



Visual Thinking Strategies

Working on Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a key element in VTS facilitation for important reasons. For example, when you paraphrase comments consistently and well, you not only honor individual contributions to discussions but also set a supportive context to encourage full participation. You show that you not only hear but also understand what someone has said, and the boost this provides to confidence cannot be overestimated. You ensure everyone hears each comment signaling how important everyone's contribution is. You model language, including vocabulary a participant might be searching for, and data show the profound effects of this over time.

Given these reasons, when learning VTS, you want to pay attention to paraphrasing, and learn to do it as well as possible.

A tip that helps some: pay close attention to what participants say—hearing their words—but take a moment before paraphrasing to ask yourself:

What are they trying to say?

Take the time to think about the meaning of the comment, and words to rephrase it come more easily.

As you paraphrase, point to what was mentioned both to help you recall details and to make it clear visually that you understand.

Here are some questions to help you reflect on any paraphrase.

- Did you understand the idea(s) contained in the comment?
- Did you convey the overall idea(s) that the student was trying to express as well as the particulars?
- Did you express only what the student said and not add your own ideas?
- Was your paraphrase as well worded and succinct as you want it to be?
- Did you stay neutral?
- Were you able to contribute vocabulary that the student was searching for?
- Did you use any qualifying language – for example, “You are suggesting that it might be...” or “So you are saying that it is possible that...”

Paraphrasing Activity - Pre K



Comment 1 I see a castle.

Paraphrase:

Comment 2 I see the two mens have no shoes.

Paraphrase:

F. Lippi, The Triumph of Mordecai

Comment 3 I see sand and a sky.

Paraphrase:

Comment 4

Um, I see the man that's walking a horse, the horse. And this is not really just a castle. It's just a sand castle.

Paraphrase:

Comment 5 I see shadow of the horse here or the man's.

Paraphrase:

Activity: Paraphrasing

GRADE 3

How might you paraphrase these student comments?



Student A (Kevin)

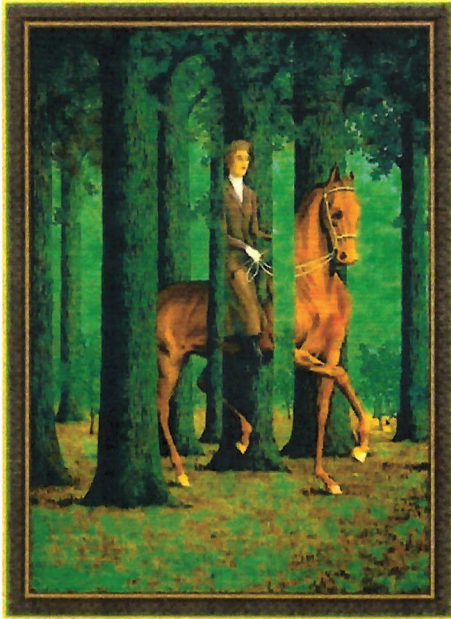
"Uh, I think that it's in China, 'cause the lettering, the clothing. And I think that the woman is, like, waiting for something, and the man's telling her to come in."

Student B (Ahmet)

"I think, I think somebody's taking a picture of them. And they are in a show. They are pretending."

Paraphrasing Activity - Middle School

Grade 7, Lesson 8



Comment 1

Jennifer: Maybe the painting is of a forest and the man and the horse is a ghost...

Paraphrase:

Comment 2

Kayla: It's an illusion, it's magic because on the part in front, the horse looks much younger in the face, and the other back part, he looks darker and little older. So maybe when he crosses the trees, he gets younger.

Paraphrase:

Comment 3

Paul: It's not a real horse – it's painted. Someone is painting a picture of a horse onto the parallel trees – b/c the horse is split up.

Paraphrase: