

PARAPHRASING

Two arenas for paraphrasing:

- Emotion
- Content

A paraphrase sends three messages:

- I am listening.
- I am interested/I care.
- I understand you (or I'm trying to).

THREE LEVELS OF PARAPHRASING

Mirror



Mediating thinking

SIMPLE: Mirror to the speaker, repeats what has been understood.

- “You are wondering...”
- “You’re noticing that...”
- “You’re pleased with...”

SUMMARIZE: Clarifies and organizes.

- “So, there seem to be two key issues here...”
- “For you then, several themes are emerging. They are...”
- “It seems that there is a sequence or hierarch here...”

SHIFT: Move logical level up to more abstract (value, belief, assumption, goal) or down to more concrete (choice, strategy, example, action).

- UP: “So a value here is...”
 “So an assumption here is...”

- DOWN: “So your next action might be...”
 “It appears the choice you are considering is...”

Adapted from the work of Robert Garmston.

EXAMPLES OF SHIFT PARAPHRASING

Comment

This class is making me crazy; no respect, no order, no following directions.

If they won't study, they won't learn, yet some kids don't do homework and still test well.

Some of our group meetings are unfocused and a waste of time.

Shift UP

Value: Discipline is very important to you.

Belief: You believe that learning requires effort, yet for some kids this doesn't seem to be so.

Goal: What you want is a productive team.

Shift DOWN

So a choice for you might be to make some rules about raising hands, taking turns, being courteous, etc.

Example: So it's puzzling that Aldo doesn't seem to study, yet he excels on tests.

Example: You want people on time, prepared, and on topic.

Source: *Raise the Level of Conversation by Using Paraphrasing*
Robert Garmston, National Staff Development Journal, Spring 2008