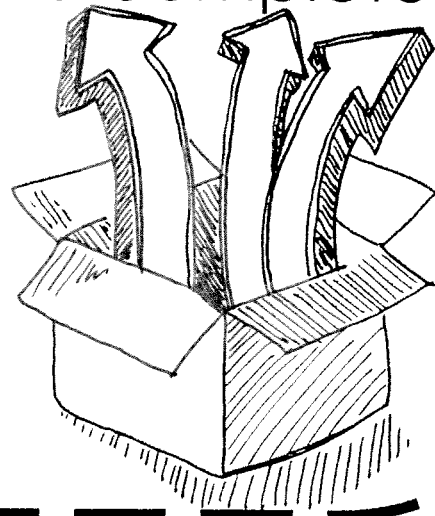


# Unpacking Math Problems

Doll (1989) used the term "unpacking" to describe how young students picked apart problems and reconstructed them into new problems. Caine et al. (1994) suggested unpacking of fundamental concepts to seek deeper meaning. Ball & Bass (2000) refer to this as unpacking the content, a decompression or deconstruction of basic mathematical concepts and skills in order to reexamine and reconstruct with understanding.

1. Read the problem.
2. What do I know?
3. What is the question?
4. What strategy will I use?
5. Organize my thinking so others can understand what I did.
6. Answer the question in a complete thought.



Doll, W. E. (1989). Complexity in the classroom. *Educational Leadership*, 7(1), 65-70.

Caine, G., Caine, R. N., & Crowell, S. (1994). *Mindshifts: A brain-based process for restructuring schools and renewing education*. Tucson, AZ: Zephyr Press.

Ball, D. L., & Bass, H. (2000). Interweaving content and pedagogy in teaching and learning to teach: Knowing and using mathematics. In J. Boaler (Ed.), *Multiple perspectives on the teaching and learning of mathematics* (pp. 83-104). Westport, CT: Ablex.