TEACHING PREDICTION
CLOZE ACTIVITIES

Acknowledgement:
This material is from the work of Dr Annah Healy, Queensland University of Technology

Although there are many ways of developing Cloze, it is generally developed for one of two purposes:

> 1. **to evaluate a student's progress in reading**

> 2. **to teach students how to use prediction skills for working out troublesome words (adapted cloze)**

1. **Creating a Cloze passage for <u>general</u> reading evaluation purposes**

   For evaluating a student's progress in reading (decoding and meaning-making), a Cloze text is developed in a very specific way:

- text should **be no longer than an A4 page**, with suitably spaced and sized print to suit the *Phase* of learner (*Reading Developmental Continuum*);

- **enough of the original text must be left intact** at the beginning to give the reader an **understanding of the context**, **characters** or **main ideas**.

- **every fifth word must be eliminated** regardless of *its place in a sentence*, the *punctuation,* or *word type.*

- **all deleted words are replaced by a line of the same length** (there should not be any difference between the length of a

line for a missing word such as 'a', and a much longer word such as 'misadventure'.

- **provide a suitable time for students to pre-read** the Cloze text before any attempts to fill in the gaps. During pre-reading, encourage students to skip any difficult words, and read on to the end of the text. Instruct them to 'guess' at what the difficult word might be, and to read their guess in the sentence. The purpose is to first **obtain an overall or general understanding of what the text is about.**

Note: The time for completing the cloze will depend on the learners' development, and to some extent, age (progression stage). Note that different cloze tasks would be given to different students dependent on their developmental phase.

When evaluating a student's progress:
The word the student places into the gap must be **grammatically** (suit the word order of English) and **semantically** (mean the same thing as the original word) correct, even if it is not **exactly the same** as the original word from the text.

2.   Creating Cloze texts for <u>specific</u> teaching purposes

Adapted cloze
Cloze can be a helpful activity for students who have difficulty with learning to read and write meaningfully.

Cloze activities provide a means for helping students to see that word choice and word order is important to the meaning of the text! Cloze also provides a means for showing students that the context (the words surrounding an unknown word) can help readers to work out what a word might be when they fail to decode (recognize) it immediately.

However, cloze activities must target the student's problem. Cloze activities must be developed from texts that are relevant to the student.

For example, if students have difficulty in reading **sight words** or **longer words** that are not regularly encountered, these are the words that should be eliminated from the text.

To help develop suitable cloze activities consider the following information:

TYPE A – Cloze that focuses on sight words

Many students have difficulty reading sight words (these are the words that connect sentences, or words that do not conjure up a picture image to make the word more memorable – for example: which, when, because, they, that, through, threw. Students with reading difficulties often confuse sight words that look similar, or guess from the first two letters.

When students have difficulties recognising sight words, they often fixate on text for periods of time that make them forget what they are reading.

It is important to teach sight words WITHIN TEXT as WHOLE WORDS (rather than break them up into sounds. Cloze is an effective way of helping a reader to focus on these words.

- Select a text that has been read over a number of days, and with which students are familiar.

- Cover the **sight words** with post-notes.

- Work with students in the same *ability* groups.

- Ask students to work out the missing words by looking carefully at the words that surround it (*What word could go into this sentence and make sense*?)

- The text can also be rewritten using a large font, leaving out the sight words that students find difficult to remember/distinguish between (for example: brought-bought; which-witch-when-where; this-then-thin etcetera).

- Make cards of the omitted sight words, and have students select the correct ones and place them into the correct section of text. This encourages students to look for meaning rather than to rely on memory only.

TYPE B – Cloze that focuses on rhyming sounds

Generally, students who have difficulty in recognizing the SOUNDS of the English language have difficulty in learning to read. One of the first sets of skills in learning to read is to see the relationship between the SOUNDS OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE with the SYMBOLS that represent those sounds when they are written down.

An important teaching strategy to help readers to see the relationship between sound and symbols is in using text that has some rhyme.

- Select a text that includes rhyme

- After reading through the rhyming text, cover each or every alternate rhyming word.

- Ask the group to **predict from the sound of the end word on the previous line** – this constitutes a guided reading segment that focuses on **phonological** awareness.

- Encourage students to read along with the next full reading of the text.

- Repeat the process but with students working in pairs on a written text to *Cloze* the rhyming gaps

TYPE C – Cloze that focuses on multiple choice word selection

Invariably, students with reading difficulties do not focus as much on the meaning of the text as they do on reading accurately. We must remember that the purpose of ALL reading is to make meaning.

The task of all literacy support people working with poor readers (and writers) is to help them see that making meaning helps accurate reading. Unfortunately, an over-emphasis on accuracy does not necessarily help readers to make meaning. One way to assist students to focus on meaning is to give them choices for closing gaps in CLOZE text. This way, the students must think about meaning so that an appropriate choice can be made.

- Select text in which students are **interested.**

- Delete the words that supply meaning to the text.

- Place three choices in the space above the deleted word, and direact students to select the ONE that is most appropriate. Include in the three options:
    1. one precisely suitable choice
    2. one less suitable, but possible choice
    3. one entirely unsuitable choice

Example:

Yesterday, Max decided that he would be more
(*insignificant ?*)
(*satisfied ?*)
(*outrageous ?*)
_____than usual, by dressing up as a court jester. He chose his clothing very, very carefully, making
(*clothing ?*)
(*footwear ?*)
(*apparel ?*)
sure that each item of _____ was exactly
(*appropriate /*)
(*restricting ?*)
(*comfortable ?*)
_____   for the occasion.

TYPE D - Cloze that focuses on word searches

Students like puzzles. Cloze puzzles can assist students to learn to look for meaning. Puzzle-solving can serve to engage students in reading text over and again while they 'trial' their chosen word in the appropriate space. The major point here is to insist that students do not wildly guess, but to think about the sense of their selection.

- After deleting words (or phrases) from text, construct a textbox at the end of the page, and place in the missing words – not in order - along with some additional irrelevant words.

- If for example you have 8 deletions, include 16 possible words in the text box. This helps students to think about their word selections.

- Note that more than one word may be appropriate in some gaps. However, tell students that they cannot **use** a word from the box more than once. This will mean that students will need to rethink some early choices when they realize that the only word to go in a gap has already been used.

<u>Example</u>:

Milly the magic cockatoo flew _____ overhead, calling as she went. The animals _____ heard her cries and detected something quite _____ in her call.

Kangaroo called _____ to her. Wombat called up to her. Emu and Koala called _____ as loudly as they could. Milly _____ not to have heard the _____ cries of her friends as she _____ round and round overhead.

Which of these words fit the sentence?			
swooped	excitedly	at	loudly
together	to	appeared	circled
below	had	seemed	urgent

desperate	magically	did	about

Instructions to students

1. Select the <u>very best word</u> you can to fill each gap.
2. Try several words before you make a final decision.
3. Ring each word from the box as you use it in the text.
4. When you are finished, check the words from the box that you have not used. Do any of these words also fit the gaps?

There are many more ways to construct cloze exercises that assist reading and writing. Always remember that **there must be purpose for these activities.** Ask the question - *What am I trying to improve in this reader or writer?*