

Action Research Report

Abstract

A problem many students have is explicit use of independent reading strategies. Research in explicit strategy training has shown improvement in word reading accuracy and comprehension.

The present study examines explicit strategy training in self-talk to help the student reread for meaning and improve independent reading accuracy

A student in Yr. 4 who has reading difficulties was exposed to explicit teaching in reading comprehension strategies. The teaching targeted self-management in reading

The student improved in independent reading accuracy, rereading and self-correction rates

Implications for teaching are discussed.

Introduction

Many students at the middle – late primary level lack effective reading strategies that facilitate comprehension and independent reading accuracy. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) (Harmon, 2002)

The greatest obstacle for readers who experience difficulties is their attitude and disposition towards reading. (Villaume & Brabham, 2000) These students frequently use avoidance tactics and show negative attitudes towards reading. They feel a lack of success and have a poor self-concept as a reader. They are unwilling and unmotivated readers who are reluctant to face any reading challenge. They are likely to have acquired “learned helplessness” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) and depend on others to support them. Helping students develop skills and strategies that enable them to become actively involved in the reading process can change these negative attitudes.

Good readers think actively as they read and use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading. Readers who experience difficulty do not use strategies automatically They are also less able to control and manage cognitive performances. Students with reading difficulties need support learn to manage their learning and develop these skills.

Reading for meaning is a major focus of the study. This task requires the student to be able to monitor for comprehension and is a critical part of metecognition. Comprehension monitoring strategies readers use include identifying where the difficulty occurs, what the difficulty is or looking back through the text. (Armbrushter & Osborn 2001)

Many students who struggle with reading have limited strategies to help them search for meaning clues. They frequently skip or sound out words they are having difficulty with or focus on the sentence where the difficulty is. Teaching specific strategies helps readers improve text comprehension (**Armbrushter & Osborn 2001**) as many students have learned and used ineffective strategies over long periods of time.

It is necessary to create strategy awareness to help the student learn about what to do when meaning is lost. Important teaching strategies include searching further back in the text and to reread a previous paragraph or page for clues to gain meaning. “They need to become more metacognitively aware of what they already know and need to learn how to make connections with what they already know to construct meaning from what they have already read.” (Harmon, 2002)

Teaching the students alternative strategies and explaining that these alternatives

are problem-solving techniques that can help reading, strengthened their concept of reading as well as what they read.

Direct and explicit instruction is used to successfully teach these strategies. This approach is particularly effective in helping students develop appropriate strategies, which increase their understanding of what they read. (Casteel, Isom, Jordan, 2000) (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001)

Explicit teaching has proven to help students think about their reading and become more active in the problem solving process. At the same time it “empowers the student to go beyond what they are taught and learn from their own reading experience” An unexpected result has been the student’s

Direct instruction in metacognitive strategies enhances learning. (Blakey & Spence, 1900)

Analysis of the student’s reading identified the above mentioned difficulties to ensure that the strategy instruction was systematic and organised. (Rhoder 2002)

The model of strategy instruction used in the study has proven to be effective for teaching comprehension strategies.

In this approach the teacher directs the students by telling them why and when they should use strategies, what strategies they should use, and how to apply them. The steps of the strategy are:

Direct explanation – the teacher explains to the student why the strategy helps and when to apply the strategy

Modeling- the teacher models or demonstrated how to apply the strategy, usually by thinking aloud while reading the text the student is using. Guided practice – the teacher guides and assists the student as they learn how and when to apply the strategy

Application – the teacher helps the student practice the strategy until they can apply it independently (Armbrushter & Osborn 2001)

Only two strategies – to self-talk and use the reading strategy were introduced and practiced to ensure that they “are not forgotten transferable to different situations and more likely to be used when needed” (Rhoder 2002)(Casteel, Isom, Jordan, 2000). With practice, students eventually assume most of the responsibility for selecting and applying strategies.

Explicit and interactive teaching was modeled with cued practice so that any attempts or confusions were addressed and clarified and student’s understanding extended as he worked on integrating the strategy into guided reading (Villaume & Brabham, 2002)

Reader self-efficacy can affect a reader’s involvement and achievement. (Casteel, Isom, Jordan, 2000) Reader self perception can effect whether reading is sought or avoided and how persistently the task is pursued A strong focus when working with students with reading disabilities is to increase positive self-perceptions about reading so that the student develops a more positive belief about himself as a reader. The strong support that is offered through the strategy teaching approach encourages this.

The present investigation aims to extend the earlier research by examining the how teaching students to become strategic readers enables them to achieve in reading and gain the experiences and successes that efficient reader expedience.

Prediction

Teaching self-talk to use the re-reading strategy will help the student re-read to gain meaning and improve independent reading accuracy

Method:

Design:

The study uses a case study OXO design in which the gain in reading for meaning

and independent reading accuracy rate following teaching self-talk to use the rereading strategy is monitored for a Yr. 4 student who has reading difficulties.

Participant:

The study took place in an ethnically and linguistically diverse primary school in the western suburbs. The participant is 9½ year-old boy in Grade 4. He was born in East Timor and has lived in Australia for 7 years. His parents are not fluent in English. A mixture of Hakka and Tetum is spoken in the home.

The student has a history of reading difficulties. Over the past two years he has received reading intervention in small needs based group, but still has low self-confidence as a reader. He shows on-going dislike of and frustration towards reading. His entry reading ability is Level 14 text with 77.5% accuracy

Materials

Materials used include the following:

- Decodable texts - Level 13 & 14
- Reading with Strategies Stage 2 Posters
- Rereading can help me become a better reader poster (appendix)
- Helping Hand poster (appendix)
- Sentences for “Which word makes sense?” activity (appendix)
- Cards for sentence manipulation (appendix)
- Running Records

Procedure

Implementation of the study consisted of developing 8 teaching sessions that were taught to the student individually.

An adapted strategy teaching approach was used in the following way:

3 sessions in which the strategy was demonstrated and explained explicitly

3 sessions in which the student was guided to apply the strategies.

2 sessions in which the student, practiced the strategy independently.

The text used for pre-testing was a level 14. The student read with 77.5% accuracy. (Hard level) The text level was lowered to level 13 (instructional level) for the first five sessions. Level 14 texts were reintroduced for sessions 6,7,and 8.

Teaching sessions were conducted in a withdrawal room next to the student’s classroom, 3 times a week.

Each session lasted 30 minutes.

Running Records were used for pre-testing and on-going data collection

The sessions began with discussion with the student about identifying some of the difficulties the student has with reading. He was told that there was a strategy that would help him with his reading. It was a strategy that he knew about but the way he was going to learn to use it would help him understand more of what he read and also help him when he found reading difficult.

In the first session the focus was the concept that comprehension is the reason for reading. Good readers think actively about what he/she is reading and listen to themselves as they read. The student viewed a range of posters and listened to statements about them. The student identified which sentences make sense. He was constantly cued to think about meaning through questions such as does that make sense? did that sound right? He was asked to identify where and why the sentences did not make sense and to make a similar statement that did make sense.

A Helping Hand poster was introduced. This poster explicitly outlined the strategy of self-talk to use the rereading strategy. The teacher modeled the steps several times. The student then practiced the rereading strategy on an unseen text, cued by

the teacher.

In the second session the emphasis was on developing management of the strategy at the sentence level. Sentences were cut up into words to be sequenced. The activity was modeled through the thinking out loud procedure. The student then sequenced the cards and was encouraged to think out loud also.

The third session focused on the explicit explanation of the rereading strategy and how it helps with becoming a better reader. This was done through the introduction of a poster with a list of how rereading helps to become a better reader. Self-talk was also emphasised. This was done through a "Which word makes sense" activity. The teacher modeled the activity, thinking out loud as the sentences were read and reread aloud. In the guided practice the student was asked to say what he was going to do when he read and why and then prompted throughout the reading to say what he was doing and why. The student was constantly cued and prompted.

The following three sessions were an opportunity for the student practiced implementing the strategy with less intervention each session from the teacher. The strategy was reviewed prior to reading. Following the independent reading the student was asked how he felt about his reading, what he did while he was reading, why he reread certain parts and what he had learnt.

The emphasis of the final two sessions was for the student to use the strategies independently. At the conclusion of the reading each of these days the student discussed and evaluated his reading and how the strategy helped him.

Results

Data was gathered daily through taking a running record on an unseen text. This data was entered into a table, which listed the text read, text level, reading accuracy, errors, text reread and errors corrected. (Table 1)

Table 2 show the rate of independent reading accuracy. Table 3 graphs the errors, text reread and errors corrected.

The learning trend for the student indicates that he benefited from being taught to self-talk to use the rereading strategy to help him reread to gain meaning and improve his independent reading accuracy.

The data supports the hypothesis that the student's independent reading accuracy would increase. In the pretest the student read with 77.5% accuracy on a level 14 text. Throughout the project his reading accuracy fluctuated, but increased from the pretest rate. At the conclusion of the project he read a level 14 text with 96.6% accuracy.

The data further supports the hypothesis that the strategy would help him to reread to gain meaning. Initially he made 23.5% errors. He reread after these errors 10% and corrected only 10% of the errors. The student's rereading and self-correction rate increased to a posttest rate of rereading 78.5% and self-correction rate of 61. %.

The results of the sessions where the strategy was demonstrated and taught explicitly, the student's reading accuracy, text rereading and self-correcting showed marked improvement. However during the next stage of the strategy, as the intervention by the teacher decreased, the student reread less and corrected fewer errors. To support the student at this stage, the pre and post reading discussions were very explicit and involved extensive modeling.

During the study the number of errors the student was making decreased, as he became aware of the need to monitor his reading for meaning and gained confidence in his ability as a reader.

The student's self talk increased each lesson. He frequently used the self-talk which had been modeled in the sessions. He also frequently reread to confirm meaning.

The student approached each session with a different attitude. He no longer

avoided reading tasks (in this setting) and said that he felt that he was becoming a good reader. In evaluating his reading he said that he thought the strategy he learnt helped him most of the time and that he remembered to use it most of the time.

Discussion

A key finding in this study was the support for the prediction that the student would help the student reread to gain meaning and improve his independent reading accuracy.

The findings were consistent with those of other investigators mentioned in the literature review. All material read offered similar opinions on all aspects of the study. Students with reading difficulties need to learn to become strategic reader. Explicit teaching helps students think more about their reading and become more active readers. The reader's self efficacy can affect their involvement and success in the task. Effective strategy teaching has the potential for changing attitudes of the reader. Direct instruction in metacognitive strategies enhances learning.

I believe that the hypothesis was supported by the fact that the student was taught individually. He had a very negative attitude towards reading and gave up easily when he felt was not going to succeed. This behavior was accentuated when working with his peers. He would become emotional and aggressive and frequently refuse to complete tasks.

An unexpected result has been the student's willingness to participate in the sessions and his positive response to put the strategies into practice. He remained enthusiastic throughout the study and has requested to continue.

The strategy teaching approach promoted the student's self – efficacy through the controlled process of explicit teaching and modeling, followed by a period of cued practice before the student was expected to use the strategy independently. There was minimum chance for failure in the early sessions due to the amount of support provided. During this period the student gained confidence in his reading as well as in using the strategies. He felt comfortable taking risks with his reading because of the support provided.

I believe that if study had involved a group of children who had similar severe reading difficulties the progress would have been much slower and more difficult to achieve. The frustration, negativity and low self-esteem are compounded in a group and students need greater encouragement to take risks in front of their peers.

The student still faces many challenges as a reader. In Year 4, he is only reading level 14 texts independently. Implications for further teaching practice with this student include maintaining the skills he has acquired through individual and small group sessions and to focus on developing his skills at word and sentence level.

Implications for teaching practice on a larger scale involves closer assessment of other students who are experiencing reading difficulty in the middle-late primary years and developing a plan of action to support them in a similar way. This would involve providing professional development for the staff to support them to implement strategies within the classroom literacy program as well as creating needs based teaching groups.

Appendix

Teaching Unit

To teach self talk to use the re-reading strategy to help the student re-read to gain meaning and improve reading accuracy.

Outcomes:

- improve self efficacy in reading
- enhance self-management and control skills and strategies
- improve comprehension at sentence level
- improve independent reading rate
- improve self-correction rate

Format

Grade level: Grade 4

Grouping: individual

Sessions: 8

Time: 30 minutes

Session 1

Focus:

Recognition of sentences that are logical and sensible and relate to the picture

Explicit demonstration and explanation of rereading strategy

Model self talk

Materials:

Reading with Strategies Posters. Stage 2. Celebration Press.

Rereading can help me become a better reader poster

Procedure

Shared reading

- Discuss with the student some of the difficulties he has with reading. Tell him that he is going to learn about a strategy that will help him with his reading. It is a strategy that he knows about but the way he is going to learn to use it will help him understand more of what he read and also help him when he finds reading difficult.
- Introduce a Reading with Strategies poster to student. Ask student to describe / discuss the poster.
- Explain that you are going to make some statements about the poster and that he is to listen carefully and decide if the statement sounds right or makes sense.
- After each statement, ask the student “does that sound right?” “ did that make sense?”
- When the student identifies statements that did not make sense or sound right, ask the student to explain why it didn’t make sense and to suggest how to change the statement so that it did make sense
- Introduce Helping Hand
Good readers need to make sure that what they read sounds right and makes sense. To help you decide if what you are reading makes sense or sounds right, you need to
 - look at the pictures and predict about the story
 - listen to yourself as you read
 - ask yourself does it make sense? does it sound right?
 - and when it doesn’t make sense or sound right
 - STOP

- Reread.
- Explicit modeling of the strategy using a shared text

Guided reading

- Cued practice Text: Popcorn Fun Level 13
 - Before reading
 - introduce book, discuss with student and invite predictions about the text
 - Remind student about rereading.
 - Ask him to say what he is going to do, what he is going to tell himself to do
 - During reading
 - If the students hesitates, ask why
 - Constantly ask the student what they are doing and why
 - If meaning is lost, ask does that make sense? Does that sound right?
 - Remind to reread, model where to go back to (where meaning was lost)
 - After reading
 - How did you feel about your reading
 - What did you do while you were reading
 - Why did you reread that part?
 - What did you learn?
- Running record: record word - accuracy, errors, rereading, errors corrected

Session 2

Focus

Developing self-management at sentence level

Materials

Cards for sentence manipulation – copy attached

Procedure

Shared Reading

- Review Helping Hand and Rereading strategies poster.
- Students says what he will do and say to himself before and during reading and why.
- Student sequences cards to make sentences related to posters. Cue student to frequently reread to help clarify / gain meaning
- Model strategy explicitly on a shared text. Stop after each sentence. Model self-talk- Did that make sense? Did it sound right? Model self-talk to reread to regain meaning

Guided reading

Cued practice procedure as for session 1

New text – Mrs. Spider’s Beautiful Web Level 13

Running record

Session 3

Focus:

Reading for meaning

Self talk

Student articulating what he does before, during and after reading

Materials:

Reading with Strategies Posters

Prepared sentences for “Which word makes sense?” activity - attached

Procedure:

Shared reading

- Revise Helping Hand strategies from previous session

- Introduce poster - Rereading can help me become a better reader
 - Rereading helps you when you've tried other strategies and you are still stuck on a word. Make the first sound(s) of the word and reread to help you predict the correct word.
 - Sometimes when you work hard on a tricky word, you forget what the sentence is about. Rereading helps you remember.
 - Rereading also helps you check that what you've read looks right
 - Student says the strategies he learnt and articulates what he does when he is reading and what he says to himself as he reads

- Which word makes sense? /sound right activity
 - Show student individual posters and sentences
 - Model the activity - reread using either words and asking yourself questions/using the Helping Hand strategies
 - Student reads each sentence and chooses the appropriate word e.g. This yellow dump/dark truck is unloading dirt to fill a huge house/hole. When the student is unable to read the words, ask opening questions e.g. where would you put the dirt?
Cue the students to say what he will do to help him choose the suitable word and the questions he will ask himself.
Ask –did your reading make sense? What do you do when it doesn't make sense?
How can you check if it does make sense?

Guided Reading

Cued practice: – procedure as in session 1

New text – Robert and the Dinosaur Level 13

Running record

Session 4

Focus

Student guided to apply the self-talk and rereading strategies

Procedure

Shared Reading

Before reading activity

Brainstorming - First Steps Reading Resource Pg. 91

Guided reading

Guided practice – Cue student before reading, less intervention by the teacher during reading, after reading discussion as session 1

After reading activity – confirm / reject predictions

New text – Ben's Tooth Level 13

Running record

Session 5

Goal

Student guided to apply the self-talk and rereading strategies

Procedure

Guided reading

Guided practice – Cue student before reading, less intervention by the teacher during reading, after reading discussion as session 1

After reading – oral retelling

New text – The Tortoise and the Hare Level 13

Running record

Session 6

Focus

Student guided to apply the self-talk and rereading strategies

Procedure

Shared Reading

Before reading activity

Draw prediction

Read text – confirm reject predictions

Guided reading

Guided practice – Cue student before reading, less intervention by the teacher during reading.

After reading discussion as session 1

New text – The Tree House Level 14

Running record

Session 7

Goal

The student practices the strategies independently

Procedure

Shared Reading

Before reading activity – Set the Scene - First Steps Reading Resource Pg. 90

Guided reading

The student practices the strategy independently.

After reading discussion as session 1

New text –The Cross Country Race Level 14

Running record

Session 8

Goal

The student practices the strategies independently

Procedure

Guided reading

The student practices the strategy independently.

After reading discussion as session 1

Ask student to evaluate his reading and discuss how he sees himself as a reader

New text –After the Flood Level 14

Running record

Bibliography

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Harmon Janis M. (2002) Teaching independent word learning strategies to struggling readers; in facilitated peer dialogues, the teacher and two students explore, use, and analyze independent word learning strategies within the context of real reading. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. V45 i7 p606(10)

Villaume Susan Kidd & Brabham Edna Greene (2002) Comprehension instruction: beyond strategies. (Question and Answers) *The reading Teacher*, April 2002 v55 i7 p672 (4)

Rereading can help me become a better reader

- Rereading helps you when you've tried other strategies and you are still stuck on a word.
- Make the first sound(s) of the word and reread to help you predict the correct word.
- Sometimes when you work hard on a tricky word, you forget what the sentence is about. Rereading helps you remember.
- Rereading also helps you check that what you've read makes sense and sounds right
- I can remind myself to reread

Session 2

Which word makes sense?

This yellow dump/dark truck is unloading dirt to fill a huge house/hole.

The mother bird is kept busy finding worms/warm to feed her hungry/happy babies.

A tiny/trying lizard is climbing/coming down.

Two fluffy/funny rabbits are tasting/ taking the delicious yellow flower

The Eskimo hunter is liking/looking for seals/snow.

These/three trees go up so high/hit they look like they touch the blue sky.

Mother grizzly bear led her cubs across /around the log and there/ through the forest.

The baby giraffe can camouflage himself against the pattern/picture of the last/larger giraffe.

These boys and girls must walk/work together to be a team/try.

If I wanted/were a fish I could swim under/over water all day long.

Session 3

Sentence manipulation

The	boy	lost	his	tooth	this	morning
while	he	was	eating	his	breakfast	

Our	class	played	sport	in	the	playground
after	lunch					

It	was	raining	so	the	children	made
popcorn	with	their	mother			

Robert	walked	into	the	forest	and	saw
a	huge	dinosaur	looking	at	him	

When	I	went	shopping	with	my	Father
he	bought	me	a	computer	game	

This	morning	it	was	raining	so	we
did	not	go	outside	to	play	

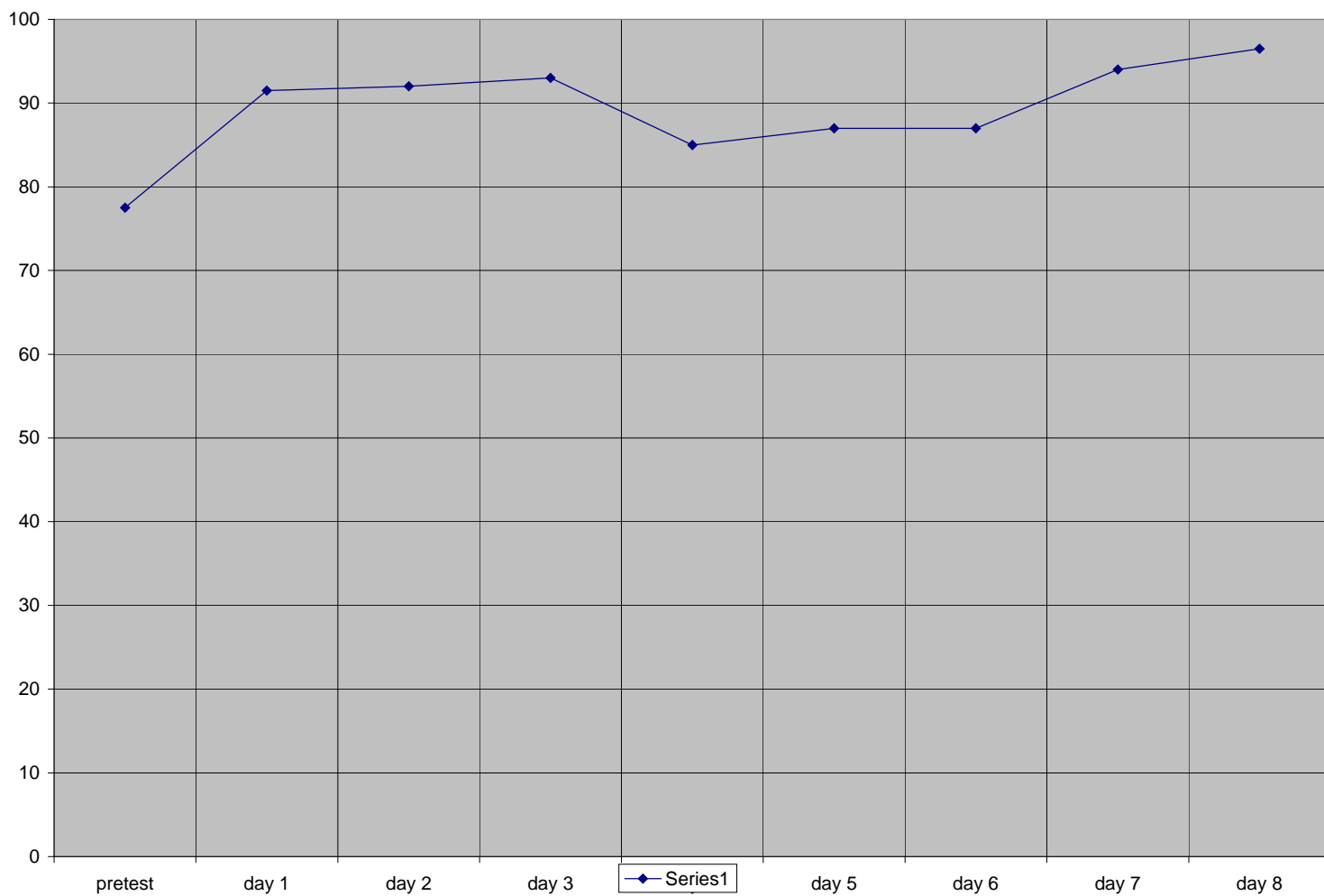


Table 1

Table 2
Results

Session	Text	Text Level	Reading Accuracy	Errors	Text re-read	Error corrected
Pre-test	The Skipping Rope	14	77.5%	23.5%	10%	10%
Session 1	Popcorn Fun	13	87%	16.3%	37.5%	25%
Session 2	Robert and the Dinosaur	13	87%	12.5%	37.5%	25%
Session 3	Mrs. Spider's Beautiful Web	13	92%	15%	56.5%	43%
Session 4	Ben's Tooth	13	92%	23.5%	86%	61%
Session 5	The Tortoise and the Hare	13	92.5%	10%	66.5%	20%
Session 6	The Tree House	14	83%	19.5%	30%	16.5%
Session 7	The Cross Country Race	14	94%	14.5%	74%	60%
Session 8	After the Flood	14	96.6%	13%	78.5%	61%

Table 3

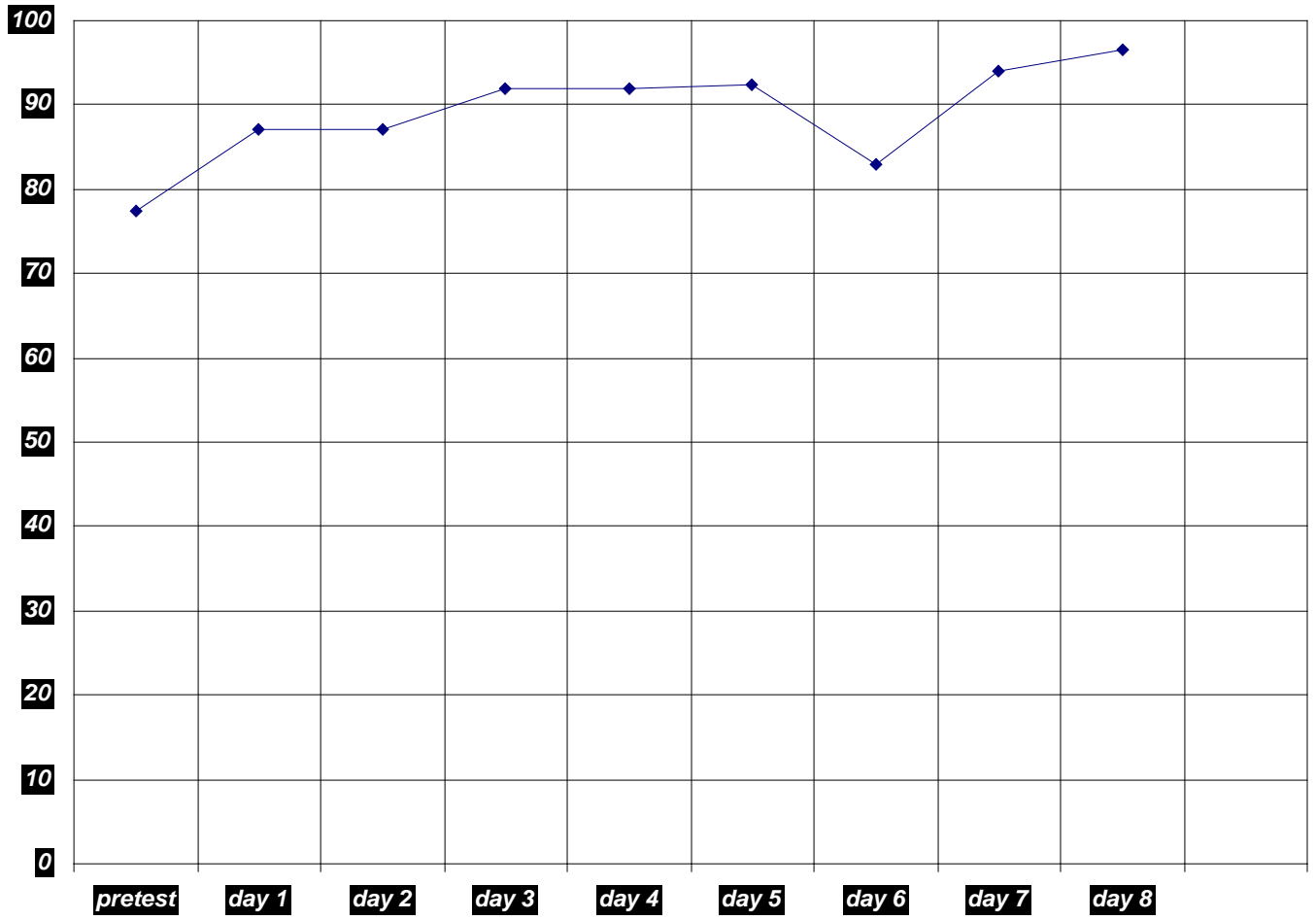


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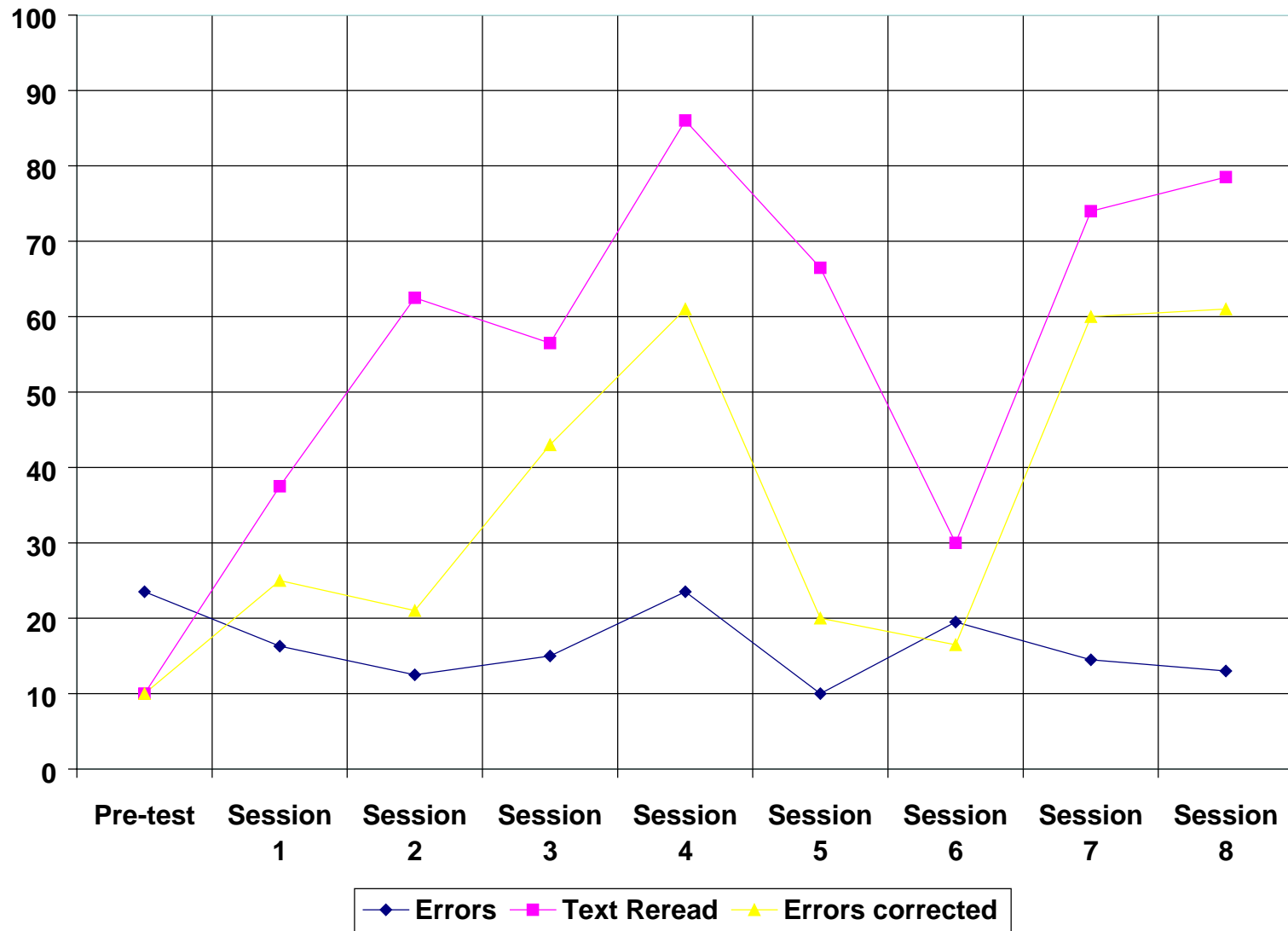


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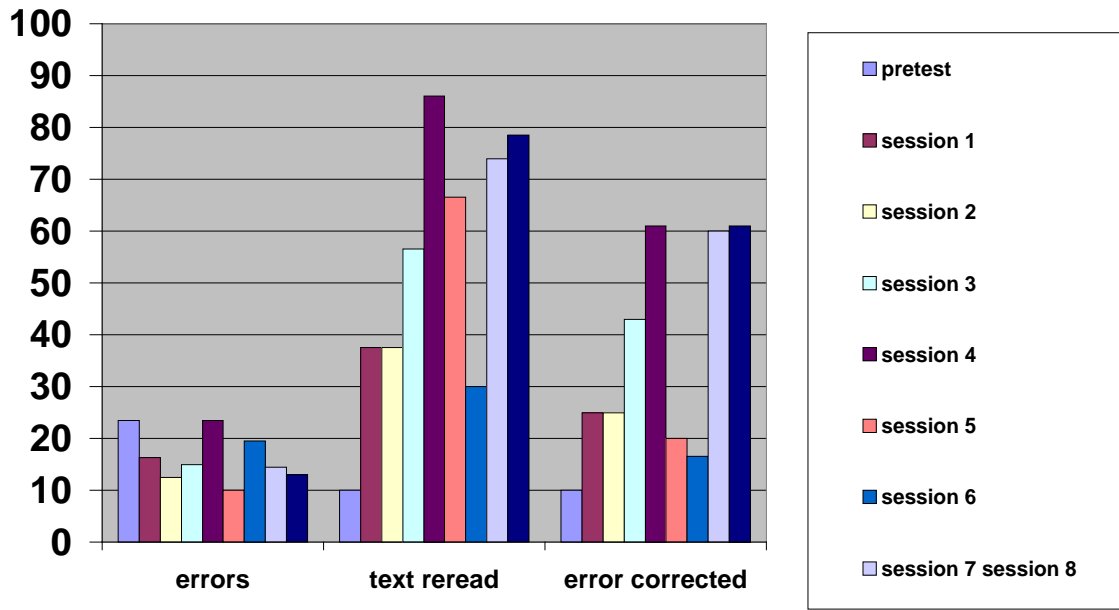
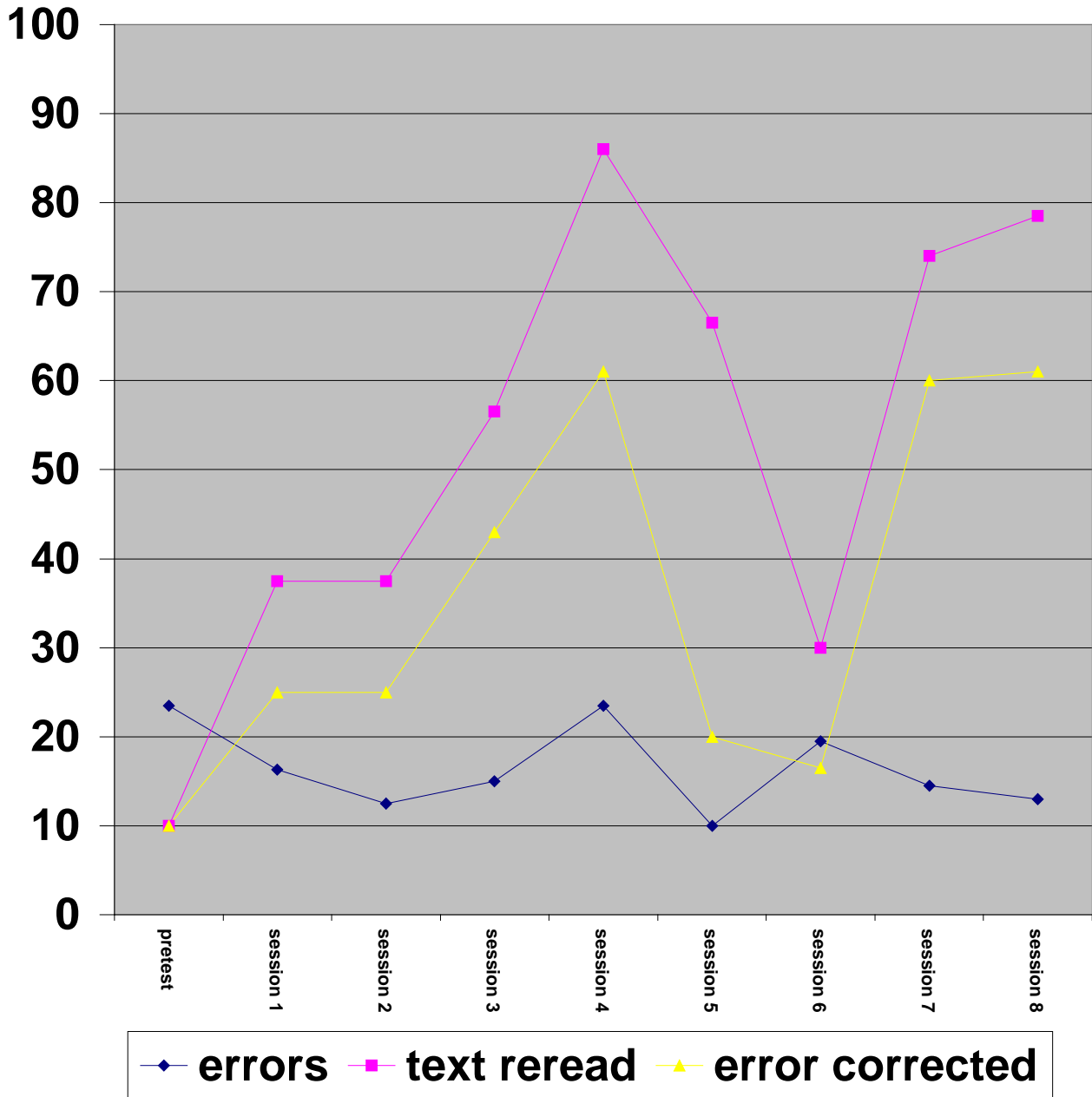




Table 6

Table 7



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