Analogies: Metaphors and Similes

Analogies in the form of metaphors and similes allow opportunities to delve deeply into the characteristics of an idea, concept, or process. Words or video can be used to create the analogy.

To instruct using metaphors or analogies, you might want to consider the following sequence:

1. Introduce students to the new concept.
2. Select something familiar to students that has some similarity and some difference to the new concept.
   - i.e. the human eye - camera
   - i.e. depression – rain puddle
   - i.e. school - orange
3. Brainstorm how these things are the same and how they are different.
4. Summarize the similarities and differences.
5. Choose the type of expression that is most effective:
   a. Human eye - camera
      i. His eyes shuttered closed.
      ii. Her eyes were like a camera, recording every movement.
   b. Depression – rain puddle
      i. He fell into a puddle of depression.
      ii. She wallowed in her depression like a new puppy rolling in the mud.
   c. School-orange
      i. He peeled back the sour layers of language from his son’s report card.
      ii. She separated the books in her backpack like the segments of a favourite Christmas orange.

To stretch student thinking, consider allowing them to choose the ‘familiar’ concept or idea. Some essentials to consider are:

- It is important to recognize where the metaphor breaks down.
- Students should challenge each other’s’ thinking to become aware of false analogies.