

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

“Rangoli” *School Journal*, Part 2 Number 4, 2005

Noun frequency level: 8.5–9.5

By the end of year 4, students are required to locate and evaluate the information and ideas within a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts, drawing on the knowledge and skills described in the Literacy Learning Progressions, to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. The curriculum tasks will often involve the students in generating their own questions as well as answering questions from the teacher.

The students in a year 4 class are involved in a visual arts unit to explore a range of art works that reflect the customs of different cultures.

This article is a recount of a rangoli competition that was held during Diwali, the Hindu festival of light. The text combines a procedure with the recount. There is clear information about making a rangoli pattern, supported by photographs. The use of Hindi words

in context, with English explanations in brackets, extends the students’ vocabulary.

The teacher chose this text because it has several characteristics that offer opportunities for year 4 students to locate information to describe the process for making a rangoli pattern. For example, there is a clear sequence of events describing the process (within the recount). The supporting photographs add to the information and build an increasing understanding of how cultural symbols and artistic materials are selected for a particular purpose.

The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.

They mix orange, blue, green, yellow, and red coconut in large, flat dishes and put them on the laundry floor.

Then the children draw their design on a large board.

First, take a pinch of coloured coconut ... Sprinkle a little at a time ... Start from the middle and work outwards.

The design has a large om (a sacred Hindu symbol) and a small diya (oil lamp).

Traditional rangoli artists use brightly coloured rice powder, sand, or powdered chalk to decorate their patterns.

Sheenal and her friends make their “paints” from coconut and food colouring mixed with a little water.

The rangoli patterns stay in the hall all day for people to admire. Then, at the end of the day, they are tipped off the boards and swept into the bin.

The student previews the photographs, and with support, locates the materials used to construct the rangoli. He confirms what he sees by reading the information that is close by in the text.

The student asks questions about how the art work is constructed. He locates the main information by using key words and phrases such as “Then”, “First”, and “Start from”.

The student uses the English explanations within the brackets to understand the Hindi words. He asks and answers questions about why specific designs were included in the rangoli. He returns to this part later to confirm, with support, that the diya is important because it represents light and the om is a traditional symbol.

The student uses prior knowledge in response to teacher questions about why coconut is used instead of traditional materials and infers that coconut is easier to obtain. He also uses his prior knowledge of how quotation marks are used, and of the paints he uses at school, to infer that coconut and food colouring are not real paints.

The student locates the statement “they are tipped off the boards and swept into the bins” and asks questions about whether this is an essential part of the process. With support, he evaluates options for preserving rangoli. He decides that making rangoli is about the enjoyment that people get from them and the significance of celebrating “light” rather than about making an art work that will last forever.

