

Building Reading Power: NUFS Online Workshop  
Juanita Heigham  
August 8, 2020

**Activating Prior Knowledge: KWL Chart**

**Robot Teachers**

You are going to read a passage about robot teachers. Think about this title for a moment and then brainstorm some ideas for the first two columns of the chart below.

What do you <b>K</b> now about the topic?	What do you <b>W</b> ant to know?	What did you <b>L</b> earn?

Passage:

If you think of the jobs robots could never do, you would probably put doctors and teachers at the top of the list. It's easy to imagine robot cleaners and factory workers, but some jobs need human connection and creativity. But are we underestimating what robots can do? In some cases, they already perform better than doctors at diagnosing illness. Also, some patients might feel more comfortable sharing personal information with a machine than a person. Could there be a place for robots in education after all?

British education expert Anthony Seldon thinks so. And he even has a date for the robot takeover of the classroom: 2027. He predicts robots will do the main job of transferring information and teachers will be like assistants. Intelligent robots will read students' faces, movements and maybe even brain signals. Then they will adapt the information to each student. It's not a popular opinion and it's unlikely robots will ever have empathy and the ability to really connect with humans like another human can.

One thing is certain, though. A robot teacher is better than no teacher at all. In some parts of the world, there aren't enough teachers and 9–16 per cent of children under the age of 14 don't go to school. That problem could be partly solved by robots because they can teach anywhere and won't get stressed, or tired, or move somewhere for an easier, higher-paid job.

Those negative aspects of teaching are something everyone agrees on. Teachers all over the world are leaving because it is a difficult job and they feel overworked. Perhaps the question is not 'Will robots replace teachers?' but 'How can robots help teachers?' Office workers can

use software to do things like organize and answer emails, arrange meetings and update calendars. Teachers waste a lot of time doing non-teaching work, including more than 11 hours a week marking homework. If robots could cut the time teachers spend marking homework and writing reports, teachers would have more time and energy for the parts of the job humans do best.

## **Building Awareness of Logical Order**

### **All Mixed Up!**

#### **I. Topic Talk (Activating Prior Knowledge)**

1. Do you have a cell phone?

*If you don't have one, please imagine having one to answer the next questions.*

2. What do you like most about using your cell phone?

3. What is annoying about using it?

4. Do you think there are any health dangers to using cell phones? If you do, what are they?

5. Read the title of this article. Guess what you think it will be about.

#### **II. Task**

The paragraphs in this newspaper article are mixed up. Your job is to reorder them. Follow the steps below.

1. Read each section and find a better way to organize the paragraphs in that section.

2. In each section, write numbers by the paragraphs to show your new organization. \*Begin with #1 in each section. \*

3. Compare your ideas with your group members' and decide on the best ideas for your group.

### **Mobile phones and cancer: Misleading headlines fail to mention rats**

#### **1. Recent News**

\_\_\_\_\_ What the headlines fail to say is that the studies these news stories are based on were carried out in rats. If you read the news report carefully, you will see that rats were used in the studies. But some people won't look beyond the headlines. The studies also used radiation doses far higher than what we'd experience in the real-world.

\_\_\_\_\_ Together, this means that even with the latest findings, there's still no convincing evidence that mobile phones cause cancer in people.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mobile phones are in the news following the release of results from a US research program that tested if a certain type of radiation given off by phones can cause cancer. As a result, headlines are claiming that there's now "clear evidence" linking mobile phones to cancer.

#### **2. What did the study do?**

\_\_\_\_\_ This means that these results cannot be translated outside of the lab and into your pocket.

\_\_\_\_\_ Researchers from the US National Toxicology Program looked at the effects of exposing a small number of rats to radiation like that given out by mobile phones.

\_\_\_\_\_ This is a point Professor Kevin Smith, professor of health science at The Open University, also highlights, saying: “The lowest radiation levels used were equal to the safety limit mobile phone manufacturers must follow. This is the level of radiation a phone user experiences when actually using the phone. The higher doses for the rats were four times those limits.”

\_\_\_\_\_ Rats were exposed to intense radiofrequency radiation throughout the body for 9 hours every day, for their entire lifetime. This is beyond the length of time people would normally be exposed to. And most of the doses of radiation tested were far higher than those emitted by mobile phones.

### 3. *What you need to know*

\_\_\_\_\_ Research into mobile phones and cancer isn't new and is still ongoing. Large studies in people have found no increased risk of cancer from using mobile phones.

\_\_\_\_\_ And considering these previous studies were in people, this latest study in rats, using conditions that don't match normal phone use, shouldn't ring alarm bells.

\_\_\_\_\_ Increased cancer risk wasn't found in rats exposed to the lowest, and more realistic, levels of radiation. But the researchers did find something surprising: male rats exposed to radiofrequency radiation lived longer.

## Predicting the Topic and Skimming

I. **Predicting the Topic:** Look at the picture and read the title of this passage. With a partner, guess what the passage might be about. *It doesn't matter if you are right!*

II. **Skimming:** Read the first paragraph. Then read *the first sentence* in the following paragraphs. Finally, read all of the final paragraph. Do you want to change your answer to number 1? Why or why not?

III. Now read the complete passage. Discuss this question with your group members: Does this passage describe your family? Why or why not.

## The Changing Scene of Digital Life

Today's grandparents are joining their grandchildren on social media, but the different generations' online habits couldn't be more different. The over-55s are joining Facebook in increasing numbers, meaning that they will soon be the site's second biggest user group, with 3.5 million users aged 55–64 and 2.9 million over-65s.



Sheila, who is 59, says, 'I joined to see what my grandchildren are doing, as my daughter posts videos and photos of them. It's a much better way to see what they're doing than waiting for letters and photos in the post. That's how we did it when I was a child, but I think I'm lucky I get to see so much more of their lives than my grandparents did.'

Ironically, Sheila's grandchildren are less likely to use Facebook themselves. Children under 17 are leaving the site – only 2.2 million users are under 17 – but they're not going far from their smartphones. Chloe, age 15, even sleeps with her phone. 'It's my alarm clock so I have to,' she says. 'I look at it before I go to sleep and as soon as I wake up.'

Unlike her grandmother's generation, Chloe's age group is spending so much time on their phones at home that they are missing out on spending time with their friends in real life. Sheila, on the other hand, has made contact with old friends from school she hasn't heard from in forty years. 'We use Facebook to arrange to meet all over the country,' she says. 'It's changed my social life completely.'

Teenagers might have their parents to thank for their smartphone and social media addiction as their parents were the early adopters of the smartphone. Peter, 38 and father of two teenagers, reports that he used to be on his phone or laptop constantly. 'I was always connected and I felt like I was always working,' he says. 'How could I tell my kids to get off their phones if I was always in front of a screen myself?' So, in the evenings and at weekends, he puts away his cell phone and computer and relies on his home phone. 'I'm not completely cut off from the world in case of emergencies, but the important thing is I'm setting a better example to my kids and spending more quality time with them.'

With growing awareness of the damage overuse of digital devices has on mental and physical health, it might only be a matter of time until the generation above and below Peter catches up with the new trend for a less digital life.

## **Paying Attention to Meaning**

### **Hmm. Something is Wrong**

Read this passage and find the strange things in it. With your partner, change some words so the paragraph makes more sense!

It was Mark's fourteenth Christmas. His dad baked a cake for him because he always bakes cakes. It was a chocolate cookie, and it had two layers. His mom usually decorates his birthday cake, so she put vanilla frosting\* on the bottom layer. Next, she put frosting on the top layer and all around the cake. Then the chocolate cake was completely white. His dad put candles on the bottom of the cake. He lit them. Mark's mom and dad stood next to him. They sang Happy Birthday to him. "Happy birthday to you," they sang. "Happy birthday to me," he said and cried. His mom said, "Now make a wish and blow out the candles." He made a wish and easily blew out all the candles. Then they sat on the cake. They always do.

*\*frosting (n) Oo (菓子)*  
*original passage*

## Ignoring Unknown Words: Blackout

Read the following paragraph and ~~completely mark out~~ any word that you do not know and then answer the questions below.

Meet Sara

Sara is a dafodila at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. She is 20 years old, and she chrisnas in Fenton. Fenton is a small town near St. Louis. Everyday Sara takes the bus to school and goes to her classes. She is carveting biology. After her classes, she studies with her boula, and then her boula that live in Fenton ride the bus home with her. Her other boula have apartments in St. Louis. Sometimes Sara has dinner in a criwel with her boula, but usually she has dinner at home with her peti after her parents and sister get back from work. Her father is a very good cook and everyone in her peti is funny so she enjoys eating at home. After dinner, Sara studies more. She wants to geter a doctor so she will be in school for a long time.

*original passage*

Answer the following questions about the passage. *Do not use any words that you do not know the meaning of in your answers.*

1. Where does Sara live?
2. Who does she usually eat dinner with?
3. Who does she study with?
4. When she doesn't eat at home, where does she eat?
5. Why will Sara be studying for many years?

## Predicting the Ending

When you read this passage, you will notice that something is missing. It has no ending! You will read the beginning of the story, and then you will write an idea for how it could end. After you finish, you will share your idea with your group. Finally, your teacher will give you the rest of the passage so you can compare your ideas.

### Fifty Good Friends

Manuel Garcia had stomach cancer. The doctors told him, “You need very strong medicine to stop the cancer.” Chemotherapy is very strong medicine that kills cancer. Manuel went to the hospital, and after a few weeks of the medicine, his hair began to fall out. Soon he had no hair.

Manuel was depressed. He felt strange without hair. He didn’t want people to see him, and he told his friends and family not to visit him. But one day, Manuel’s brother and three other relatives came to the hospital. Manuel was surprised when he saw them because...

### *Complete story*

*Manuel Garcia had stomach cancer. The doctors told him, “You need very strong medicine to stop the cancer.” Chemotherapy is very strong medicine that kills cancer. Manuel went to the hospital, and after a few weeks of the medicine, his hair began to fall out. Soon he had no hair.*

*Manuel was depressed. He felt strange without hair. He didn’t want people to see him, and he told his friends and family not to visit him. But one day, Manuel’s brother and three other relatives came to the hospital. Manuel was surprised when he saw them because they had no hair. “You shaved your heads!” Manuel said, and he began to laugh. The other men laughed, too. “Please be quiet,” the nurse said, but he was smiling, too.*

*When Manuel came home from the hospital, friends and relatives came to visit him. “We want to look like you,” they said. Manuel shaved all their heads. He also shaved his sons’ heads.*

*At the hospital, Manuel was depressed because he had no hair. After his family and friends showed him support by cutting their hair, he stopped feeling bad. “With my family and friends’ help, I’m ready for anything,” he said.*

*This story is adapted from ‘True Stories in the News’ (1996).*

## Summarizing

I. When we summarize something, we tell it again, but we only include the main points. It’s like when you tell friends about a movie you watched. You tell the story, but it’s very short. You’re going to write a summary for the following reading passage. As you read, think about what the main points are. Make *memos using symbols* as you read like ! / ? / \*. Doing that will help you to prepare for to write a good summary.

### Dish Soap for Dinner

Joe came home from work and opened his mailbox. In his mailbox, he found a yellow bottle of soap that was for washing dishes. The dish soap was a free sample from a

soap company. The company mailed small bottles of soap to millions of people. It was a new soap with lemon juice in it. The company wanted people to try it.

Joe looked at his free bottle. There was a picture of two lemons on the label. Over the lemons were the words “with Real Lemon Juice.”

“Good,” thought Joe, “A free sample of lemon juice! I’m going to have a salad for dinner. This lemon juice will taste good on my salad.” Joe put the soap on his salad and ate it. After Joe ate the salad, he felt sick.

Joe wasn’t the only person who got sick. A lot of people thought the soap was lemon juice. They put the soap on fish, on salads, and in tea. Later they felt sick, too. Some people had stomachaches but felt better in a few hours. Other people felt really sick and went to the hospital. Luckily, no one died from eating the soap.

What can we learn from Joe’s story? Read labels carefully, and don’t eat dish soap for dinner!

II. Reread the passage and pay close attention to your memos. Are those the main points? Is there anything you missed? After you consider these questions, summarize the story to your partner.

III. Now, you are ready to write the summary. *Turn your paper over so you cannot see the story*, and write your summary.

*This story is adapted from ‘True Stories in the News’ (1996).*