprehension. With remediation of this very necessary skill, the student was expected to experience increased comprehension in reading and improved grades within the classroom.

Due to the nature of the educational setting in which this author was placed, the time frames for implementation varied with each individual student from three weeks to twelve weeks. Student A completed three weeks of implementation before release from the facility. Student B had difficulty adhering to the implementation due to noncompliance with the practicum manager and the rules of the facility. This student refused to participate after three weeks of implementation, but four weeks later attempted to re-enter the program. This lasted for only one week due to her discharge from the facility. Student C completed eight weeks of implementation before his discharge from the facility. Student D completed all
twelve weeks of the program. Student E began later several weeks into the practicum project and completed eight weeks of implementation. Student F participated for only one week of the project. The outcome objectives for this project were as follows:

1. Over a period of three to twelve weeks each targeted secondary student will increase reading comprehension by one grade level as evidenced by a comparison on the Brigance Basic Skills Test Comprehension Form A given as a pretest and the Brigance Basic Skills Test Form B given as a posttest.

2. Over a period of three weeks each targeted secondary student will increase their paraphrasing mastery score by 10 percent as evidenced by a paraphrasing progress chart score. The criteria used to score paraphrasing ability will be the total "main idea" and "detail" points earned, then converted into a mastery percentage as specified in the Kansas Learning Strategies Curriculum for Paraphrasing.

3. Over a period of three weeks each of the targeted secondary students will increase their comprehension mastery score by 10 percent as evidenced by a comprehension progress chart score. The criterion to score comprehension will be correct responses to comprehension questions for the assigned text in the
Barnell-Loft Specific Skill Series "Finding the Main Idea and "Getting the Facts."

4. Over a period of three to twelve weeks each of the targeted secondary students will display generalization of increased comprehension as evidenced by improved grades in their health book unit checks and improvement in comprehension as observed by the teacher. The criterion used to measure increased comprehension will be a 10 percent increase in correct answers to comprehension questions at the end of each unit of the student's health book text as compared with the percent correct before implementation.
CHAPTER II
Research and Solution Strategy

The main idea concept was not tested on the October 1979 Florida State Assessment Test (Walters et al., 1989). Analyses of District Reading Level Tests in 1978-1979 indicated that this critical comprehension area needed more emphasis. Stevens (1988) noted, by citing research done by Brown and Smiley, that when the lack of ability to recognize the main idea of passages exists, comprehension as well as recall is hindered. Less-skilled readers recalled less information from passages, and that they did recall was not necessarily related to the main idea of the passage. Poor readers lacked metacognitive knowledge concerning their control of the comprehension process. In 1988 Stevens published the results of a comparison study of metacomprehension strategies, comprehension fostering strategies, and classification skills instruction. These were taught through computer instruction, which gave immediate and corrective feedback. The study supported the hypothesis for training remedial readers in the identification of the
main idea and metacognitive strategies to improve comprehension of text. The students who were trained performed better than peers not only on main idea questions, but also on generalization to new content areas. Classification skills training had limited effectiveness and did not generalize. A variety of strategies to effectively remediate main idea comprehension deficits, which also promoted generalization were found in abundance.

Direct Instruction in various strategies and concepts had ample research to prove its effectiveness. Carnine et al. (1990) cited research done in direct instruction of categorizing text, summarizing skills, metacomprehension training, vocabulary instruction with the use of mnemonic keyword method, and visual-spatial displays. Direct instruction of self-questioning techniques and strategy skills yielded marked improvement in multiple measures of main idea comprehension over the control groups or those using basal readers. Direct instruction using computer assisted instruction yielded higher motivation of students and greater retention than groups that did not use direct instruction principles.

The method of categorizing text has been shown to be an effective method for teaching the main idea.
Carnine et al. (1990) cited Williams, who designed a method of teaching main idea comprehension to middle school learning disabled (LD) students. This method involved categorizing text based on the level of importance. The students who received training in this method outperformed the non-LD control group in finding main-idea sentences within a text and in noting unusual details. Walters et al. (1989) noted that there are three levels on which to understand what the author is saying: the factual level, the inferential level, and the critical level. By teaching paragraph patterns, the students learned to identify the main idea and various levels of understanding (Figure 1:15).

Visual Concepts

△ main idea first
details

△ main idea repeated

▽ main idea last

▽ key word, main idea
mentioned

main idea in middle
details

Figure 1

Paragraph Patterns
(Walters et al., 1989)

Substantive research has supported the use of visual notetaking, especially for visual learners.
Hickey and Braun (1990) cited Stein, who showed that visual and graphic displays use the left and right sides of the brain, thereby increasing the chances of recall. The "T-line" (Figure 2:16) and the "Stick-Person" (Figure 3:17) approach were both developed by Stein specifically for visual notetaking of social studies text.

Visual Notetaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
<th>date</th>
<th>place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 2

The "T-line" Approach
[Hickey and Braun, 1990]

Semantic mapping or frames have also been shown to improve At Risk student's comprehension in content area [Dimino and Kolar, 1990]. These authors cited a research study done by Darch and Carnine, which used visual spatial displays to improve literal comprehension content. This study also compared the results, after nine days, of a subject group with those
of a control group using the same content. The visual display group scored higher on quizzes and on a posttest than did the control group. Visual displays promoted comprehension and helped the students to structure information. A similar study by Lovitt et al. was cited by Dimino and Kolar (1990). The Lovitt study showed that, after a 12 week implementation, LD

Visual Notetaking

ideas - brain
words - mouth
actions - hands
feelings - heart
visions, hopes - eyes
weaknesses - Achilles heel

dates - under the figure
background information/family history at roots

Figure 3
The "Stick-Person" Approach

students scored higher than non-handicapped peers. Dimino and Kolar (1990) found that students liked this instructional strategy, found the material easier to
understand, and displayed positive attitudes.

Metacomprehension strategies have also been found to be effective in main-idea-comprehension strategies. Carnine et al. (1990) cited research by Jenkins et al., Chan and Cole, Bean and Steenwyk, and Patching et al. which showed that the methods of direct instruction of summarizing skills and self-questioning skills yielded marked improvement in comprehension and generalization when compared with control groups which used workbook-with-feedback strategies, read-and-read-aloud procedures, or no intervention. Rule-based direct instruction strategies also built intuitive and critical thinking skills as evidenced by standardized paragraph comprehension tests and writing samples of experimental groups taught metacomprehension strategies.

One of the most popular and effective methods noted in research literature for teaching reading comprehension is the SQ3R method. Harris et al. (1986) noted that this method was developed by Robinson in 1961 and needed to be taught through direct instruction and practiced under supervision. This method can be used with any reading material. The steps are as follows:

1. S - skim or survey headings and summarize quickly to get the general ideas
2. Q - question (look at the heading and turn it into a question, then write it down)
3. R - read the entire section and try to answer the question
4. R - recite from memory the answer to the question and write the answer down. Do this for each headed section.
5. R - review the lesson to organize ideas and recite them to remember them better.

Olson and Platt (1992) noted that this method helps the students structure the key points and vocabulary, paraphrase the passage, and identify the main idea.

Another strategy that used a mnemonic to help the students remember the self-questioning steps to gain comprehension in textbooks was the TELSQA method (Hickey and Braun, 1990). This technique was developed by Tama and Martinez:

1. Title - note what the material will include
2. Examine the reading material
3. Look for different words, find out what they mean
4. Self-Question and check for understanding by asking a question and answering it
5. Answer the comprehension questions at the end of the chapter

This strategy is often used with social studies texts, which have questions at the end of each unit. Schumaker et al. (1988) of the University of Kansas have developed a paraphrasing strategy based on the mnemonic R-A-P:

1. Read the paragraph
2. Ask "What was the main idea and details in this paragraph?"
3. Put the main idea and details into your own words.
This strategy is one that needs to be taught using cue cards as prompts (which eventually are faded), teacher modeling, verbal rehearsal, controlled practice, and feedback. The student would be taught this strategy over a period of weeks in steps outlined in the handbook. There are paraphrasing score sheets provided for the teacher to evaluate the student using specific guidelines outlined in the handbook. The student would work toward an 80 percent mastery score. A Paraphrasing Progress Chart is also provided for the student to chart results and gain visual feedback of efforts. This curriculum can be used with various commercially made materials for use with guided practice and pre and posttest evaluations.

Many of these types of strategies may be incorporated into computer assisted instruction (CAI) or practiced with the use of the computer. Roberts (1991) noted that by upper elementary age remedial students' failures have resulted in a motivational deficit. Good software can activate a student's desire to participate, gives multi-grade levels, gives immediate and corrective feedback, and has a measurement component that records mastery of each section. Remedial students not only become involved in computer reading programs, but have been shown to
experience success, where otherwise they might have failed to reach their goals. Roberts (1991) cited Marsh, who noted principles of student success using a computer for instruction: fear of embarrassment or correctives were non-threatening, enhanced interaction with the material, gave writing and reading a purpose related to the real world. Roberts (1991) cited Cochran-Smith et al. as having noted that unmotivated and underachieving students often withdraw from teachers and peers in the school environment. Nonetheless, studies have shown that the computer experience increased social interaction between peers.

Interactive discussion and activities play a crucial role in the implementation of the Interactive Model developed by Bos and Anders (1989) to aid LD students with comprehension deficits. They used well-documented research that metacognitive difficulties were often connected to reading difficulties. They wanted to move away from the decoding remediation to more recent research, which promoted comprehension in content area subjects by combining various instructional models. Learning disabled students have difficulty in comprehension because they lack the cognitive and metacognitive strategies for dealing with the text. This model was
based in part on the schema theory, which showed the importance of activating background knowledge to find relationships among concepts. Weisenback (1988) used conceptual-webbing as a background building technique that was similar to brainstorming. Students would take a topic and brainstorm all related ideas or concepts, then draw lines between the ones that were connected in some way. Students were encouraged to bring in objects to touch and discuss that would help activate prior knowledge, which was especially helpful for tactile-kinesthetic learners.

The Interactional Model was also based on the psycholinguistic theory of reading, which used language cues for comprehending the text. The model also used the theory of concept of learning and development. It gave examples and non-examples of information as well as organized the material into superordinate, coordinate, and subordinate concept levels. Furthermore, the model also used the sociocultural theory of cognitive development which showed that problem solving and practical activity interactions increased cognitive functioning. This model focused on both the content and the strategies to learn the content. The model had five steps:

1. Review text for textual clues
2. List key concepts
3. Organize material into categories
4. Interactive discussions and activities to facilitate content knowledge and comprehension
5. Use semantic feature analysis such as charts, semantic mapping, and classification frames.

Interactive methods supported research findings by Mclaughlin (1992), which showed that positive feedback, especially in written form, increased the quality and quantity of work done by behavior-disordered students.

The teaching strategy ReQuest developed by Manzo and described by Weisenback (1988) used a teacher-student interactive method. The teacher and the student read a passage and alternately asked/answered questions related to the material. This method incorporated concepts of comprehension monitoring and metacognition. The exchange of roles between the student and the teacher was found to be a strong motivating factor. The teacher was able to ask both implicit and explicit information, which helped to develop critical thinking skills.

Other methods which have been noted to have direct bearing on reading comprehension were reviewed. The whole language approach described by Olson and Platt (1992) stressed active learning, whereby the students selected the activities, books to read, and topics on which to write. Materials used were said to be functional and lesson plans were often thematic. Silent
reading and shared sustained reading were encouraged. Hunt (1990) noted that teaching practices in reading have focused on acquisition-of-skills rather than acquisition-of-meaning or comprehension. The whole language approach may have the potential to eliminate this problem. The holistic approaches to remediation of reading difficulties were reviewed by Rosinski (1989). Repeated readings were found to increase comprehension, but also brought about boredom. Taped recordings helped students in word recognition, and if repeatedly played, comprehension improved. Phase-cued texts and neurological-impress methods were not often used due to teacher time restraints. Rosinski (1989) did note, however, that marked phrases helped students to process the text more meaningfully. Down and Morin (1990) found that repeated readings and neurological impress, were more effective if used along with precision teaching. The teacher could monitor improvement and could design or individualized program for improving reading fluency and comprehension. The neurological-impress strategy involved new passages to be read aloud simultaneously with the teacher for ten minute sessions. The students moved their fingers beneath the words as the teacher read at a quick pace. Repeated readings continued until the decoding of words
was automatic. The students could then concentrate on comprehension. The research to support reading fluency as a remediation for comprehension showed that repetitions and hesitations broke up the thought process, thereby hindering comprehension. It was found that if the passage were read quickly (with fewer hesitations), comprehension improved. Similarly, those proponents of vocabulary-building as a means to increase comprehension noted that one cannot understand a text without knowing what the words mean [Nagy, 1988]. Nagy continued to say, however, that not all vocabulary instruction teaches comprehension, and comprehension of the text does not require in-depth knowledge of every word in the text. Vocabulary increased through much reading and interaction with others. Highlighting the terms needed to understand a text would be sufficient to increase overall comprehension of that text.

In preparation for this practicum project, a review of the literature revealed a substantial number of reading comprehension remediation strategies and theories. The goal of this practicum author is to help the students learn a strategy for understanding and remembering what they read, to help them retain learned skills, and to help them apply these skills to other areas of their lives. Generalization is an
important goal for this practicum author. Generalization cannot occur, however, if the student does not retain the skill or have the opportunity to exhibit the target responses under different conditions. Brigham and Snyder (1986) noted that each activity which is planned in teaching a new skill should include a sequence of demonstration, practice to mastery, and generalization. Brigham and Snyder (1986) also cited Ysseldyke and Deno, who noted that students have the most success when they are involved in the learning process. Teachers can motivate their students by giving them choices. Hunt (1990) noted research done by Bristow which found that teaching structures which did not allow a sense of control can contribute to overly passive behavior or even hostile behavior. Students need to feel that they have some control over their reading environment.

This practicum manager chose a combination of the researched strategies to meet the outcome objectives proposed. A metacognitive strategy for finding the main idea within a text, *The Paraphrasing Strategy* (Schumaker, Denton, Deshler, 1988) was used with direct instruction, modeling, verbal rehearsal, and immediate feedback. The scoring chart and progress chart provided made this strategy
attractive for monitoring purposes. In addition, this strategy was able to be used with many commercially made materials. This student used the Barnell-Loft Specific Skills Series for guided practice and evaluation. This practicum manager offered the students a choice of low-level, high-interest Newberry Honor Award books to read independently. The use of a journal (Appendix A:56) exposed them to the use of semantic mapping and frames to organize characters and important comprehension concepts. The journal also contained a section for them to write any words that they did not know. They were given the opportunity to discuss their journal and to look up any words in an electronic dictionary at each session. Each book had a corresponding piece of software published by Sunburst Communications, Inc. These software programs included sections on comprehension, sequence, and vocabulary, as well as a motivating crossword puzzle. The software gave immediate feedback, and a printout of each session's score was provided. Since this practicum student realized that the computer is a motivating and effective medium, additional software published by Morning Star Inc. ("Reading Comprehension: The Main Idea") was used as an incentive and as a choice at each session. Finally, this practicum manager
provided a "Fun Box" of comprehension-building activities for the student to use after the direct-instruction lesson had ended. In order that generalization was taught, this practicum manager will incorporated passages from the students' health textbook with the practicing of the paraphrasing strategy.

The solution strategy, therefore, involved a multi-modal approach to learning. Students had the opportunity to use tactile-kinesthetic, oral, visual, and aural modalities. The students received one-to-one instruction with motivating materials. The students were given some control over their reading activities. The students developed metacognitive strategies that will generalize to other areas of their lives.
CHAPTER III

Method

Implementation of this solution strategy involved preparation of several kinds of materials. The Apple III computer was set up in a conference room where this practicum manager and the students worked. A preview of the software and a software check list was made. A printer was installed for the purposes of recording the student's progress. Paraphrasing score sheets and progress charts were duplicated and placed in each student's portfolio for charting purposes. A "Fun Box" of comprehension learning materials was compiled to use as an educational incentive for completion of the day's work. Certain high interest, low reading level Newberry Honor Award books were purchased by this practicum manager to use in conjunction with Sunburst Communications Inc. software. These books were as follows: *The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeline L'Engle, *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell, *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George, *Call It Courage* by Armstrong Perry, and *Sounder* by William H. Armstrong. Journals for the students to use were
prepared (Appendix A:56). Other materials such as the Brigance Reading Comprehension Form A and Form B, the Barnell Loft Specific Skills Series, the software from Sunburst Communications and Morning Star's Reading Comprehension: The Main Idea, and school supplies were obtained from Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System. This preplanning and these materials allowed this practicum writer to help remediate the deficient comprehension skills of the targeted secondary students at this facility.

Since this was a locked facility a schedule of implementation dates needed to be set by this practicum manager's mentor. The mentor was responsible for assisting this practicum manager in choosing students needing remediation, providing a schedule, and a workspace. A youth counselor was available outside the workspace. A contract of agreement was signed outlining the responsibilities of the Nova student and the practicum site facility. Permission for students to be a part of this practicum was obtained by the mentor from the parents.

Each session lasted approximately fifty minutes. However, due to counselling, restrictions, and schedule problems students often did not have fifty minutes.
The students were seen individually for two sessions per week. Since each student's stay at the facility varied, the last session with each student used the lesson plans of Week Twelve, Session Two. The following timeline was followed by this practicum manager:

**Week One, Session One**

1. Met the student and introduced the program. The student signed a "Commitment to Learn" contract [Appendix B:63].

2. The practicum manager administered the Brigance Reading Comprehension Test Form A as a pretest in order to determine grade level appropriate materials to be used.

3. The student selected a book from the Newberry Honor Award selection. They were given a journal to use while reading the book. The practicum manager discussed clues and keeping the journal with the student.

4. Helped the student to set goals.

**Week One, Session Two**

1. Introduced The Paraphrasing Strategy.

2. The student did one unit from the Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea" and charted.
Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea" and charted.

3. The student made cue cards with colored markers and index cards while working through Step Two of the paraphrasing handbook.

4. If the student read from the Newberry Honor Award book, reviewed the journal.

5. The student had a choice of any activity from the Fun Box, if time remained.

**Week Two. Session One**

1. Reviewed Step Two of paraphrasing.

2. The student worked through the next unit in the Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea" and charted the progress.

3. Worked through Step Three - Modelling in the paraphrasing handbook.

4. If the student read more from the Newberry Honor Award book, reviewed journal.

5. Student had choice of Fun Box or working with the computer with Sunburst software or Morning Star software, if time remained.

**Week Two. Session Two**

1. Reviewed steps learned in paraphrasing.

2. The student worked through one unit in Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea". Charted progress.

3. Worked through Step Four - Verbal Rehearsal in
the paraphrasing handbook.

4. If the students read more from the Newberry Honor Award book, reviewed journal.

5. Student had choice of Fun Box or the computer with Sunburst or Morning Star software, if time remained.

Week Three, Session One

1. Reviewed steps of paraphrasing strategy that were taught.

2. The student completed one unit from the Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea" and charted progress.

3. Reviewed verbal rehearsal by using a cassette player, a video tape of the student, and verbal rehearsal game. Some students objected to this and would not cooperate with the tape recording. The tape recorder was eliminated as a medium in that case.

4. If the student read more from the Newberry Honor Award book, reviewed journal.

5. Student had a choice of a comprehension skill activity from the Fun Box or on the computer, if time allowed.

Week Three, Session Two

1. Reviewed steps of paraphrasing strategies by allowing the student to record them into a cassette player and hear it played back, if they did not object.
2. The student did one unit from the Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea" and charted progress.

3. The student had controlled practice and feedback by using the paraphrasing strategy with paragraphs from a unit in Barnell Loft "Getting the Facts".

4. If the student read more from the Newberry Honor Award book, reviewed journal.

5. The student had a choice to work with comprehension skill activities from the Fun Box or with the computer, if time allowed.

Week Four, Session One

1. Reviewed paraphrasing steps by having the student do a controlled practice and feedback lesson using the Barnell-Loft "Getting the Facts".

2. The student had grade-appropriate practice and feedback by using one unit from the Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea" and charted progress.

3. If the student read more from the Newberry Honor Award book, reviewed journal.

4. The student had a choice to work with comprehension skill activities from the Fun box or with the computer, if time allowed.

Week Four, Session Two
Repeated steps from Week Four, Session One.

Week Five, Session One
Repeated steps from Week Four, Session One

Week Five, Session Two
Repeated steps from Week Four, Session One

Week Six, Session One - Midpoint Evaluation

1. The practicum manager and the student reviewed the results of the progress chart and noted any goals met. If goals were already met, new ones were set. Increased level of work. If progress was not being made through practice, retaught strategy.

2. The practicum manager and the student reviewed the printouts of the comprehension skills on the Sunburst software related to the student's chosen Newberry Honor Award book. If the student completed the book, the student was able to play the crossword puzzle game on the software. The student chose another book if desired. The student was given the option of the practicum manager reading orally from a new book as part of the free choice option, if significant progress was not being made or if the student preferred this as a change.

3. The practicum manager and the student reviewed the printouts of the comprehension skills on the Morning Star software. A decision to change levels
was made based on the student's mastery scores.

4. The student was asked to use the paraphrasing strategy from an uncovered unit in the student's health book text. This evaluation will test generalization of the strategy.

5. The student had free choice of comprehension skill activities from the fun box, using the computer, or having the practicum manager read orally, if time allowed.

Week Six, Session Two

1. The student completed one unit from the Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea" and several paragraphs from the student's health book text using the paraphrasing strategy. Charted progress.

2. The student worked on the Morning Star software at the appropriate level.

3. If the student read from the Newberry Honor Award book, reviewed journal.

4. The student had free choice of comprehension skill activities from the fun box, the computer, or can be read to by the practicum manager, if time allowed.

Week Seven, Session One

1. The student completed one Barnell Loft "Getting the Facts" unit and several paragraphs in the student's health book text by using the paragraphing
strategy. Charted progress.

2. The student worked with the Morning Star computer software.

3. If the student read from the Newbery Honor Award book, reviewed journal.

4. The student chose from a comprehension skill activity in the fun box, used the computer, or was read to by the practicum manager.

**Week Seven, Session Two**

Repeated lesson plan from week Seven, Session One

**Week Eight, Session One**

1. The student had the choice to do a unit from the Barnell Loft "Finding the Main Idea" or "Getting the Facts" using the paraphrasing strategy. The student also used the paraphrasing strategy on several paragraphs from the student's health book text.

2. Repeated steps two through four of Week Seven, Session One.

**Week Eight, Session Two**

Repeated lesson plan from Week Eight, Session One.

**Week Nine, Session One**

Repeated lesson plan from week Eight, Session One.

**Week Nine, Session Two**

Repeated lesson plan from week Eight, Session One.
Week Ten, Session One

Evaluated mastery level using paraphrasing strategy. If the student reached mastery level of 80 percent, the student was placed on maintenance. The student chose either the computer or paraphrasing strategy using the Barnell Loft series as practice, worked from the health book text. If mastery level was not reached lesson plans from Week Eight, Session One were used.

Week Ten, Session Two

See Week Ten, Session One.

Week Eleven, Session One

See Week Ten, Session One.

Week Eleven, Session Two

See Week Ten, Session One.

Week Twelve, Session One

See Week Ten, Session One.

Week Twelve, Session Two

1. The practicum manager administered the Brigance Reading Comprehension Test Form B as a posttest.

2. The practicum manager and the student evaluated the progress made and goals met.

3. The student had free choice of activities provided by the practicum manager.
The last week of implementation the practicum manager had only two students left from the group assigned. The students were presented with "So glad I can R.A.P." tee-shirts (Appendix C:65).

In several instances, the computer was not available for use, due to a printer or disk drive being inoperable, or if the students were required to be in an environment other than the conference room. On many occasions Student C was placed on a unit crackdown restriction, which prevented the use of the computer or any of the Fun Box activities. On many occasions students were unwilling or unable to work due to severe behavior problems. In these cases this practicum manager used the appropriate session schedule the next time the student was willing or able to work.
CHAPTER IV

Results

The evaluation of this project was provided by pre and post tests, charting, journals, and a computer management system. The evaluation was executed with various instruments as described below:

1. Over a period of three to twelve weeks the targeted secondary students were to increase reading comprehension by one grade level as evidenced by a comparison on the Brigance Basic Skills Test Comprehension Form A given as a pretest and the Brigance Basic Skills Test Form B given as a posttest. The Brigance Test was developed by Albert H. Brigance in May of 1978 as a resource for teachers needing assistance in assessing procedures and instruction planning. It is a criterion-referenced test that uses performance terms in the form of a grade level proficiency. Skills tested were in a developmental and sequential hierarchy. No specialized training was required to administer the test. Teacher prompts were given. The Brigance has been field tested and
critiqued in over sixteen states at more than 100 sites. The Brigance was designed to meet PL34-142 requirements. Student A was pretested at a grade level three. Because this student left the facility without advanced notice no post-test was given. Student B pre-tested at grade level four. Due to this student's non-compliance no post-test could be given. Student C was pre-tested at below third grade level. Eight weeks after beginning implementation this student post-tested at the eleventh grade level. Student D pretested at below third grade level and post-tested at the fifth grade level after twelve weeks of implementation. Student E pretested at below third grade level and post-tested at the tenth grade level after eight weeks of implementation.

2. Over a period of four weeks each of the targeted secondary students were to increase their paraphrasing mastery score by 10 percent as evidenced by a paraphrasing progress chart score (Appendix D:67). The criteria used to score paraphrasing ability was the total "main-idea" and "detail" points earned, then converted into a mastery percentage as specified in the Kansas Learning Strategies Curriculum for Paraphrasing (Appendix D:67). The Learning Strategies Curriculum designed by Schumaker, Denton, Deschler of The
University of Kansas in 1984 was designed to enable students to effectively meet the demands of curriculum by using strategies which will generalize into other curricular areas. The Paraphrasing Strategy was field tested in the Blue Valley School District in Kansas. This strategy is built upon recent research that shows that when students learn how to learn, their performance level increases. This strategy required the student to actively interact with the reading material. Student A did not meet this goal due to the short implementation period. The student did increase the paraphrasing mastery score by an average of seven percentage points after only three weeks implementation. Student B was generally non-compliant when it came to this portion of the program. The student also would not record privately in a tape recorder. After a time away from the program, however, the student consented to writing this portion of the work. Although work was given, none was completed. Student C increased paraphrasing mastery from 66 percent to an average of 82 percent after eight weeks implementation. Student D increased from 52 percent to an average of 94 percent after twelve weeks implementation. Student E increased paraphrasing mastery from 60 percent to an average of 89 percent over an eight week implementation. Therefore,
all students, who had a minimum of four weeks implementation met the goal of increasing their mastery score by 10 percent. The graphs of each student may be seen in Appendix D:67.

3. Over a period of four weeks each of the targeted secondary students was to increase their comprehension mastery score by 10 percent as evidenced by a comprehension progress chart score. The criterion to score comprehension was correct responses to comprehension questions for the assigned text in the Barnell-Loft Specific Skill Series "Finding the Main Idea and "Getting the Facts." These materials were recommended for usage with the paragraphing strategy. Each unit contained five paragraphs and ten questions. The students then used the paraphrasing progress chart (Appendix D:67) provided with the Learning Strategies Curriculum handbook. The teacher noted the student's proficiency in paraphrasing by using the paraphrase score sheet (Appendix E:75) in the same handbook. This kind of direct feedback allowed the students to see their progress at a glance. It also allowed the teacher to increase or decrease levels according to the students' progress. All students who were part of the implementation process for at least four weeks met the goal to increase comprehension scores by 10
percent as Table 2 below shows. Student A did not meet this goal for two reasons. One, the student was part of the project for only three weeks. Secondly, the student was experiencing 100 percent comprehension from day one. The practicum manager challenged the student by moving into the next level Barnell-Loft book, thereby decreasing comprehension results.

Table 2

Main Idea Comprehension Probes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

4. Over a period of four to twelve weeks each of the targeted secondary students were to display generalization of increased comprehension as evidenced by improved grades in their social studies classroom and improvement in comprehension as observed by the teacher. The criterion used to measure increased comprehension was to be a 10 percent increase in
correct answers to comprehension questions at the end of each unit of the student's social studies text as compared with the percent correct before implementation. Circumstances beyond the practicum manager's control prevented measurement of this objective. Upon starting the project the practicum manager requested social studies comprehension grades in order to make a comparison at a later date. These were not supplied. In addition, five weeks into the implementation the students were changed to a new curriculum for the summer, which did not offer comprehension checks in the traditional sense. In addition, students D and E received a new teacher mid-way through the program eliminating the possibility for teacher observation as a basis for comparison. The new teacher had transferred from the other unit. therefore, comparisons for students A, B, and C could not be made by the newly assigned teachers of these students.

5. Students were encouraged to read high interest, low level reading books. These books had computer software published by Sunburst Communications, Inc. that tested comprehension, vocabulary, sequencing, and had a crossword puzzle
to reinforce vocabulary and comprehension facts.
These programs had a student progress report that
was printed out each time the student used the
program so that progress was charted. Student A and
C did not use the software. Student A was released from
the facility only three weeks into the program. Student
C was on unit restriction and in-school suspension so
often that the student was not able to have access to the
computer. Student B used the software for comprehension
and vocabulary and did well on the first attempt. The
student was not enthusiastic to use the computer.
Student D enjoyed the use of the software
and received 100 percent on all attempts with the
exception of sequence. because the student had not
completed the book by the end of implementation. Student
E enjoyed the use of the computer. The student
was able to try all lessons in the software. This
student had to have multiple attempts at each of the
lessons in order to reach mastery. The use of the
software was difficult due to time restraints in using
the computer because it was located in a class being used
by a teacher. Further, these students
needed to be monitored by another personnel as well as
the practicum manager, and one was not always available.
6. Students were to use computer software
published by Morning Star Inc. entitled "Reading Comprehension: The Main Idea" as a part of the lesson plan or as an incentive for working hard. The software included fictional and factual material and randomized the order of multiple choice selections for repeated usage. The software included modeling, guided practice, ongoing review, testing for mastery, and corrective feedback as a reinforcement strategy. This software taught a strategy for accurately summarizing information, used literal and inferential items, and had four levels: picture, sentence, paragraph, and short passage. The instructional method was a model-lead-test format. This software also included a teacher management system which provided a printout of the student's progress for charting. The criteria for mastery was 75 percent on three consecutive sets of eight items. The student advanced to a higher level each time mastery was met. The students tried to improve their own best scores. The students, again, had difficulty having access to the computer due to time and location constraints. Students D and E were able to successfully master the two introductory/instructional levels of the software.

7. Students were also encouraged to keep a journal of what they read in their Newberry Honor
Award book. The journal was to include vocabulary words the student did not know. The student was given the opportunity to look them up on an electronic dictionary. There were pages for information on each of the main characters. There was a page for a short summary of the main idea in each chapter. There was a page to answer the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the book. Students were encouraged to write their own ideas and predictions in the miscellaneous note section. Regular reviews of the journal served to evaluate the students understanding, paraphrasing ability, and motivation. Student A had great interest in the book *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle. This student kept the journal well and often looked up vocabulary words on the electronic dictionary. This student was discharged early into the implementation process, but was so motivated in reading the book that the practicum manager made a gift of the book to the student. Student B completed the reading of the book *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George and summarized parts orally to the practicum manager. This student did not keep the journal and eventually lost it. Student C was not motivated to read the book chosen, *Sounder* by William H. Armstrong, independently. On days the student was unable to
concentrate on work due to emotional problems or results of medication, the practicum manager read to this student orally. The journal was not kept and eventually lost by this student. Student D was highly motivated and nearly completed the book *Sounder* by the end of implementation. A regular review of the journal was often not possible, since rooms were to remain locked and the student often forgot the journal before school began. The book was made a gift to the student upon completion of the project. Student E had similar problems remembering the journal before school began earlier in the day. This student read at least half the book before the practicum project ended.

In conclusion, the practicum project was worthy in that the majority of the student's did show progress in comprehension and in the paraphrasing strategy. The project may have had better results given a regular classroom routine. Due to the emotional problems these students were having to deal with as part of the treatment process and the results of medication, the students were often not able to work effectively. Time constraints in working with students, who needed to be pulled for other treatments or could not work as a consequence of behavior made implementation difficult. Starting and stopping
students at different places in the implementation process proved to be challenging. Motivating students to complete the process often took much longer than the time originally allotted. This project attempted to deal with many issues at once, namely, increased main idea comprehension, increased paraphrasing strategy, increased interest in reading, and generalization. Given the nature of this facility, the emotional make-up of the students, and only a bi-weekly contact with the practicum manager, the objectives were many and goals were set high. This project has shown that main-idea comprehension and paraphrasing strategies do work with emotionally-handicapped students given a consistent program toward that effort. This practicum manager also witnessed expressions by the students, both surprised and elated, that they had the ability to obtain such high scores. This practicum manager noted increased effort and self-challenging behaviors on the part of the students as the project progressed. Positive and immediate feedback were key to the success of this project.
CHAPTER V

Recommendations

The Director of Education at the facility has requested a copy of the proposal and final report from this practicum writer so that the educational department at the facility may use the results when evaluating their program. The results of this implementation have been successful; therefore, the Director may use this study as part of an inservice training program to teachers at the facility.

Since this was the first education intern this facility had, the success of this internship has opened doors to other intern relationships. This practicum manager may be able to facilitate other practicum students in working at this facility by being a contact person.

This student has gained a position in the public school system in the special education area. The results of this practicum implementation have helped this student in gaining teaching experience and benefitted from the successes and failures of the implementation. These results can also be shared with fellow teachers.
These results can also be shared with fellow teachers on the team, and may also be incorporated into a facilitated class at the Orlando Nova University site as a guest speaker of a strategies class for behavior disorders.
References


References (continued)


Appendices
Appendix A

Student Journal for Use With

Newberry Honor Award Book
JOURNAL FOR
The 5 W's & an H can help you to summarize a chapter or a whole book. Answer your 5 W's and H by putting key words in the block below the appropriate question.
CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

Place the name of your main character(s) in a triangle.

Put the names of other characters in circles.

Draw lines between the characters that have a relationship.

On the lines write what kind of relationship they have.
(Example; friend, mother, brother, etc.)
SUMMARIES

Write the main idea of each chapter that you read. Remember to do it as soon as possible so that the ideas are fresh in your mind. (Hint: R-A-P, 5W's & H)
Appendix B

Student Contract to Learn
I would like to learn a strategy that would help me with understanding and remembering what I read. I will come prepared to work to the best of my ability. When I complete my work my teacher will have "free choice" activities from which I may choose.
Appendix C

R.A.P. Tee-Shirts
Appendix D

Paraphrasing Progress Chart

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PARAPHRASING PROGRESS CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal-Setting Section</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
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Key:
- Paraphrase Percentage
- Comprehension Percentage
MP → Mastery Level for Paraphrasing
MC → Mastery Level for Comprehension
PARAPHRASING PROGRESS CHART

Student's Name: Student A

Goal-Setting Section

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Date Completed:

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Key:
- Paraphrase Percentage
- Comprehension Percentage

MP → Mastery Level for Paraphrasing
MC → Mastery Level for Comprehension
Student's Name: Student B

PARAPHRASING PROGRESS CHART

Goal-Setting Section

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Key:

- Paraphrase Percentage
- Comprehension Percentage

MP → Mastery Level for Paraphrasing
MC → Mastery Level for Comprehension
Student's Name: Student C

PARAPHRASING PROGRESS CHART

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Goal-Setting Section</th>
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Key:
- • Paraphrase Percentage
- ★★ Comprehension Percentage

MP → Mastery Level for Paraphrasing
MC → Mastery Level for Comprehension
**Student's Name:** Student D

**PARAPHRASING PROGRESS CHART**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Goal-Setting Section</th>
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<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
<th>Step 5</th>
<th>Step 6</th>
<th>Step 7</th>
<th>Step 8</th>
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**Key:**
- ●● Paraphrase Percentage
- ★★ Comprehension Percentage

**Legend:**
- MP → Mastery Level for Paraphrasing
- MC → Mastery Level for Comprehension
Appendix E

The Paraphrasing Score Sheet

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**PARAPHRASE SCORE SHEET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph 1</th>
<th>Paragraph 2</th>
<th>Paragraph 3</th>
<th>Paragraph 4</th>
<th>Paragraph 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>D</td>
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Calculating the Score:

Score Toward Mastery

- Main Idea (MI) Points
- Detail (D) Points

Total Score Toward Mastery

\[
\text{Total Score Toward Mastery} = \frac{\text{Total Score Toward Mastery}}{\text{No. Paragraphs} \times 3}
\]

\[
\% = \frac{\text{Total Score Toward Mastery}}{\text{No. Paragraphs} \times 3}
\]