Teaching students in year five/six to use contextual clues, as well as what they know about words (i.e.: the meaning), when faced with unknown words in a text, improves vocabulary knowledge and comprehension.

Abstract:

The ability to comprehend what is read varies greatly within any given group. When we read we are draw upon several levels of text processing (i.e.: word, sentence, conceptual, topic and dispositional) at a time. Teachers of students who have difficulty comprehending what they read are faced with the interesting challenge of determining where those students need assistance and how best to provide it.

This study aims to explore the hypothesis that teaching students in Year Five/Six to use contextual clues, as well as what they know about words (i.e. the meaning), when faced with unknown words in a text, improves vocabulary knowledge and comprehension.

In order to investigate the above hypothesis a series of ten teaching sessions were planned and administered to the whole class of Year Five/Six students. Students were tested on their synonyms knowledge and their level of comprehension both before and after the teaching sessions. A control group from the other classroom was established and a study group was closely monitored and reported on. Observations of the progression of all students in the class were made by both the class teacher and the students.

All students improved in their ability to provide synonyms for selected words that were grammatically correct. Eighty three percent of the Study Group demonstrated gains in their comprehension after participating in the teaching sessions. Out of the rest of the class, fifty six percent demonstrated gains after the sessions, twenty two percent could not be determined because they scored full marks in both the pre and post test and twenty two percent scored equal to or less than on the post test.

The results indicate that explicitly teaching students to find and use contextual clues and draw upon their knowledge of words lead to an improvement in comprehension for the majority of students involved with strongest gains made by those students who needed it most.

Introduction:

There are clear and long standing connections between vocabulary (all the words of a language) and reading comprehension (the ability to get meaning from a written text) and there are complex connections between vocabulary growth and reading comprehension. Studies show that vocabulary is a principle contributor to comprehension, fluency, and achievement. Bromley (2007) states that vocabulary development occurs because of reading comprehension, but it also leads to reading comprehension because word meanings making up as much as 70-80% of comprehension.

Comprehension is hindered by not understanding the meanings of words. If oral language development is lacking the difficulty is even greater. Jacobson, Lapp & Flood (2007) refer to research across the decades which suggest that "students from both English and non English speaking backgrounds, encounter difficulties with reading comprehension as a result of not understanding meanings of many words, including homonyms, homophones, and homographs." (Hawkes, 1972: Hudelson, Poyner & Wolfe, 2003: Readence, Baldwin & Head 1985) "This difficulty is compounded if the second language speaker's oral proficiency in English has not been acquired before reading instruction begins (August & Hakuta, 1997; Strickland, Ganske, & Moore 2002)".

Greenwood and Flanigan (2007) draw upon research which indicates that the size of an individual's vocabulary is a powerful predictor of how well that person comprehends. Beimiller & Slonim (2001), as cited in Boulware – Gooden et al (2007), reported that students who were behind in vocabulary knowledge in third grade, would remain behind throughout their schooling.

Bromley (2007) states "teaching vocabulary well is a key aspect of developing engaged and successful readers". She provides nine points about the teaching of vocabulary. She refers to Allington, (2006); and Samuels, (2002) and states that "fluent readers recognise and understand many words, and they read more quickly and easily than those with smaller vocabularies". Bromley goes on to say that "Students with large vocabularies

understand text better and score higher on achievement tests than students with small vocabularies". (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). Furthermore, she states that "a broad word knowledge enables students to communicate in ways that are precise, powerful, persuasive, and interesting because words are tools for analysing, inferring, evaluation and reasoning (Vacca, Vacca, Gove, Burkey, Lenhart, & Mc Keon, 2005)". Step seven states that "direct instruction in vocabulary influences comprehension more than any other factor. Although wide reading can build word knowledge, students need thoughtful and systematic instruction in key vocabulary as well (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004; Graves & Watts – Taffe, 2002; Nagy,1988)".

Students experiencing reading difficulties may be found to be lacking in vocabulary knowledge. They may lack knowledge about the English language and how it works. They may be unable to make connections between words they know and connotations of words or totally new words. Or they may be unable to recognize or use contextual clues surrounding the unknown word.

Given the significance of vocabulary in reading comprehension, teachers need to determine the most effective means of developing a student's vocabulary.

Jacobson, Lapp and Flood (2007) report that scaffolding instruction in a way that takes the student from denoting the meaning (eg: cat is a feline animal) to making connections via connotations (eg: catlike, lion, tiger, leopard etc) is one form of effective instruction. Reading and comprehension are enhanced because the new vocabulary and information are built or scaffolded from the meaning of the known word to the new word. Additionally, they state that "knowing the meaning of a root, prefix or suffix often gives clues to what a word means. The meanings of 60% of multisyllabic words can be inferred by analyzing word parts. Students need a mindset to alert them to this.(Nagy & Scott, 2000)".

However, learning words as discrete meanings is not enough. Students don't necessarily connect these meanings back to the larger context of the passage. Greenwood and Flanagan (2007), whilst discussing the teaching of semantic gradients (which help

students to discern shades of meaning.), noted that their students were able to state through experience that you must often search beyond the sentence with the targeted word in order to fully ascertain the meaning.

Gardner (2007) refers to these as forward cues (when information follows the target word) and backward cues(when information precedes the target word) and draws on Chern's (1993) findings that adult subjects with higher reading scores were better able to utilize the two cues to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words than those with lower reading scores. Additionally forward cues were used less often than backward cues by both groups.

Gardner (2007) refers to the four types of natural reading contexts in which children might encounter an unfamiliar word as described by Beck et al (1983). They are:

a) *misdirective* – "those that may direct the student to an incorrect meaning for a target word";

b) *nondirective* – "those that seem to be of no assistance in directing the reader toward any particular meaning for a word";

c) *general* - those that "seem to provide enough information for the reader to place the word in a general category";

d) *directive* – those "that seem likely to lead the student to a specific, correct meaning of a word" (pp 178-179).

A fifth type of context, the pedagogical context is one which is intentionally written for the purpose of conveying meaning of an unknown word. This is of significance because in order for direct instruction to be of value, teachers may need to manipulate contextually thin texts to ensure rich contextual clues are provided. Greenwood and Flanagan (2007) provide the following examples to demonstrate this: "Unlike Rebecca, Tammy was very morose." This could be seen as misdirective if for example, Rebecca had previously been described as tall. The context could however be enriched if the text was changed to "Unlike Rebecca, who was very enthusiastic, Tammy was morose."

Students experiencing reading difficulties need to be explicitly taught how to make the vocabulary to comprehension connections. Jacobson, Lapp & Flood (2007) state that "Instruction that models ways to acquire the meaning of an unknown word provides a foundation of knowledge and a set of procedures from which students can draw to independently identify and categorise words according to sound and meaning when reading, writing, listening and conversing. (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004)".

The challenges educators face include finding and implementing the most effective ways to broaden their students' vocabulary in a manner that ensures they develop the necessary strategies to determine the meaning of words independently wherever possible.

The present study seeks to look at the effects of teaching students to build vocabulary knowledge, make connections between words, and use contextual cues as a means of comprehending via the strategy developed by Greenwood and Flanigan (2007):
Look–before, at, and after the new word
Predict–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start
Reason–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit
Resolve–recognize that you may need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)
Redo–go through the steps again if necessary

This process is something that successful readers do automatically. Students who are faced with unknown words, who don't apply the above strategy will have difficulty understanding the text. Once this happens, meaning is lost. The teaching of this process along with exploring semantic gradients, will help students develop the habit of unlocking new words independently, thus determining that teaching students in Year Five/Six to use contextual clues, as well as what they know about words (i.e. the meaning), when faced with unknown words in a text, improves vocabulary knowledge and comprehension.

Method:

This study uses an OXO design, whereby gains in reading comprehension via the explicit teaching of the use of contextual clues and semantic gradients are monitored and assessed for Year 5/6 students over a period of 10 teaching sessions. The study compares two groups of students, a control group and an intervention group.

Participants:

All students attend a school where there are no ESL students, in a small country town. Students in both Year Five/Six classes were assessed using PROBE (Parkin, Parkin and Poole, 2002) at the beginning of the school year. PROBE assesses comprehension of both fiction and non fiction texts. It was interesting to note that all students selected for the study scored higher with the non fiction text except for one, whose score was equal. This is a fairly consistent trend within both classes and is also generally reflected in the AIM results for the school. In order to gain a PROBE score of 70% or above for comprehension, some students sat several PROBE tests. In some cases a score of 70% could not be achieved and so testing was stopped. Results of selected students indicated that five were at least twelve months behind the corresponding PROBE age. One student was nearly six months behind. In order to gain a clearer insight I chose to administer the TORCH – Test Of Reading Comprehension (Mossenson, Hill and Masters. 1987) to both classes. All students were also assessed using The John Munro Synonym Test (Munro, 2005)

 Six students from a class of twenty seven were selected for the study. Selection was done so based on lower results for at least two out of the three assessments. Of the six participants in this study, four students were in the bottom 30% for all three assessments. Students from the other class who scored lower results for at least two out of three assessments were used as the control group. Details of participants are as follows:

Student	Group	Age		Earlier Intervention	Reading age according to PROBE	
					Fiction	Non Fiction
Student A	Study	10.75	M	Reading Recovery	<7.5-8.5 yrs. (62.5%)	7.5-8.5 yrs (75%)
Student B	Study	10.33	M		<8.5-9.5 yrs (62.5%)	8.5-9.5 yrs (87.5%)
Student C	Study	9.91	F		8.5-9.5 yrs (75%)	8.5-9.5 yrs (87.5%)
Student D	Study	9.75	F		<7.5-8.5 yrs. (50%)	7.5-8.5 yrs. (75%)
Student E	Study	11.41	M		<7.5-8.5 yrs. (50%)	<7.5-8.5 yrs. (50%)
Student F	Study	11.75	F		9-10 yrs (70%)	9-10 yrs (90%)
student A	Control	10.83	M		9-10 yrs (70%)	8.5-9.5 yrs (50%)
Student B	Control	11.66	M	Reading Recovery	7.0-8.0 yrs (75%)	7.5- 8.5 yrs (50%)
student C	Control	12.00	M	Reading Recovery	10 – 11 yrs (60%)	10.5-11.5 yrs (40%)
student D	Control	10.58	F		9– 10 yrs (60%)	9-10 yrs (20%)
student E	Control	10.25	F		9-10yrs (100%)	9-10yrs (90%)
student F	Control	11.08	F		10-11 yrs (60%)	9.5-10.5 yrs (50%)

Materials:

Two assessment tasks were administered before the teaching sessions began. The John Munro Synonyms Test provides students with a list word and they must provide as many synonyms they can think of for that word. TORCH provides the children with a passage of text and a series of items that aim to identify the types of reading tasks required by students. Analysis of responses aims to determine which reading tasks students require assistance with. In this instance, all children were assessed on the passage titled "Feeding Puff." This passage was chosen because it was non fiction and it fell within the Year 5/6 range.

Ideas for the teaching sessions were adapted from a series of lessons by Greenwood and Flanigan (2007), available on www.readwritethink.org. Throughout the teaching sessions, examples of sentences are taken from "Tom Appleby, Convict Boy" by Jackie French as this was the novel being studied in class at the time. This text ranks as mid Year Six on the Fry Readability Scale. Serial reading of the text to the class was heavily scaffolded. A range of comprehension questions requiring oral or written responses after each chapter ensured students were following the story. Enjoyment level for all students was determined to be very high with even the reluctant readers keen to hear of Tom's life. Graphic organizers and posters were designed for the teaching sessions. The Semantic

Gradients worksheet (Read, Write, Think 2007) was used in Session 6 and the Semantic Gradients Plus Context worksheet (Read, Write, Think 2007) was used in Session 8.

<u>Procedure:</u>

At the beginning of the school year, all Year Five/Six students completed the self efficacy scale for reading (adapted from Chapman and Tumner 2002) and were assessed using PROBE. It was administered to the whole class. Children were required to silently read the passage and then answer the questions. For the purposes of this study, The John Munro Synonym Test and the TORCH (Feeding Puff) were administered, again, to the whole class. The same Synonyms and TORCH (Feeding Puff) tests were used as post tests.

The hypothesis for this study states that teaching students in Year Five/Six to use contextual clues, as well as what they know about words (i.e. the meaning), when faced with unknown words in a text, improves vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. Ten sequential teaching sessions were planned and delivered to all students in my class in order to test this hypothesis. They were administered each day as part of the Senior Reading Program. Each session lasted between 45-60 minutes. After the whole class teaching, modelling or discussion took place, all students worked individually or in mixed ability groups to complete set activities. Study group students were gathered together to discuss their work and continue on with it. Each session ended with a reporting time whereby students were required to share what they had learnt for the session. Sessions One, Two and Three introduced the notion of context clues and the LPRRR model (Greenwood, S.C., & Flanigan, K. (2007):

> **Look**–before, at, and after the new word.
>
> **Predict**–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start.
>
> **Reason**–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit.
>
> **Resolve**–recognize that you may need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone).
>
> **Redo**–go through the steps again if necessary.

Students applied the model to selected examples using a graphic organizer. In Session Four, contextual clues were broken down into four areas: definition, synonyms, antonyms and inference. Session Five looked at enriching contextual clues. Sessions Six and Seven introduced Semantic Gradients (a sequential array of words organized according shades of meaning.) and called for application by the students. Sessions Eight and Nine linked contextual clues to Semantic Gradients and Session Ten tied contextual clues, synonyms and Semantic Gradients together.

The other Year Five/Six class was not involved in these sessions. Their reading program was totally different during this time. At the end of the ten sessions, all students in both classes were assessed using The John Munro Synonyms Test and the TORCH (Feeding Puff).

Results:

Study Group results:
The results of the pre and post testing of the study group indicate that in each case, after participating in the 10 sessions, the students ability to provide synonyms for given words improved. In all but one case reading comprehension also improved. Reading comprehension for Student E stayed the same. (Figures 1 and 2)

Study group	Synonyms pre test	Synonyms post test	Torch pre test	Torch post test
Student A	24	78	31	39
Student B	56	78	38	46
Student C	44	124	41	57
Student D	14	55	36	43
Student E	29	62	46	46
Student F	46	94	44	57

Figure 1   Test results table for Study Group
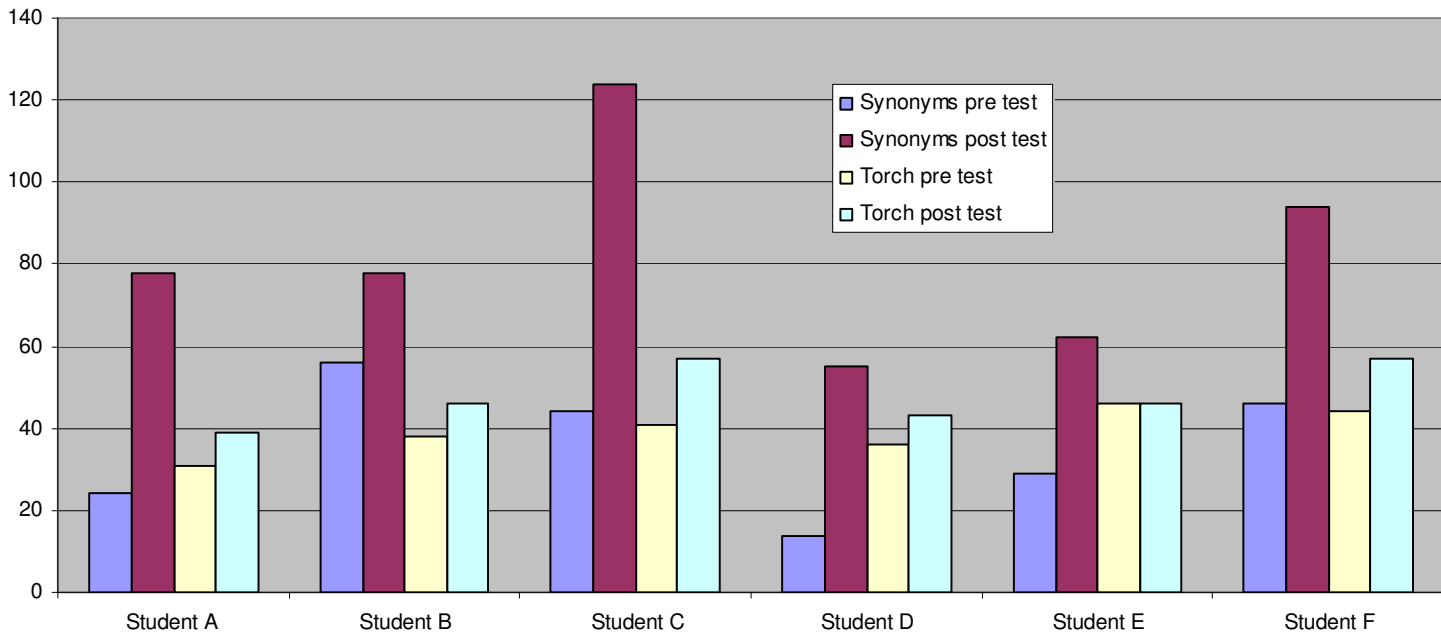
Figure 2   *Test results graph for Study Group*

Student A

Student A participated in the Reading Recovery program when he was in Year One. He is now in Year Five. Over the years he has been a reluctant reader and avoided having to do it as much as possible. On the self efficacy scale completed earlier on this year, Student A indicated that he knew he could remember what happens in a story and also make a picture in his mind as he read. By his own reckoning, he was unsure or definite that he did not use any of the other strategies. Responses to the second section of the assessment indicated that he would wait for help, give up on words, not worry if he couldn't understand something and think he would get them wrong regardless. His low opinion of his ability to read impacts on all he does in the classroom throughout the day.

Initially, during the course of the sessions, he was unable to find contextual clues. As the sessions went on, he worked with a patient classmate who was able to support and value his attempts at the set work, his successes increased and so his confidence rose slightly. I ensured that I kept returning to him when he and his partner were working on the activities to reinforce what was being done. Incidentally, whilst working on the novel, Tom Appleby (French J) during literature sessions, he demonstrated that he was applying

the use of contextual clues to the text as it was being read to the class. It is worth noting that throughout the lessons, words supplied by Student A were grammatically correct.

His ability to list synonyms in Session 10 and the extra 54 synonyms provided in the Synonyms test indicate that he has improved his vocabulary. His TORCH score increased by 21%. These gains will hopefully serve well to bolster Student A's confidence in himself.

Student B

Student B is currently in Year Five. During the initial sessions, he was unable to determine contextual clues. As the lessons progressed, with the support of classmates, he demonstrated a greater understanding. By Session Six, he was able to successfully complete the Semantic Gradients (Read, Write, Think. 2007) activity sheet without any assistance. Throughout the sessions, all words provided were grammatically correct. His Synonym list increased by 22 words and his TORCH score increased by 45%.

Student C

In Session One, this student, who is also in Year Five, was unable to recognize the forward clues that supported the meaning of the word unbearable. She was absent for Session Five which prevents me from knowing whether she can effectively use the model of LPRRR to determine the meaning of selected words. Words supplied throughout the sessions were grammatically correct. Student C demonstrated rapid gains in both the Synonyms Test (where she supplied an additional 80 words during the post test) and the TORCH test (with an increase of 62%).

Student D

Student D, in Year Five, found the Synonyms pre test extremely difficult. She was unable to identify clues in sentences provided in the first session and was absent for Session Two where this was followed up. When working with a partner for Session Three they were able to recognize the word as an adjective that described the noun *waves*.
Session Five demonstrated an inability to recognize or provide forward or backward clues. The Semantic Gradients activity sheet (Read, Write, Think. 2007) was completed

successfully. This activity was done individually. Words provided by Student D were often grammatically incorrect particularly in regards to tense where she would swing between past and present. Parts of speech were also confused, for example: adjectives were used when verbs were required. Student D was absent for Session 10. In the post test for Synonyms, she was able to provide an additional 41 synonyms. Given the initial difficulties and the absences, this was a tremendous achievement. Her TORCH score increased by 31%

Student E

Student E is currently in Year Six. He has demonstrated consistent difficulties with anything of an organization matter. In the past he has been unable to prepare what is needed before a lesson starts. He has no system for sorting or filing his work and his writing has been restricted by the lack of ability to sequence his thoughts. This has been a targeted area that Student E has been working on throughout the year. Significant gains have been made; both in personal organization and in his writing, where he is now producing passages of writing that clearly demonstrate a logical flow.

In Session One, Student E was able to use forward clues to determine the meaning of *unbearable*. When determining the meaning of a word in Session Two and Three, he and his partner did not recognize that the word was an adjective describing the noun *waves*. In Session Five, when provided with forward clues, he did not determine the meaning of *melancholy*, however he was able to generate his own sentences to demonstrate what forward and backward clues are. His semantic gradient work showed that he was capable of placing more common words, but many of the words used in the examples were not understood by him. As this task was organizational in nature, he found it difficult. Words provided were grammatically correct. The Synonyms post test provided 33 more words than the pre test. Curiously, his TORCH score did not change. He scored 46% on both occasions. On the post test, two of the same questions were incorrect. The other incorrect answers on the post test were correct on the pre test. On both tests, the incorrect items were to the left of his TORCH score, which are the easier items. The TORCH manual suggests reading over the text and answers with the student to determine if the student has been confused by the reading tasks. Upon discussing this with Student E, I found that his approach to answering the questions was to do all the easy ones first and then go back to

the harder ones. This was a strategy employed by several class members, with interesting results and shall be explored more fully in the discussion.

Student F

Student F is a Year Six student who lacks confidence in her own ability and stresses about her work, for fear of being incorrect. She was unable to determine any forward clues in Session One, however, when working with a partner in Sessions Two and Three, was able to recognize and use contextual clues provided. In Session Five she was able to select appropriate words and determine the meaning of words from forward and backward clues. She was also required to create her own forward and backward clues for the sentence Tom was_____. She successfully completed both.

During the session on semantic gradients, she was able to complete three gradients successfully. The other two had only two words jumbled (both of which are less common words). When completing her own gradients, some words were grammatically incorrect. She confused adjectives and verbs. She was absent for Session Ten.   Her post Synonyms test showed an increase of 48 words and her TORCH score increased by 57%.

Control group results:

The results of the pre and post testing for the control group are less consistent than the study group results. For three students, synonym scores increased over time, whilst for the other three students, they decreased. It was pleasing to see some increases in the synonym test even without targeted lessons. All students in the control group participated in regular reading sessions within the classroom over the time of the study. Three students' TORCH results increased, two students stayed the same and one students post TORCH test score decreased. (Figures 3 and 4)

Control Group	Synonyms pre test	Synonyms post test	Torch pre test	Torch post test
Student A	41	52	29	46
Student B	54	44	46	48
Student C	70	87	27	39
Student D	41	24	43	43
Student E	40	48	43	43
Student F	42	37	43	39

Figure 3   Test results table for Control Group
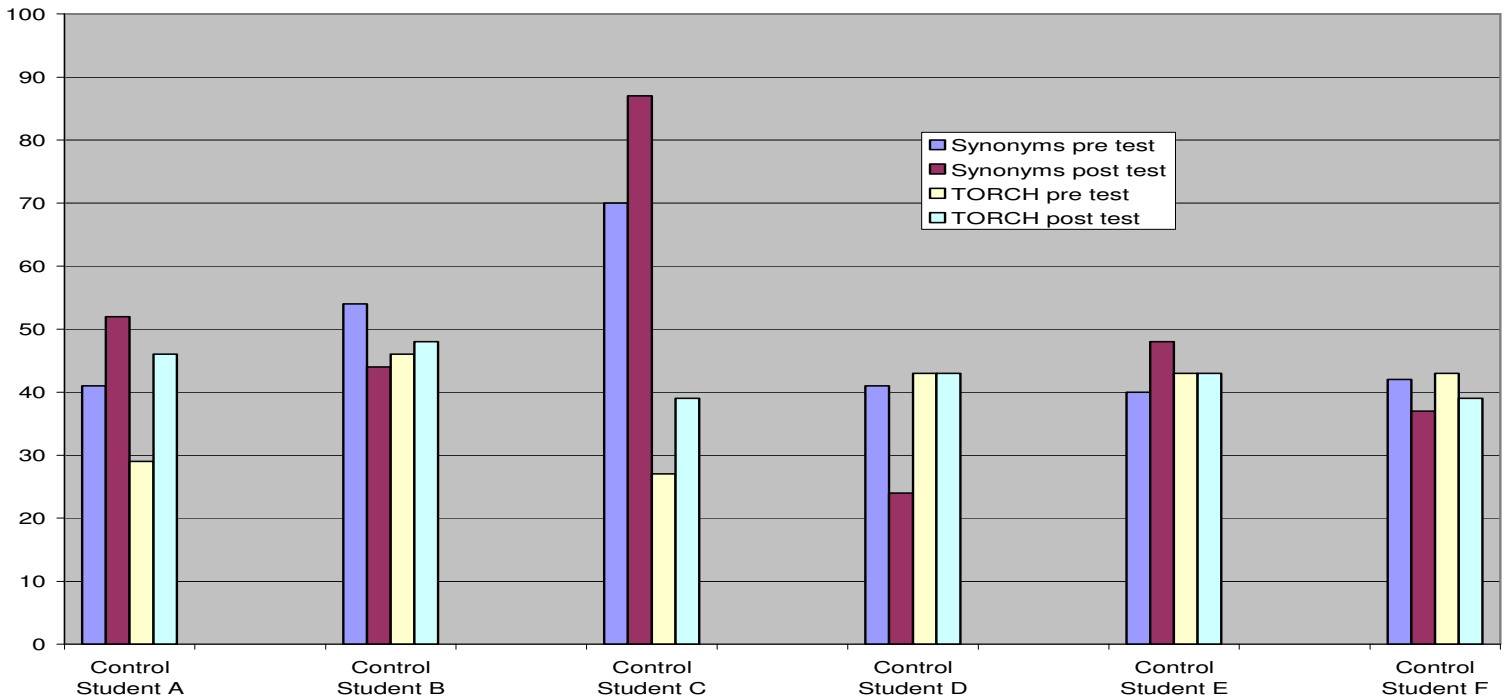
Figure 4   Test results graph for Control Group

The gains made by the students in the study group with the synonyms test are generally significantly greater than any gains made by the control group (Figures 5 and 6). Whilst not as significant, gains in reading comprehension as assessed by TORCH were also greater in the Study Group. (Note that on the graph, where test results did not vary, no bar is present. This is because there was no difference in the results.)

	Diff. btw synonym pre/post test results	Diff. btw TORCH pre/post test results
Study Group Student A	54	8
Study Group Student B	22	8
Study Group Student C	80	16
Study Group Student D	41	7
Study Group Student E	33	0
Study Group Student F	48	13
Control Group Student A	11	17
Control Group Student B	-10	2
Control Group Student C	17	12
Control Group Student D	-17	0
Control Group Student E	8	0
Control Group Student F	-5	-4

Figure 5   Table demonstrating difference in pre and post test scores
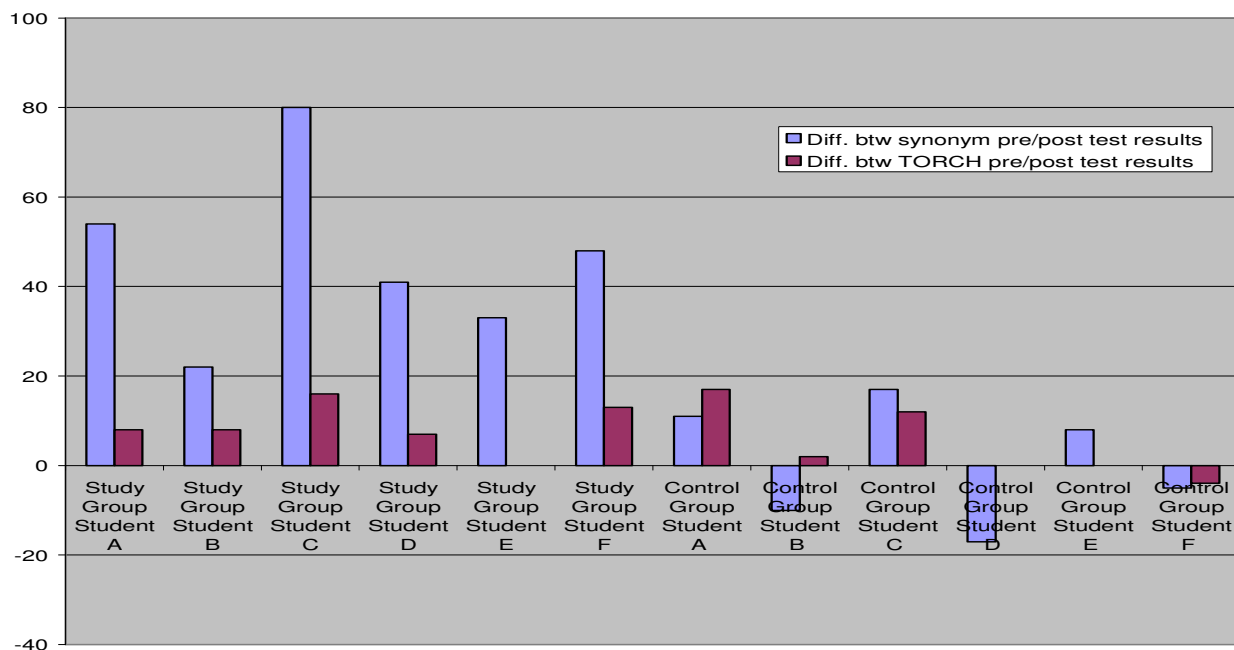
Figure 6   Graph demonstrating difference in pre and post test scores

Further investigation regarding the worth of the teaching sessions was able to be undertaken because the sessions were administered to the whole class. An assessment checklist was used throughout the sessions to determine how students were managing the tasks set. Figure 7 details the checklist used. All students in the class improved in the Synonyms test. Five out of six Study Group students improved in the TORCH post test. Of the remaining eighteen students, one showed no improvement in the post test, fourteen improved and three students scored full marks in both tests and therefore no conclusions can be drawn regarding the impact of the sessions on their ability to comprehend.

	Session 1. made use of FC and BC for unbearable	Session 2. made use of B/F C with partner for selected words	Session 5. determined meaning of melancholy from FC	Session 5. provided forward clues for sentence	Session 5. Provided Backward Clues for Sentence	Session 6. Successfully completed all semantic gradients *partner work	Session 8. Brainstormed words were grammatically correct. *partner work	Session 9. Inserted synonyms were grammatically correct *like ability gp	Session 10. Successfully used the model (LPRRR)	Pre and post Ass. Syn. Test	Pre and post Ass. TORCH Test
A	N		N			N		N		24-78	31-39
B	N	N		N	N	N		N		56-78	38-46
C	N		ABS	ABS	ABS			N		44-124	41-57
D	N	N	N		N	N		N	ABS	14-55	36-43
E		N	N	N		N		N	ABS	29-62	46-46
F	N					N		N	ABS	46-94	44-57
G	N	N	N							58-140	48-48
H	N									64-126	62-53
I			N							48-103	51-46
J	N									38-114	62-57
K		N	N							62-98	69-62
L			ABS	ABS	ABS					73-130	53-69
M			N							48-94	48-51
N	N		N							66-113	51-53
O	N									52-70	46-51
P	N									46-108	48-53
Q										70-80	53-62
R		N				N		ABS		31-80	57-62
S			ABS	ABS	ABS					50-92	62-69
T	N	N	ABS	ABS	ABS					64-107	57-69
U	N									46-107	53-69
V										74-128	69-69
W						ABS				68-90	69-69
X			ABS	ABS	ABS					84-158	69-69
Y										ABS-	ABS-
Z		N		N	N	N			ABS		- ABS

Figure 7   *Checklist used during teaching session*

Discussion:

All students in the class were tested at the beginning of the year using PROBE. All students in the class underwent both pre and post testing using the synonyms test and the TORCH test (Feeding Puff).

Whilst analyzing the results for all students prior to beginning the teaching sessions, I was able to determine fairly quickly the students I wanted in the study group. Their

results across all three tests were in the lower 30% of the class. I was also able to eliminate those students who scored at the highest end of the scale. My attention was continually drawn to several students whose results throughout the PROBE testing at the beginning of the year and the TORCH pre testing, demonstrated inconsistencies. Whilst they did not form part of the study group their results and the consequent discussion we engaged in provided a useful insight.

As indicated in Figure 7, all students in the class improved on their post synonyms tests - a very pleasing result. However, naming more synonyms in isolation does not demonstrate an improvement in comprehension. The TORCH test was used to demonstrate this.

Study Group member, Student E (who has difficulty with organizational procedures) scored the same in both the pre test and the post test. He did not get the same questions wrong both times. In his self assessment he was at odds to think of why this might be.

Students G also showed no signs of improvement, getting the same questions wrong both times (with the exception of one). She pointed out that she did feel rushed towards the end of the post test, when other students who had finished became restless. Interestingly, her oral language demonstrates a muddled thought process. This is evident in her writing too. She will stop mid sentence to include another thought and then get tangled in her ideas. Student G provides us with an interesting study that would appear to contradict Bromley's claim that "Students with large vocabularies understand text better and score higher on achievement tests than students with small vocabularies". (Bromley 2007). Whilst her synonyms results showed the most significant gain of all students tested (an extra 82 points were scored on the post synonyms test), her TORCH results were the same for both pre and post. On her self assessment sheet (Appendix 2) she acknowledges that she does not think of synonyms as she reads, even after participating in the ten sessions. It would appear that she has not made the link between synonyms and comprehension.

Students H, I, and J all scored lower for the post test and Student K scored full marks in the pre test but got one wrong in the post test. She determined that she actually left one out by accident.

Interesting and valuable discussion ensued. All of the above students have been perplexing to me throughout the year in regards to their reading. It came to light that a strategy suggested to the students over the years has been to do all the easy questions first and then go back and do the hard ones. All of the students who scored equal to or lower in the TORCH post test employed this strategy. With the exception of the three students who scored full marks in the pre and post test, all other students in the class worked through the TORCH questions sequentially and scored higher on the post test.

Determining whether answering comprehension questions in sequential order affects results could be an interesting area to investigate further.

Because the teaching sessions that were developed to test the hypothesis, were administered to the whole class over a period of about three weeks, I was able to monitor the progress of all students in the class. All students worked in mixed ability groups as well as like ability groups and individually, depending on the requirements. This was done with the Study Group students in mind. I wanted to support their learning during the sessions by partnering them with students who understood the tasks and who also had a broader vocabulary and therefore were in a position to provide words (especially when working on semantic gradients). This allowed them to consider the tasks without the pressure of coming up with words they possibly didn't have available to them.

Further support for these students was provided by using examples from the novel we were working from at the time. The benefit of this was two way – it supported the students listening comprehension during the reading of the novel and, because these students had prior knowledge to draw upon, they approached the sessions with some familiarity, which boosted their confidence. If these sessions are to be replicated, examples could be changed to suit the specific requirements of the group.

Eighty three percent of the Study Group demonstrated gains in their comprehension after participating in the teaching sessions. Out of the rest of the class, fifty six percent demonstrated gains after the sessions, twenty two percent could not be determined because they scored full marks in both the pre and post test and twenty two percent scored equal to or less than on the post test. (Possible reasons for this were discussed earlier.)

Interestingly the study group, that is the group of students who ranked in the lower third of the class, performed most strongly. These results support Bromley when she says "Direct instruction in vocabulary influences comprehension more than any other factor. Although wide reading can build word knowledge, students need thoughtful and systematic instruction in key vocabulary as well (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004; Graves & Watts – Taffe, 2002; Nagy,1988)".

All students in the class were provided with a graph of their results. They referred to this when they completed the student self assessment task. (Appendix 2). The Study Group students all indicated that they have started to apply the strategies to their reading and that participating in these sessions has helped them understand more when they read. They were asked to create a semantic gradient of words to describe the ten sessions and circle the word that best describes how they felt about the lessons. Words provided by all Study Group students were all grammatically correct. Circled words were all positive and included such words as: encouraging, helpful, happy, fun, interesting and good.

After due consideration I believe it is fair to say that the results of both the study group and the rest of class support the hypothesis that teaching students in Year Five/Six to use contextual clues, as well as what they know about words (i.e.: the meaning), when faced with unknown words in a text, improves vocabulary knowledge and comprehension.

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Appendix 1

- Lesson plans incorporating relevant worksheets and posters.

Teaching students in Year 5/6 to use contextual clues, as well as what they know about words (ie: the meaning), when faced with unknown words in a text, improves vocabulary knowledge and comprehension.

Session One: Introductory Session

Prepare:	• *Tom Appleby, Convict Boy* by Jackie French • Computer access • Dictionaries • Modelled sentences displayed • Poster with LPRRR model and graphic organizer displayed. • Definition poster (to be added to)
Introduce:	"When we are reading and we come across something we don't understand, we can do 2 things: 1. skip over it and keep reading 2. try to work out what it means from the clues the author gives us. (these are called context clues) If we choose 1, we run the risk of not understanding what we are reading (which is a waste of time.) By choosing 2, we are ultimately *working smarter not harder because we will invest some time in working it out, which will lead to understanding. We can then read on to gain more information." Introduce students to the notion that sometimes authors hand us information on a platter, but other times they make us work hard to find the meaning of what is written because they only give us clues. If we learn how to use the clues, we can learn new words, and understand what we read more easily.
Apply: I*ndividual.*	Refer to the following sentence which has been written on the board. *Even the harbour sounded <u>foreign</u>...* (have children link this sentence to the novel). Brainstorm what <u>foreign</u> might mean – write up suggestions. Explain that these are probably guesses as there isn't enough information surrounding the word.
Model: *Whole class.*	"Even the harbour sounded <u>foreign</u>. Tom could hear the natives yelling as their canoes bumped the side of the *Scarborough*." (pg 113) model to students the thought process you might go through.(Scarborough is the ship and they are sailing into a harbour. Natives are the people that live there. He refers to the sound of the harbour so maybe he can hear the talking of the natives. <u>Foreign</u> may describe their language, but I cant say for sure, so I will check the dictionary for this one – model how to use the Microsoft word dictionary.) Record the students definition of <u>foreign</u>.
Introduce:	Introduce the LPRRR model: **Look**–before, at, and after the new word **Predict**–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start **Reason**–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit **Resolve**–recognize that you *may* need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone) **Redo**–go through the steps again if necessary Display prominently in the room Introduce the graphic organizer for this model.
Apply: *Individual.* *Study group.*	Provide an example that is less demanding of the students: As a group, apply the above model using the graphic organizer, to the following sentences to define <u>unbearable</u>: "Unbearable, pondered Tom. The chimneys had been unbearable. Newgate was unbearable." (references to the chimneys and Newgate will lead students to draw upon their prior knowledge of the text.) note: in this instance they will use forward clues which tend to be used less often. Complete the graphic organizer and record the students definition of <u>unbearable</u>.
Report: *Study group.*	Have students state what they did to come up with a definition of <u>unbearable.</u> Teacher to note comments made by students.
Assess	Using the assessment checklist assess their ability to: • use forward clues to determine the meaning of unbearable

Graphic organizer for LPRRR model:

Word:	Look–before, at, and after the new word	Predict–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start	Reason–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit	Resolve–recognize that you *may* need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)	Redo–go through the steps again if necessary	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*If you do take other steps, write them here:*	

"<u>Unbearable</u>, pondered Tom. The chimneys had been unbearable. Newgate was unbearable."

Word:	Look–before, at, and after the new word	Predict–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start	Reason–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit	Resolve–recognize that you *may* need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)	Redo–go through the steps again if necessary	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*If you do take other steps, write them here:*	

Look–before, at, and after the new word

Predict–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start

Reason–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit

Resolve–recognize that you may need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)

Redo–go through the steps again if necessary

Sessions Two and Three:

Prepare:	• *Tom Appleby, Convict Boy* by Jackie French • Computer access • Dictionaries • Poster with LPRRR model and graphic organizer displayed. • Definition poster (to be added to) • Worksheet # 1
Revise: *Whole class.*	Have students explain what was covered in the previous lesson. (Look, predict, reason, resolve, redo) Focus on the benefit of having examples of unbearable that followed the word.
Apply: *Individual.* *Study group.* *Whole class*	As a further reminder of what was done is the prior session, have the students use the graphic organizer of the LPRRR model to attempt to define the word <u>haul</u> in the following sentence: "Tom glanced back at the marine, sitting on one of the smooth rocks that surrounded the harbour, admiring his <u>haul.</u>" (pg 147) Note: this example does not provide enough information to define it from contextual clues. Students will need to resolve and redo in order to gain the meaning of this word. Students share their predicted and resolved definitions. Discuss how they resolved the problem. Complete the graphic organizer and record the students' definition of <u>haul</u>.
Model: *Whole class*	To demonstrate that sometimes we need to go further back in the text, read the 3 paragraphs prior to the above sentence where the items that were found by the marine are mentioned. As a group list the items in the <u>haul:</u> (two spears with strange barbed points, and a stone axe too.)
Apply: *Partners* *Study* *group.*	Refresh students' memories by discussing parts of a convict ship – deck, hold and berth. Read parts of page 124 to students and have them visualize the text (the author describes what happens to the convict ship when it enters the wild and freezing waters of the Southern Ocean). Have students work in pairs to complete one worksheet to define words from selected passages. (see worksheet #1) Complete the graphic organizer and record the students definition of <u>gales,</u> <u>sluicing,</u> <u>foul</u> <u>effluent,</u> <u>furthest</u> <u>colony</u> <u>shoved</u> <u>carcass</u> <u>arrowed</u> <u>glinted</u>
Report: *Whole class.*	Students share the process they went through to find the meaning of their 2 words. Teacher to note comments made by students.

"Now the freezing gales began as they passed into the Southern Ocean, with ice-green water sluicing over the deck." (pg 124)

Word:	Look–before, at, and after the new word	Predict–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start	Reason–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit	Resolve–recognize that you *may* need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)	Redo–go through the steps again if necessary	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*If you do take other steps, write them here:*	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*do take other steps, write them here:*	

"with water…pouring through the deck…so it washed them off their berth and sent foul waves sloshing from one side of the hold to the other awash with the effluent of humans and sheep." (pg 125)

Word:	Look–before, at, and after the new word	Predict–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start	Reason–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit	Resolve–recognize that you *may* need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)	Redo–go through the steps again if necessary	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*If you do take other steps, write them here:*	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*do take other steps, write them here:*	

"So far away, he thought. We'll be the furthest colony in the world." (pg 126)

Word:	Look–before, at, and after the new word	Predict–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start	Reason–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit	Resolve–recognize that you *may* need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)	Redo–go through the steps again if necessary	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*If you do take other steps, write them here:*	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*do take other steps, write them here:*	

"…instead a sailor unlocked the chains around his ankles, and <u>shoved</u> him towards the ladder dangling above the ship's boat. 'Move yer <u>carcass</u>,' he said roughly. 'we aint got all day.'" (pg 136)

Word:	**Look**–before, at, and after the new word	**Predict**–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start	**Reason**–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit	**Resolve**–recognize that you *may* need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)	**Redo**–go through the steps again if necessary	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*If you do take other steps, write them here:*	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*do take other steps, write them here:*	

"Tom pointed. 'Snake!' the animal swam between the reeds, then made it to the solid ground and <u>arrowed</u> up the slope. Its back was black and shiny. Its belly <u>glinted</u> red." (pg 146)

Word:	Look–before, at, and after the new word	Predict–quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start	Reason–think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit	Resolve–recognize that you *may* need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)	Redo–go through the steps again if necessary	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*If you do take other steps, write them here:*	
	List any clues here:	*Have a go:*	*What do you know about the word?*	*How confident are you? Does your prediction make sense? Do you need to take any other steps?*	*do take other steps, write them here:*	

Session Four:

Prepare:	• 4 context clues on poster.
Revise: *Whole class.*	Have students explain in their own words, what context clues are and why we use them.
Introduce:	Provide students with explanations for each of the following context clues. Definition, Antonym, Synonym, Inference.
Model:	Using examples of students in the room, attempt to come up with more examples for each of the 4 types of contexts. Eg: The environmental leader, the student responsible for organizing the recycling in the school, distributed the recycling bins. (definition) Whereas Ms Stevens the Phys Ed teacher is quite flexible, Mrs B is stiff and awkward. (antonym) The talkative child was so chatty, the class was unable to think about the work. (synonym) The students endearing behaviour ensured the whole class would get out early. (inference)
Task: *Partner*	Have students work with a partner to come up with one example of any of the 4 types of clues.
Report: *Whole class.*	Each group selects one good example of each of the 4 types of clues and shares them with the class. Write these up for display.
Assess:	Teacher to collect and note understanding. Using the assessment checklist assess their ability to: • Used backward or forward clues to determine meaning of selected words

Definition: The word is defined directly and clearly in the sentence in which it appears.

"The prison, where Tom was sent as punishment for his crime, was called Newgate".

Antonym: Contrasting or opposite in meaning. It is often signaled by the words whereas, unlike or as opposed to:

"Tom was an orphan, unlike Rob who was sailing on the ship with both his mother and his father."

Synonym: other words are used in the sentence with similar meanings.

"The sickly prisoner was so ill, he was unable to move."

Inference: word meanings are not directly described, but need to be inferred from the context.

"But there were stars now as the clouds moved towards the mountains and the wind blew fresh and salty." (tells us it's night time)

Session Five:

Prepare:	• 4 context clues on poster. • Poster featuring : "The expressionless features were hidden under the filth of the dirty, <u>melancholic</u> chimney sweep." With 2 columns for the predicted definition of melancholic before and after the second sentence is provided. • All sentences marked * to be written on strips of paper, ready to be pasted into workbooks. (see session 5 worksheet)
Revise: *Whole class*	Have students read examples out of each of the 4 types of context clues from the previous session. Revise parts of speech: Verb = action, doing word. Adverb = adds to the verb, Noun = naming word. Adjective = describes the noun
Model: *Whole class.*	*"They_____ across the water". Brainstorm possible words. Provide students with sentence strip. Students select their word and insert. Without more information it is not possible to know who they were or what they did. Provide the next sentence strip: *"A cry from the mast of the ship indicated to the convicts that land had been sighted. They _____across the water to see for themselves." Students select the most appropriate word and insert.
Apply: *Individual. Study group. Whole class.*	Provide students with the following sentence strip: *"The expressionless features were hidden under the filth of the dirty, <u>melancholic</u> chimney sweep." Have them go through the LPRRR process. Students record their suggestions for suitable synonyms for melancholic. Because there is a lack of information a conclusive definition will not be possible. Provide them with the next sentence strip: "He had plenty of reasons to be feeling gloomy." This is a clue that allows us to reconsider the prediction. Record new predictions on strip and test to see if they fit.
Model: *Whole class.*	Demonstrate to students how to enrich the context of a sentence to show meaning: Brainstorm with the students to fill in the blank for the following sentence: *The sergeant _____ the convicts. Provide students with sentence strip. Students select the most appropriate word and insert. Provide students with the next sentence strip. Students select the most appropriate word and insert. *The sergeant _____ the convicts. He was annoyed with them for getting drunk. Finally, provide students with this final sentence strip. Students select the most appropriate word and insert. *The sergeant _____ the convicts. They worked hard to build the makeshift shelter for the marines. In small groups, students discuss their word selection for each and explain why.

Task:
Whole class. Individual. Study group.
	Provide students with sentence strip. Students select the most appropriate word and insert.
	*Tom was_____.
	Share possible responses.
	Provide students with sentence strip
	Have them enrich the sentence in 2 ways (1. backward clue sentence. 2. forward clue sentence) to demonstrate the meaning of the word.
	eg: Basic sentence: Tom was enthusiastic.
	      Backward clue sentence: After considering Jem's plan to escape Tom was enthusiastic.
	      Forward clue sentence: Tom was enthusiastic. Jem's plan to escape sounded feasible.

Report: *Mixed ability.*	Students share their enriched sentences with their mixed ability group.
Assess:	Collect and check their sentences for understanding. Using the assessment checklist assess their ability to: • Determine the meaning of melancholic from the forward clues provided. • provide backward and forward clues to enrich sentences.

"They_____ across the water".

"A cry from the mast of the ship indicated to the convicts that land had been sighted. They _____ across the water to see for themselves."

"The expressionless features were hidden under the filth of the dirty, <u>melancholic</u> chimney sweep."

"The expressionless features were hidden under the filth of the dirty, <u>melancholic</u> chimney sweep. He had plenty of reasons to be feeling gloomy."

The sergeant _____ the convicts.
The sergeant _____ the convicts.
He was annoyed with them for getting drunk.

The sergeant _____ the convicts. They worked hard to build the makeshift shelter for the marines.

Tom was_____.

Backward clue sentence:

Forward clue sentence:

Session Six:

Prepare:	• Multiple copies of thesauri • Computer access • Semantic Gradient handout (Read, Write, Think)
Introduce:	Revise synonym : a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word in the same language. Explain that even though they are similar, they do vary slightly in meaning. Revise antonym : a word that means the opposite of another word. Explain Semantic Gradients : a sequential array of words organized according shades of meaning.
Model: *Whole class.*	Brainstorm synonyms for the word *angry.* Use class thesauri and also Microsoft word thesaurus. Look at the example of *angry* and *furious*. They are similar though not exactly the same. Furious is a stronger more intense word for angry. Together, consider how the other synonyms rate in intensity compared to *angry*. Model selection of 2 words from the list as anchor points and place them on the gradient. Provide a bank of other synonyms and together place them on the gradient: Eg: l_____l_____l_____l_____l_____l upset furious Word bank: angry frustrated irritated annoyed
Apply: *Individual.* *Mixed ability. Study group.*	Provide students with the semantic gradient handout. (Read, Write, Think 2007). Encourage them to use a thesaurus. Have them complete the first one on their own: Depressed_____Elated Word bank: upset indifferent glad happy Come together and share answers, with students explaining their reasoning. Students complete the other 4 gradients.
Report: *Study group.*	Students come together and explain how they graded their words. Note: for children having difficulty, they could type the words into *Microsoft Word,* then look each one up and copy and paste the definition next to the word. This should then make the distinctions clearer. Teacher to note comments made by students.
Assess:	Using the assessment checklist assess their ability to: • place the words correctly on the gradient.

Name: _____

Date:_____

Semantic Gradients

After some explanation from your teacher, fill in the following semantic gradients and explain your reasoning.

depressed   elated

|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|

Word Bank: upset, indifferent, glad, happy

obese   skinny

|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|

Word Bank: slender, thin, chubby, hefty, average

trudged   sprinted

|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|

Word Bank: raced, walked, hurried, dawdled, hobbled

microscopic   gargantuan

|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|

Word Bank: big, small, tiny, huge, large

careless   meticulous

|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|

Word Bank: haphazard, careful, tidy, casual

Session Seven:

Prepare:	• Thesauri • Computer access
Revise: *Whole class*	Revisit definitions of synonyms and semantic gradients Revise parts of speech: verb, adverb, noun, adjective. Have students demonstrate how to use a thesaurus
Model: *Whole class*	Provide students with the word: EAT. Brainstorm possible synonyms. From this list select 2 anchor points. (EG: nibble devour.) Have students act out these words to demonstrate shades of meaning. Students select suitable words from brainstorm to put onto gradient. Note: cross out the words that don't really belong on the gradient as you go. Place all the words on the gradient and have students act out each one: l_____l nibble chew munch scoff devour
Task: *Whole class.* *Partners*	. Students work in pairs to come up with their own semantic gradients using 4 or 5 words that are synonyms of a selected word . When satisfied with their answers, they can create the gradient with anchor points and selected words placed appropriately.
Report: *Partners-Mixed ability.*	Pairs report to the group on the gradient that was given to them to complete. If they were not in agreement with the creators, they must state their case.
Assess:	Teacher to collect gradients to check for understanding.

Session Eight:

Prepare:	- All display posters on hand - worksheet with 4 sentences on it
Revise: *Whole class.*	Students need to explain the following: Context clues LPRRR 4 types of context clues Enriching context clues synonyms semantic gradients
Model: *Whole Class.*	Write the following sentence on the board: "Tom _____back." note the possibilities –walked, moved, stepped, jumped, leapt, ran etc At this point, because of a lack of context a decision cannot be made as to which is the most appropriate word to use. Enrich the sentence: "Tom _____back. 'Snake!'" Supply the following semantic gradient: l_____l_____l_____l_____l moved leapt Word bank: jumped walked stepped Discuss with the students which word would be most appropriate to use.
Apply: *Whole class.* *Individual.* *Study group.*	Provide students with the example (Read, Write, Think 2007) : "Jimmy _____ home." Have them list possible words. Enrich the sentence: "Jimmy _____ home. He couldn't wait to see the new puppy" Students fill in the following gradient: l_____l_____l_____l_____l_____l_____l trudged sprinted Word bank: raced, walked, hurried, dawdled, hobbled Students write the complete sentence including the word they select as most appropriate.
Report: *Whole class.*	Students share their sentence. Explain why they chose the word. Teacher to note comments made by students.
Apply: *Individual.*	Look at examples of contextually thin sentences provided in the Semantic Gradients Plus Context worksheet (Read, Write, Think 2007): 1. "Jamon's team _____ their opponents." 2. "Jamon's mom _____during the movie." 3. Jamon felt _____ when he got the test back." 4. Jamon was dressed properly for the _____ weather." Students select one sentence and brainstorm possible words.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Semantic Gradients Plus Contexts

Select a word to fill in the blank in the first sentence. Then place the Word Band words along thesemantic gradient. Be prepared to consider which word best fits with the context that is provided in the second sentence.

"Jimmy _____ home."

trudged   sprinted
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------1

Word Bank: raced, walked, hurried, dawdled, hobbled

"Jimmy _____ home. He couldn't wait to see the new puppy."

1. "Jamon's team _____ their opponents."

2. "Jamon's mom _____during the movie."

3. "Jamon felt _____ when he got the test back."

3. "Jamon was dressed properly for the _____ weather."

Pick one of the four sentences and make a semantic gradient including anchor words and Word Bank words. Place the words along the continuum. Then revise or add to the sentence by including context and then explain which word on the gradient would be the best answer to fill in the blank.

Session Nine:

Prepare:	• 4 sentences written up on butcher paper. • Semantic gradient for each of the 4 enriched sentences written up. • Thesaurus • Computer access
Revise: *Similar ability.*	Look back at the 4 sentences form the previous session: 1. "Jamon's team _____ their opponents." 2. "Jamon's mom _____during the movie." 3. "Jamon felt _____ when he got the test back." 4. "Jamon was dressed properly for the _____ weather." Read over possible words. Group the students according to similar ability. As a group come up with a master list of all the words they could put into their sentence. Display list of words under each sentence
Model:	Have students explain that the 4 sentences did not provide enough information for them to be specific with their word selection. Provide students with enriched sentences: 1. "Jamon's team _____ their opponents 45 to 3." 2. "Jamon's mom _____during the movie. It was the saddest film she had ever seen." 3. "Jamon felt _____ when he got the test back. He blamed himself for not making the time to study." 4. "Jamon was dressed properly for the _____ weather. His wool hat, mittens, and insulated boots were just perfect." Discuss how this new information now narrows the list of words.
Apply: *Similar ability.*	Each group of similar ability needs to review their list of possible words and delete any that do not fit with the enriched sentences and possibly add any more new words that they think do fit with the sentences.
Task: *Similar ability.* *Study group.* *Individual.*	Provide each of the 4 groups with the relevant semantic gradient. Have them insert graduated synonyms either as a group or individually. Each group member must write out their sentence using the word they believe fits best.
Report: *Study group.* *Whole class.*	Students share their sentences which have substituted words in them. Students can agree or disagree by stating their case.
Assess:	Collect individual sentences to check for understanding.

Name: _____

Date:_____

Semantic Gradients Plus Contexts (Continued)

Fill in words along the continuum and then select the word that best completes the sentence based on the context.

1. "Jamon's team _____ their opponents 45 to 3."

Squeezed by   decimated
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|

2. "Jamon's mom _____during the movie. It was the saddest film she had ever seen."

giggled   bawled
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|

3. Jamon felt _____ when he got the test back. He blamed himself for not making the time to study."

somber   jubilant
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|

4. "Jamon was dressed properly for the _____ weather. His wool hat,mittens, and insulatedboots were just perfect."

sweltering   frigid
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|

Session Ten:

Prepare:	• Graphic organizer poster from Session Two • Graphic organizers for each of the 5 sentences from Session Two.
Model: *Whole class*	Refer back to example provided in Session Two: "Tom glanced back at the marine, sitting on one of the smooth rocks that surrounded the harbour, admiring his <u>haul.</u>" Remind students of the backward clue that gave us the context for the word <u>haul.</u> Brainstorm synonyms for the noun haul. Place on a semantic gradient. Using the graphic organizer for that sentence, re write the sentence replacing <u>haul</u> with an appropriate synonym.
Task: *Individual* *Study group*	Refer back to contextual charts used in Sessions Two and Three. For each of the underlined words, find synonyms. Select the most appropriate synonym and use it in the sentence – re write the sentence in the last box on the graphic organizer. • "Now the freezing <u>gales</u> began as they passed into the Southern Ocean, with ice-green water <u>sluicing</u> over the deck." (pg 124) • "with water…pouring through the deck…so it washed them off their berth and sent <u>foul</u> waves sloshing from one side of the hold to the other awash with the <u>effluent</u> of humans and sheep." (pg 125) • "So far away, he thought. We'll be the <u>furthest</u> <u>colony</u> in the world." (pg 126) • "…instead a sailor unlocked the chains around his ankles, and <u>shoved</u> him towards the ladder dangling above the ship's boat. 'Move yer <u>carcass</u>,' he said roughly. 'we aint got all day.'" (pg 136) • "Tom pointed. 'Snake!' the animal swam between the reeds, then made it to the solid ground and <u>arrowed</u> up the slope. Its back was black and shiny. Its belly <u>glinted</u> red." (pg 146)
Report: *Whole class* *Study group*	Students share their modified sentences for discussion
Assess:	Collect individual sentences to check for understanding.

Appendix 2

Assessment tools:

- ## Student self assessment

- ## Teacher assessment checklist

Reading sessions evaluation and self assessment: _____

We have just completed 10 reading sessions on the following:

- Using the LPRRR *(Look, predict, reason, resolve, redo)* approach to determine the meaning of the word.

- Finding clues before and after a word that help to explain the meaning of the word *(The sergeant _____ the convicts. They worked hard to build the makeshift shelter for the marines.)*

- Enriching sentences by providing backward or forward clues that help to explain the meaning of a word. *(eg: Basic sentence: Tom was enthusiastic. Enriched sentence: After considering Jem's plan to escape Tom was enthusiastic.)*

- Finding synonyms for words. *(eg: Upset   furious   angry   frustrated   irritated   annoyed)*

- Creating semantic gradients for words using anchor points and word banks:
(Depressed_____Elated)
Word bank: upset   indifferent   glad   happy)

Please think about what you have learnt and then answer the following:

1. Explain what the results of your pre and post synonyms tests indicate?

2. Explain what the results of your pre and post TORCH tests indicate?

Mark the answer on the scale below that best suits you:

l_____l_____l

I don't look for clues	I look for clues by	I did it
by reading	reading back	automatically
back or forward	or forward now	anyway

l_____l_____l

I don't think of	I do think of	I did it
synonyms as I read	synonyms as I read	automatically
		anyway

l_____l_____l

I don't think of shades of	I do think of shades of	I did it
meaning for words	meaning for words	automatically
as I read	as I read	anyway

l_____l_____l

Doing this work	Doing this work	I did it
hasn't helped	has helped	automatically
me understand	me understand	anyway.
more when I read	more when I read	

Please create a semantic gradient of words to <u>describe</u> what you thought of these sessions. Circle the word that best describes your opinion of them.

NB: If they are describing words they will be adjectives to describe the nouns – teaching sessions, so you could think of sentence like: teacher, these sessions were_____

Remember to include:

- 2 anchor points
- a word bank

Then:

- place your words on the gradient.
- Circle the word that best describes your opinion of these sessions.

	Session 1. made use of forward and backward clues for unbearable	Session 2. made use of B/F C with partner for selected words	Session 5. determined meaning of melancholy from FC	Session 5. provided forward clues for sentence	Session 5. Provided Backward Clues for Sentence	Session 6. Successfully completed all semantic gradients *partner work	Session 8. Brainstormed words were grammatically correct. *partner work	Session 9. Inserted synonyms were grammatically correct *like ability gp	Session 10. Successfully used the model (LPRRR)	Pre and post Assessment: Synonym Test	Pre and post Assessment: TORCH Test
Student A											
Student B											
Student C											
Student D											
Student E											
Student F											
Student G											
Student H											
Student I											
Student J											
Student K											
Student L											
Student M											
Student N											
Student O											
Student P											
Student Q											
Student R											
Student S											
Student T											
Student U											
Student V											
Student W											
Student X											
Student Y											
Student Z											

Appendix 3

Links to the

Multiple Levels Of Text Processing

Model:

Areas highlighted demonstrate where the 10 teaching sessions fit with the MLOTP model:

Level of text	Reading action
word level strategies	• ==use the context of the word in the sentence and its initial few sounds.== • ==Read to the end of the sentence and then re-read word== • ==Say the sentence containing the word in own words== • Match a non-word read with a word in the student's oral language.
sentence level strategies	• Organise the print to be read • Listen to themselves as they read • Talk to one's self when reading, paraphrase • Visualise or 'make a mental picture' • ==Put your self into the context== • ==Re-read and monitor sentences for meaning== • ==Question==
conceptual level strategies	• Think ahead, predict what might happen next • Ask "Why did that happen?" and inferring • Read between the lines
topic level strategies	• What are main ideas so far? How have ideas changed? • How do I skim, scan? • ==Linking up ideas as I read. Readers use semantic mapping procedures.== • Using paragraph reading strategies.