

# ACTION RESEARCH

*Explicit teaching of sentence structure and vocabulary improves listening comprehension*

## **ABSTRACT**

Many students have limited vocabulary and poor sentence structure. Research has shown that building vocabulary, teaching correct sentence structure and encouraging children to participate in storytelling leads to improvement in comprehension. The present study examines the effect of teaching vocabulary and sentence structure on listening comprehension.

A class group of 28 students participated in storytelling sessions which introduced them to new vocabulary. They were instructed how to form sentences correctly and then retell the story through drama, ordering pictures and in partner activities. The results showed that all students made significant improvements in listening comprehension with two students gaining 100%.

The next step to consider when teaching sentence structure is when students are comfortable with 1 event sentences explicitly teach them how to construct 2 and 3 event sentences in order that they become proficient when using oral language in all aspects of their learning. Children would need to be encouraged to use correct sentence structure when participating in oral or written activities and not just utter one or two word answers which can occur with ESL children. Teachers would need to address this when teaching and in all aspects of classroom learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Many students in the junior primary level who are from a non English speaking background or from low socio – economic homes have limited vocabulary and poor sentence structure which hinders their ability to fully comprehend text when listening and then retell in a sequential order. Oral language according to Clay (1983) is vital as children need to be skilled in oral language in order to communicate with everyone around them. These students are often able to read a text but have very little understanding of what they have read and cannot express what they have learned in correctly structured sentences. The difficulties experienced by these learners could be attributed to a lack of life experiences and good models of oral interaction. Vandergrift (2006) suggests that listeners need to comprehend what is being spoken and that they construct a mental representation of what they have understood. These students are unable to express an understanding of a text due to a lack of word knowledge and meanings and an inability to structure sentences correctly. Students with poor oral language skills are at a noticeable disadvantage if they cannot express themselves using appropriate structures and levels of vocabulary.

In order to enable students to become proficient in listening comprehension Oullette (2006) suggests that the depth of vocabulary knowledge maybe an important missing component. (Dickinson 2003 cited in Oullette 2006, p.564) state that “low-income children are at a disadvantage for vocabulary.” Oral language skills provide an essential foundation for skills in listening comprehension. Thus identifying synonyms and providing definitions increases students’ levels of understanding. It is also important to note that “semantic and syntactic knowledge are integrally related to reading (and in this study’s case listening) ability in that both systems serve as primary cues for deciphering text.” (Speece, Roth, Cooper, de la Paz, 1999, p170) Furthermore Lubliner and Smetana (2005) noted that a challenge when undertaking an intervention in vocabulary is not to just teach a set of words but to make it positively affect comprehension.

In examining the research on listening comprehension (Biemiller , 1999) believes that listening comprehension develops through the early years and can grow if there is interaction with other people and texts that introduce new vocabulary, concepts and language structures. Furthermore, Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer and Lowrance, (2004) indicated that storytelling and story reading were found to produce positive gains in oral language complexity. They believe that story reading and storytelling influences the development of comprehension. By getting children to repeat phrases, act out sections of a story and refer to illustrations this increases levels of comprehension.

Furthermore it has been argued that reading books aloud not only increases reading achievement scores, but also listening and speaking abilities. Children who are exposed to storybook reading frequently are more likely to use complex sentences, improve literal and inferential comprehension skills, gain greater story concept development, increase letter and symbol recognition and importantly develop positive attitudes about reading. (Silvern, 1985; cited in Isbel et al. p158).

Research undertaken by Brett, Rothlein and Hurley (1996) investigated the effects of vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories and explanations of target words. They found that “students who listened to two stories along with a brief explanation of target words learned significantly more new words and remembered them better 6 weeks later than the students who heard stories with no explanations of words” (p415). By giving explanations of words to children as they are listening to stories being read produces significant gains in vocabulary. The evidence gained in the present study concurs with these results. After identifying vocabulary associated with the text and providing synonyms children acquired a higher level of vocabulary knowledge.

With regard to oral language Storch and Whitehurst (2002) feel that the role of oral language abilities is important in the early stages of reading ability. Research from (Bowey, 1986; Demont & Gombert, 1996; Feagans & Applebaum, 1996; Tunmer et al., 1998 cited in Storch and Whitehurst (2002) show that “a link between the discourse and syntactic awareness, and later reading achievement has also been shown. (p935) Observations made in the present study showed that developing semantics and syntax knowledge as well as narrative discourse lead to improvements in oral language.

The present investigation aims to examine the effect of teaching a whole class of Grade One students how to retell stories sequentially with a particular focus on improving breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge and correct sentence structure to improve listening comprehension ability. These students come from low socio economic backgrounds and are from non English speaking backgrounds. The students will have a greater understanding of text and increase their knowledge of synonyms. The hypothesis of this study is that explicitly teaching vocabulary and sentence structure improves listening comprehension.

## **METHOD**

### **DESIGN**

The study uses a case study OXO design in which the gain in listening comprehension will demonstrate increased understanding of sentence structure and improvements in breadth and depth of vocabulary is monitored for Grade 1 students with low levels of oral language. This study compares two groups of students; a control group and an intervention group.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

The participants of this study are Grade 1 students between the ages of 6 and 7 years. Students were selected according to their Record of Oral Language scores from beginning of the year ClaSS testing, socio economic status and whether they were from Non English Speaking backgrounds. (See Appendix 1 for Child Data)

Children who had a score of 20 or less on the Record of Oral Language were considered for the study. (It is the expectation of ClaSS – Children’s Literacy Success Strategy – that Year 1 Children score 42). These children were not part of the Integration Program or intervention programs such as Reading Recovery.

Running concurrently within the school was an identical study targeting Prep children who had oral language scores under 13.

## **MATERIALS**

Children are assessed using the following tests:

- Record of Oral Language – Marie Clay

The Record of Oral Language is to assist teachers to: observe aspects of oral language and assess a child's ability to handle selected grammatical structures. (Clay, 1983, p8). Sentences are read aloud to the children who then repeat it back to show whether they have mastery of different sentence structures.

- Synonym Word test – John Munro

The Synonym Word test is used to determine the breadth of vocabulary that a child has. Children were read a word and then required to provide a synonym for the word given.

- Listening Comprehension test – John Munro

The Listening Comprehension test ascertains a child's ability to understand spoken texts and whether they can retell in a sequential order. Children were read a passage and then asked to retell the story as much as was possible for them in the correct order.

- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III

The PPVT-III test is a norm reference measure of receptive vocabulary and as a measure of listening comprehension for spoken words. Children are presented with items in a set consisting of 12 items. Each item has four black and white pictures to select from, each set becomes progressively difficult. Children are required to select a picture which best illustrates the meaning of the word given by the teacher.

Children were assessed individually. Each student was assessed in a single session of approximately 40 minutes total duration.

The materials used for teaching sessions included three different fiction texts, colourful stimulus pictures, vocabulary charts – a label and a picture of an item with a list of synonyms, pictures for sequencing, story maps and masks of characters in each text. (See Appendix 2 for Session Outlines)

## **PROCEDURE**

To ensure that the teaching sessions were suitable for the group chosen to be part of the study a Pilot Study was initially carried out. Eight children from another Grade 1 class took part in Session 1 of the teaching lessons. The Pilot Group was successful and thus it was deemed to be suitable to carry out the teaching sessions as they had been planned.

The intervention consisted of 10 teaching sessions each of 40 – 45 minutes duration within the ClaSS Literacy block. The teaching was directed to a whole class of Grade 1 students with 8 students selected as a target group within this class group. Students in the control group continued to participate in the regular classroom Literacy program. Following all of the teaching sessions children in the teaching group and control group were re-assessed using the same tests that were initially administered.

Three sessions were spent on text 1 and text 2 and text 3 consisted of four sessions. Each text followed the same teaching format. The lessons were designed so that they could be used by teachers as a lesson with a whole class group.

In session 1 the children were initially shown large stimulus pictures to generate ideas and vocabulary. As vocabulary was suggested it was displayed for everyone to see. The children were then asked to give synonyms for the vocabulary generated which was also displayed. The teacher also suggested some synonyms. The children then used '1 Action' sentence frames to create sentences using the vocabulary produced in the picture chat.

E.g. The \_\_\_\_\_ is/are \_\_\_\_\_.  
I can see the \_\_\_\_\_.

Before reading, the text the teacher instructed the children what it meant to be a good listener. While reading, the text the children repeated phrases and acted out different parts of the story. After reading, children took part in an activity which required them to sequence pictures in a small group and retell the story.

In session 2 the children sequenced pictures and retold the story with a partner. Next the children produced 'Who questions?' with a partner and gave answers which were structurally correct. E.g. "Who was eating the porridge?" "Goldilocks was eating the porridge or "Who made the bears angry?" "Goldilocks made the bears angry." In small groups children were given a character mask and required to act out the story in the correct order.

In session 3 the children revisited the synonyms they had learned in a rapid naming of items activity. The teacher would show a picture and ask the children to give synonyms. E.g. a picture of a man and the children would respond with guy, male, gentleman etc. After listening to the story for a third time the children participated in a progressive memory activity where they used the sentence frame "In the story the ...." This activity required the children to retell the story sequentially as a group. Finally the children had to sequence pictures from the story in the correct order and then retell the story to the teacher. This was carried out individually. A tape recorder was used to gather responses and then referred to later. At the conclusion of every session children were asked to review what they had learnt.

The Gingerbread Man had an extra session due to the large amount of characters and it followed the same format as session 3 but instead of sequencing pictures the children were asked to dramatise the story in a group.

## **RESULTS**

The results are shown in two groups. Results have been grouped according to the test (intervention) group and the control group. Individual students have been highlighted in descriptions of group results. The results gained indicate support for the hypothesis that teaching vocabulary and sentence structure

improves listening comprehension. The post testing scores of all students in the test group indicate improvements. (Appendix 3, Table 3)

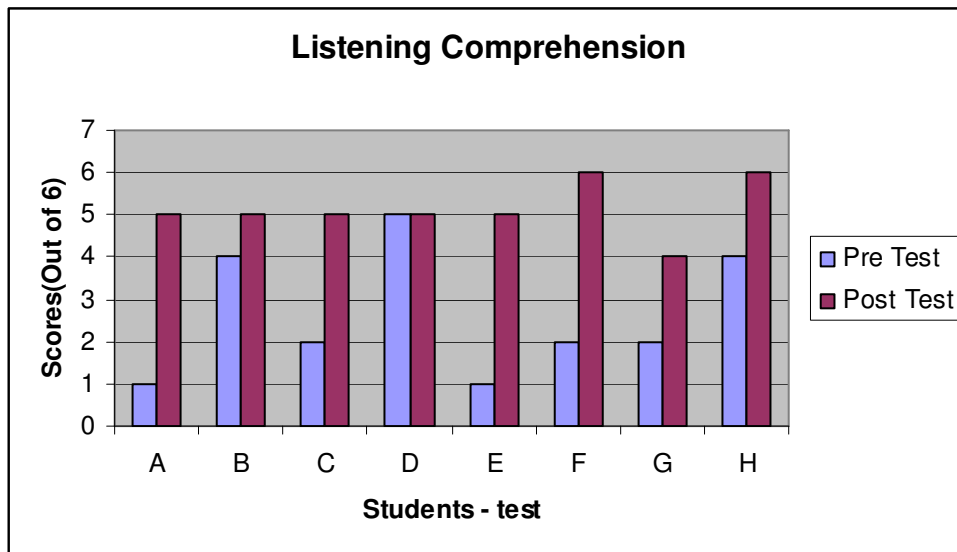


Figure 1

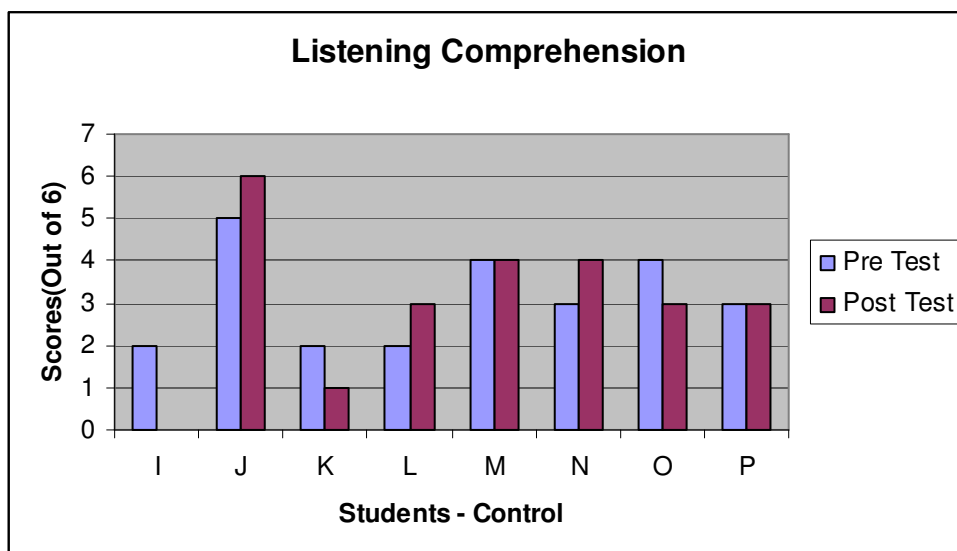


Figure 2

The listening comprehension scores of all students in the test group indicate considerable improvements. The gains made by the test group were indeed higher than the control group. It is interesting to note that Students I and K in the Control Group demonstrated higher listening comprehension scores in pre testing than they subsequently scored in post testing.

In the test group Students A and E could initially only retell 16% of the detail required. This increased to 83% in post testing. Student F also showed improvements from 33% to 100%. These findings show significant gains and indicate that teaching vocabulary and sentence structure along with retelling in class improves listening comprehension skills. With the control group there were slight improvements observed in students J, L and N and no change in results in students M and N. Student I did not make any gains and in fact his score decreased. His recall of events was completely inaccurate. Student K's

results also declined. It is interesting to note that the pre testing scores for the control group were generally higher.

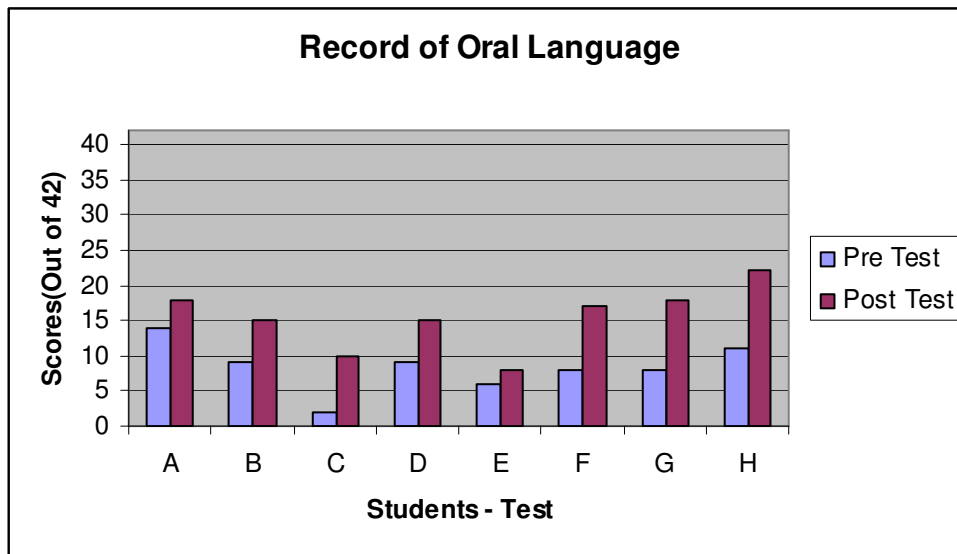


Figure 3

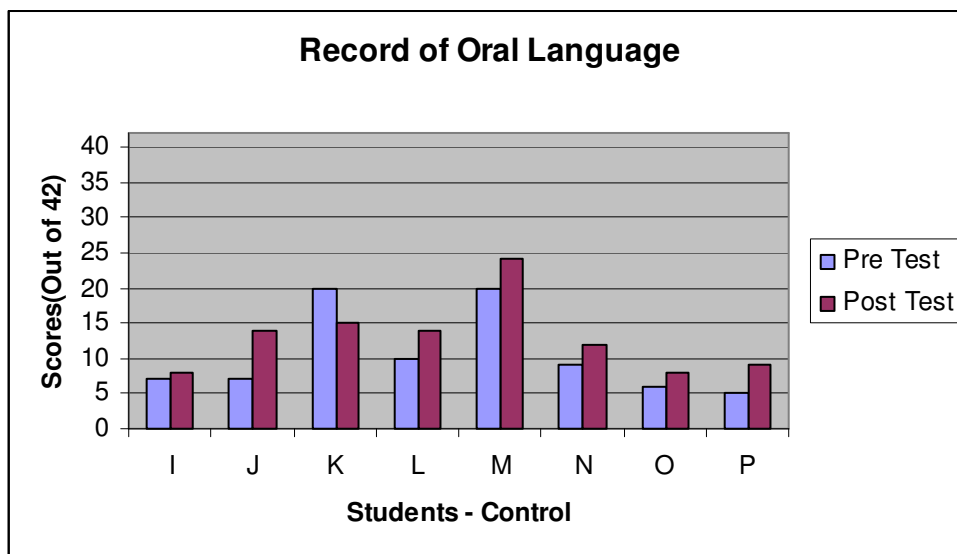


Figure 4

Scores for the Record of Oral Language were obtained as a means of grouping the children initially. The pre test results for the test group were between 0 – 13 for students B, C, D, E, F, G and H. Student A had a score of 14. According to the Record of Oral Language, students who score within the range of 0 to 13 will not be able to follow a story read to them in class. They are operating below 5.0 years level for oral language. Students who score 14 – 28 will operate at a 5.5 – 6.0 year level.

Students in the control group had slightly better scores than the test group with students K and M having a pre test score of 20. Post test results indicate a greater understanding of semantic and syntactical features of a sentence. Levels of oral language had definitely improved. Students A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H all showed an improvement in their score. Student C in pre testing got 5% of the sentences correct and in post testing had 24% correct. She paid



Careful attention to grammatical structures as had been required of her in the class teaching sessions.

The control group did make gains but they were not as significant as the teaching group. It is interesting to note that Student K's score decreased by 5. She went from 48% down to 36% of the sentences being correctly repeated.

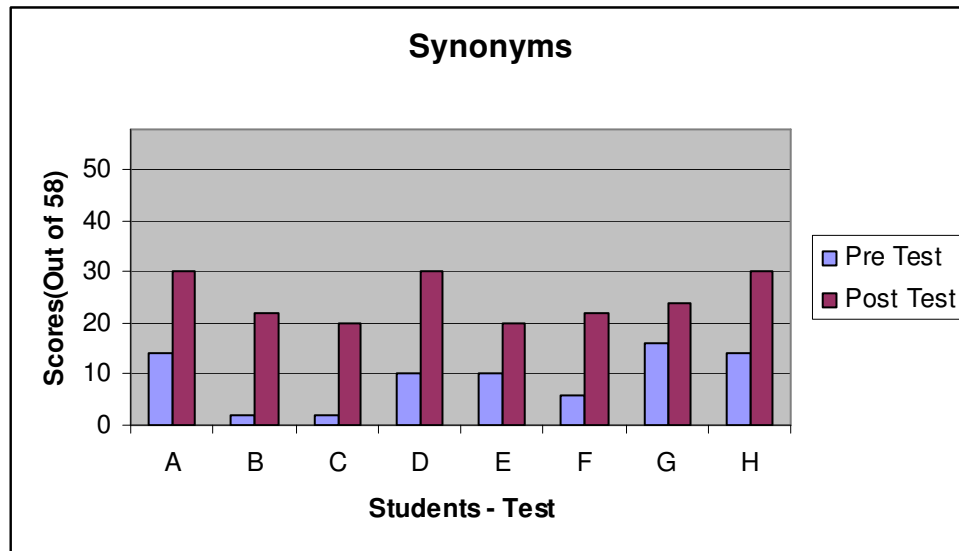


Figure 5

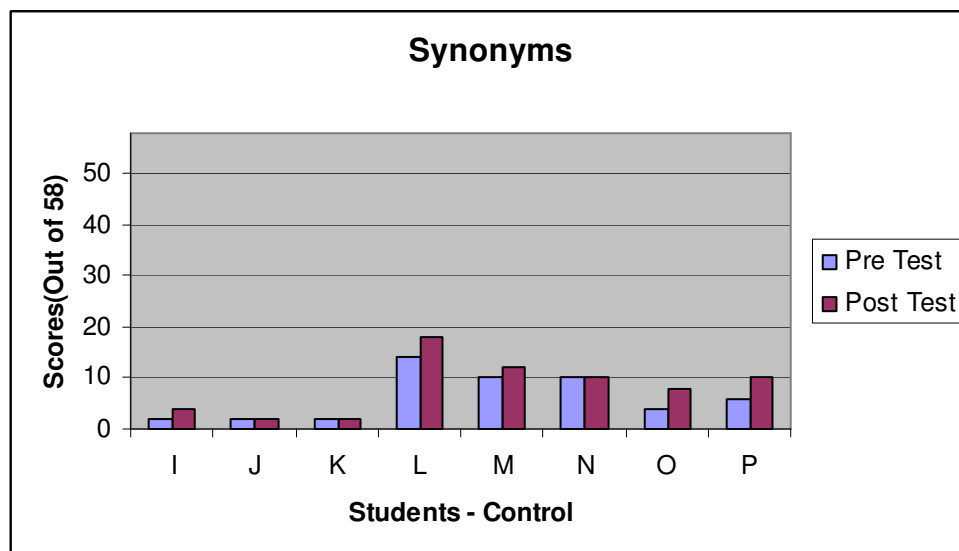


Figure 6

In the synonym test at pre testing the range of scores for the teaching group was slightly higher – 2(3%) – 16(38%) than the control group 2(3%) – 10 (17%).

The group trends for the test students indicate that vocabulary building strategies increased the breadth of vocabulary for each student. All made considerable gains during post testing. Student B before instruction could offer only 3% of the synonyms and after instruction was able to offer 52% of the synonyms required. Students A, D and H increased their scores to 71% of the synonyms required. The gains for the control group were either minimal or

of no gain at all. This demonstrates that the teaching of synonyms to build vocabulary increases children's understandings.

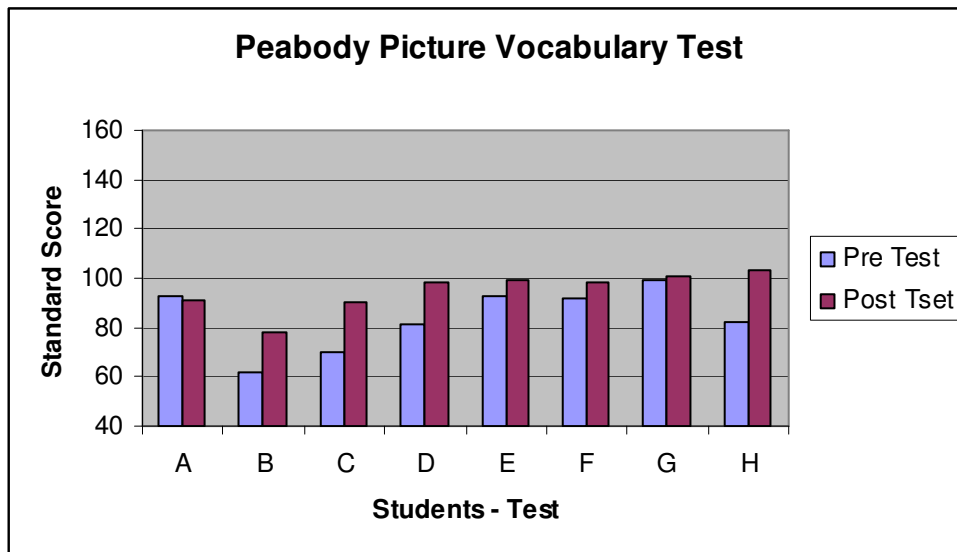


Figure 7

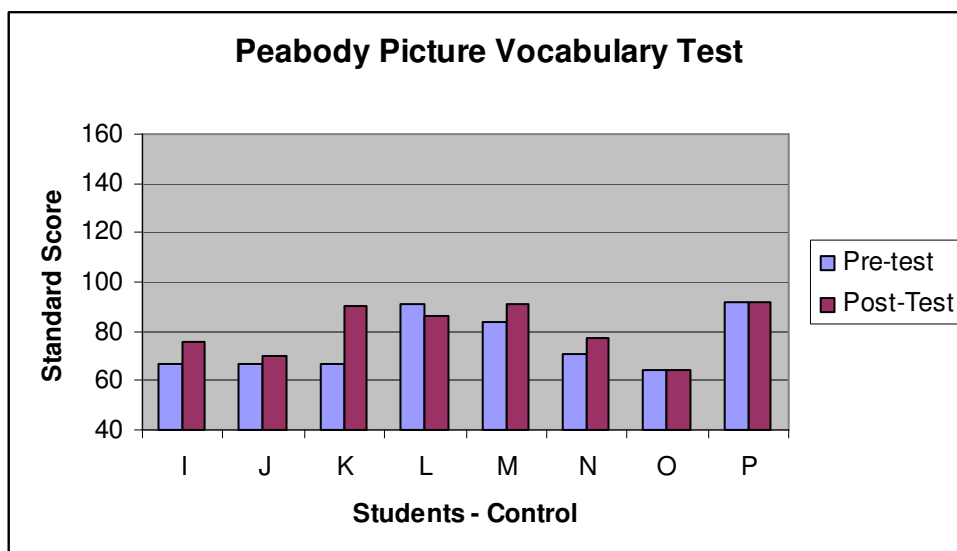


Figure 8

Student A in the test group did not make any gains after post testing of the PPVT III, he in fact went down. This could have been attributed to the time taken between pre and post testing as a different age scale was used, he had increased in age by 2 months. All of the other students in the test group increased their standard scores slightly. These scores indicate that students A, C, D, E and F are all falling within the Low Average range and student B is within the moderately low range therefore all falling below their age equivalent scores. Students G and H are just above the average range suggesting that they are working at an age appropriate level. Student H made the greatest gains in this test. These findings suggest that more work on receptive vocabulary may need to be carried out within the classroom. It was interesting to observe the students as they taking part in this assessment. Many of the students seemed to use elimination skills to determine which object should be selected.

In the control group the results show that all students are working in the low average to moderately low range. Interestingly student K who has shown a decline in all of the other tests increased her results.

## **DISCUSSION**

In reflecting on the results of this study there is support for the hypothesis and the research, which suggests that teaching students' vocabulary and sentence structure improves listening comprehension. Students improved their listening comprehension skills increasing their recall of events in a sequential order. They had a much better understanding of what synonyms were and consequently increased their levels of understanding of vocabulary. In the Record of Oral language students demonstrated gains indicating that they had a better awareness of the role of syntax when repeating sentences. Listening also played a key role in this and indicated that they better comprehended what they were hearing. The students in the teaching group had poor oral language skills initially and in the short period of time that the intervention took place improvements were definitely evident. From the results obtained it has shown that this teaching can be directed to whole class teaching. It would be interesting to observe what would happen if the intervention was administered to the control group and if the same improvements occurred.

As it has been widely recognised that oral language underpins a great deal of a child's learning it seems to be relevant to immerse children with as much vocabulary and the structures with which to use it in order that their levels of comprehension progress as they move through their years of schooling. The results lend support to the research carried out by (Oullette, (2006) who suggests that intervention studies which incorporate activities to increase vocabulary size and semantic growth are relevant to comprehension processes. He also commented on the role of increasing vocabulary and meaning in children from low income backgrounds. By teaching vocabulary and synonyms all of the students increased their own lexicon. It was interesting to observe the children referring to the displayed word lists of synonyms and new vocabulary when they were constructing sentences. Because the teaching group was introduced to the concept of naming and finding synonyms for particular words this it would seem improved their results on the synonym test. The students could look into their own word banks and find an example of a synonym, whereas the children in the control group who had received no instruction on synonyms did not score as well in post testing.

With regard to the stories that were shared daily. The children were encouraged to participate through repeating phrases and acting out different parts. The students were completely involved in the story telling process and not just reliant on text and illustrations. Isbel et al (2004) commented in their study that this was an effective way for children to increase their comprehension skills. This was indeed evident in the results of the listening comprehension. All of the students in the teaching group became more proficient at retelling what they had listened to. Students F and H both managed to score 100% in the post test. Results from the study Isbel et al (2004) undertook indicated that storytelling was beneficial in the development of oral language complexity and comprehension in children.

Research undertaken by Brett et al (1996) complements the present study in that they found that by reading aloud and giving explanations of unfamiliar words this produced significant gains in vocabulary. They also suggested that using these words in sentences would be beneficial. The results of the present study indicate that teaching syntax increases levels of comprehension. Storch and Whitehurst (2002) also expressed the benefits of awareness in syntax and word knowledge on levels of comprehension and oral language development.

Improvements occurred in all areas and therefore an intervention program such as this would sit well with general classroom teaching. Oral language most definitely has a key place of importance within the class. Children need to have a solid foundation in all aspects of oral language in order for comprehension to develop be it reading or in the case of this study furthering listening comprehension ability. As these children were all from a low socio economic background and non English speaking homes it shows the necessity for providing children such as this with oral language opportunities.

There are a number of factors that would need to be addressed if repeating this study or continuing teaching sessions with these students. Due to circumstances beyond control the lessons were not conducted in a consecutive manner but took place over a period of 3 weeks. The teaching was manageable with a class group but teachers carrying out these lessons would need to be aware of children with weaknesses as they may not fully engage in the sessions. Although it was noted that during this teaching all of the students were enthusiastic about participating and joined in all aspects of the lessons. The texts used were traditional tales and it would be interesting to use a wider range of texts to see if the results were the same. If non fiction texts were used a different form of acting out the information would need to be devised. Children relied heavily on the sentence frames to construct their sentences, thus it would be the next step that when they were comfortable with 1 event sentences to show them how to construct 2 and 3 event sentences in order that they become proficient when using oral language in all aspects of their learning. Children would need to be encouraged to use correct sentence structure when participating in oral or written activities and not just utter one or two word answers which can occur with ESL children. Teachers would need to address this when teaching and in all aspects of classroom learning.

The results suggest that the teaching of vocabulary and sentence structure is a successful strategy and should be taught to improve listening comprehension. It is a concern that on the PPVT III most of the students are functioning in the low average to moderately low range. What implications does this have for them in terms of oral language ability? For future research another area of possible study would be to get the students to locate information within in the text and give answers using correct sentence structure.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Brett, A., Rothlein, L. & Hurley, M. (1996). *Vocabulary Acquisition From Listening to Stories and Explanations of Target Words*. *The Elementary School Journal*, 69, 4, 415 – 422.
- Biemiller, A. (1999). *Oral comprehension Sets the Ceiling on Reading Comprehension. From Reading Research to Practice: A Series for Teachers*. Brookline Books, Canada.
- Clay, M.M., Gill, M., Glynn, T., McNaughton, T., Salmon, K. (1983). *Record of Oral Language Biks and Gluctches*. Auckland, New Zealand, Heinemann Education.
- Dunn, L.M. & Dunn, L.M. (1997). *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (PPVTIII)*: Circle Pines, Minnesota: American Guidance Service.
- Isbell, R., Sobol, J., Lindauer, L. & Lowrance, A. (2004). *The Effects of Storytelling and Story Reading on the Oral Language Complexity and Story Comprehension of Young Children*. *Early Childhood Journal*, 32, 3, 157 – 163.
- Lubline, S. & Smetana, L. (2005). *The Effects of Comprehensive Vocabulary Instruction on Title I Students' Metacognitive Word-Living Skills and Reading Comprehension*. *Journal of Literacy*, 37, 2, 163 – 200.
- Munro, J.K. (2006). *Listening Comprehension Test, 476 – 696 Project in Literacy Intervention: Course Notes: University of Melbourne*.
- Munro, J.K. (2006). *Synonym Test, 476 – 696 Project in Literacy Intervention: Course Notes: University of Melbourne*.
- Ouelette, G.P. (2006). *What's Meaning Got To Do With It: The Role of Vocabulary in Word Reading and Reading Comprehension*. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98, 3, 544 – 566.
- Speece, D.L., Roth, F.P., Cooper, D.H. & De La Paz, S. (1999). *The Relevance of Oral Language Skills to Early Literacy: A multivariate analysis*. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20, 167 – 190.
- Storch, S.a. & Whitehurst, G.J. (2002). *Oral Language and Code Related Precursors to Reading: Evidence From a Longitudinal Structural Model*. *Developmental Psychology*, 38, 6, 934-947.

## APPENDIX 1

Table 1 Selection Criteria for Students in Study.

Test Group	Sex M-Male F-Female	AGE	PRE-TEST	E.M.A	NESB
		Yrs & Months	ROL		
A	M	6y6m	7	√	√
B	M	6y10m	9	√	√
C	F	6y1m	2	√	√
D	F	6y2m	9	√	√
E	M	6y3m	6	√	√
F	M	6y4m	8	√	√
G	M	6y4m	8	√	√
H	F	6y2m	1	√	√
<b>Control</b>					
I	M	6y4m	7	√	√
J	M	6y10m	7	√	√
K	F	6y5m	20	√	√
L	F	6y10m	10	√	√
M	F	6y2m	20	√	√
N	F	6y5m	9	√	√
O	M	6y11m	6	√	√
P	M	6yr9m	5	√	√

## APPENDIX 2

TABLE 2

SESSION	TEXT	GENRE
1	The Little Red hen	Fiction
2	The Little Red hen	Fiction
3	The Little Red hen	Fiction
4	Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Fiction
5	Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Fiction
6	Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Fiction
7	The Gingerbread Man	Fiction
8	Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Fiction
9	Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Fiction
10	Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Fiction

### APPENDIX 3

#### Teaching Procedure – Session 1 – The Little Red Hen

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION  (Ideas – Word Level)	PICTURE CHAT (Enlarged pictures from book that will relate to text that will be read to children in READ TO section) Generate existing vocabulary and introduce new vocabulary.	
10 minutes SYNONYMS	Synonyms generated by children from the vocabulary given during the picture chat.	
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	<u>Action Sentences</u> Action sentences modelled to children. Children use 1 action sentence frames to produce sentences from vocabulary given during the picture chat. (Sentence Production) Illicit from another child what the sentence means. (Sentence Comprehension, e.g. include drama)	<u>Child A</u> The hen, dog, cat and goose live in a house. <u>Child D</u> The hen is working in the garden. <u>Child G</u> (In response to Child D acted out the hen threshing the seeds.) <u>Child H</u> The dog is sleeping.
10 minutes READ TO	Children are instructed on how to organise themselves as good listeners and how to be a disciplined listener. Teacher reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Retell story in order with a partner. Children called on to share parts of the story Picture Cues	<u>Child F</u> Once upon a time a little red hen lived in a cottage. <u>Child C</u> The hen planted and watered the seeds. <u>Child B</u> The Little Red Hen made flour. No help. <u>Child E</u> The hen made bread and she eat it all by herself, nobody did any work.
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	<u>Child H</u> Today I learned that another word for hit is thresh.

## Teaching Procedure -Sessions 2 – The Little Red Hen

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION - RETELL	Oral Sequencing of story. Children are handed a picture and come to the front of the class in the correct order and retell.	
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	<p><u>Action Sentences</u> Action sentences modelled to children. Children use 1 action sentence frames to produce sentences from vocabulary given during the picture chat. (Sentence Production) Illicit from another child what the sentence means. (Sentence Comprehension, e.g. include drama)</p> <p><u>Who? Questions</u> Teacher asks children 'Who Questions' and the children respond. Children ask each other 'Who Questions'.</p>	<p><u>Teacher</u> Who planted the seeds? <u>Child H</u> The hen planted the seeds. <u>Teacher:</u> Who made the bread? <u>Child D</u> The hen made the bread.</p>
10 minutes READ TO	<p>Children remind themselves orally how to be a good listener.</p> <p>Teacher re- reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.</p>	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	<p>Retell story in order –Drama presentation. In small groups act out story. Each child will have a puppet. Characters then share with class what they said during their acting. (Small groups)</p>	<p><u>Child A,C,H,B</u> Who will help me eat this bread? I will I will I will No, I will eat it all. You didn't help me.</p> <p><u>Child E,D,F,G</u> Who will help me plant the seeds? Not I Not I Not I Oh I will have to do it myself!</p>
5 minutes REVIEW	<p>Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.</p>	



### Teaching Procedure -Session 3 – The Little Red Hen

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION	Oral Sequencing of story. Children are handed a picture and come to the front of the class in the correct order and retell.	
10 minutes SYNONYMS	RAN of vocabulary from sessions 1 and 2 to determine whether children have automatic recall of vocabulary and synonyms. (Picture flash cards. Child A gives a label, Child B gives a synonym for that label etc)	
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	Children will play Progressive Memory game. "In the story the ...." Sentence Production and progressive memory.	<u>Child A</u> In the story the animals lived in a cottage. <u>Child C</u> In the story the cat, dog and goose did not help the hen. <u>Child G</u> In the story the hen ate the bread all herself.
10 minutes READ TO	Children are instructed on how to organise themselves as good listeners and how to be a disciplined listener. Teacher reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Retell story in order. Story map – Children draw story map and share with a partner/teacher.	<u>Child H</u> Once upon a time the red hen live in the farm. No one helping the hen. The little red hen cut the weed. (seed) The Little red hen cut and thresh the weed. (seed) She take it to the mill. She put it in a bag. She take it home and baked bread and she it all because she do it all herself.
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	

### Teaching Procedure – Session 4 – Goldilocks

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION  (Ideas – Word Level)	PICTURE CHAT (Enlarged pictures from book that will relate to text that will be read to children in READ TO section) Generate existing vocabulary and introduce new vocabulary.	<u>Child A</u> - Absent
10 minutes SYNONYMS	Synonyms generated by children from the vocabulary given during the picture chat.	<u>Child F</u> <u>Child G</u> Girl – woman              lady <u>Child G</u> Big – gigantic <u>Child E</u> <u>Child F</u> Walk – went                go <u>Child H</u> Tasted - tried
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	<u>Action Sentences</u> Action sentences modelled to children. Children use 1 action sentence frames to produce sentences from vocabulary given during the picture chat. (Sentence Production) Illicit from another child what the sentence means. (Sentence Comprehension, e.g. include drama)	<u>Child D</u> The girl broke the chair. <u>Child C</u> The child tasted the medium-sized bowl. <u>Child E</u> The big bear was angry. <u>Child H</u> The girl is high when she is standing.
10 minutes READ TO	Children are instructed on how to organise themselves as good listeners and how to be a disciplined listener. Teacher reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Retell story in order with a partner. Children called on to share parts of the story  Picture Cues	<u>Child F</u> The bears went for a walk and the girl went inside. <u>Child G</u> The woman licked the porridge. <u>Child B</u> The little bears found the girl sleeping. <u>Child C</u> The bears came home and the girl ran away.
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	

### Teaching Procedure –Session 5 - Goldilocks

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION - RETELL	Oral Sequencing of story. Children are handed a picture and come to the front of the class in the correct order and retell.	
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	<p><u>Action Sentences</u> Action sentences modelled to children. Children use 1 action sentence frames to produce sentences from vocabulary given during the picture chat. (Sentence Production) Illicit from another child what the sentence means. (Sentence Comprehension, e.g. include drama)</p> <p><u>Who? Questions</u> Teacher asks children 'Who Questions' and the children respond. Children ask each other 'Who Questions'.</p>	
10 minutes READ TO	<p>Children remind themselves orally how to be a good listener.</p> <p>Teacher re- reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.</p>	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Retell story in order –Drama presentation. In small groups act out story. Each child will have a puppet. Characters then share with class what they said during their acting. (Small groups)	<p><u>Child A,E,F,H</u> Someone's been sitting on my chair Someone's been sitting on my chair Someone's been sitting on my chair and it's broken.</p>
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	

### Teaching Procedure -Session 6 – Goldilocks

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION	Oral Sequencing of story. Children are handed a picture and come to the front of the class in the correct order and retell.	
10 minutes SYNONYMS	RAN of vocabulary from sessions 1 and 2 to determine whether children have automatic recall of vocabulary and synonyms. (Picture flash cards. Child A gives a label, Child B gives a synonym for that label etc)	
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	Children will play Progressive Memory game. "In the story the ...." Sentence Production and progressive memory.	<u>Child A</u> In the story the animals lived in a cottage. <u>Child C</u> In the story the cat, dog and goose did not help the hen. <u>Child G</u> In the story the hen ate the bread all herself.
10 minutes READ TO	Children are instructed on how to organise themselves as good listeners and how to be a disciplined listener. Teacher reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Retell story in order. Story map – Children draw story map and share with a partner/teacher.	See data collected on next page.
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	

## **Retell – Session 6 – Goldilocks**

### **Child A**

The girl went in the house and ate the bears' porridge. She sat on the big chair, the wide chair and then the little chair. She broke it. Then she went to the beds and fell asleep. The bears came back and were cross. Goldilocks run away.

### **Child D**

The bears walked outside. The girl went in and sat on the chair. She broke the little one. Then Goldilocks ate the bears' food. Then Goldilocks sleep in the baby's bed. The bears went inside and saw her sleeping and the girl ran away.

### **Child F**

Once upon a time there were three bears. Baby Bear said the porridge was too hot so they go for a walk. Goldilocks came inside and tried porridge. The big porridge was too hot, the middle sized porridge was too hot and Baby's porridge was just right and then she ate it up. Then she went to try the chairs. The big chair was too hard, the middle sized chair was too soft and the little chair was broken. After she wanted to sleep, the big bed was too hard and the middle sized bed was too soft and Baby's bed is good so she sleep. The bears came home and find her. They were cross and Goldilocks ran away.

### **Child H**

Three bears go for a walk in the forest. Goldilocks went inside and she ate the bowl of porridge. She sat on the chairs and on Baby's chair she broke it. She slept in Baby's bed. When the bears went back from walking they were angry and Goldilocks ran away.

## Teaching Procedure – Session 7 – The Gingerbread Man

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION  (Ideas – Word Level)	PICTURE CHAT (Enlarged pictures from book that will relate to text that will be read to children in READ TO section) Generate existing vocabulary and introduce new vocabulary.	
10 minutes SYNONYMS	Synonyms generated by children from the vocabulary given during the picture chat.	
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	<u>Action Sentences</u> Action sentences modelled to children. Children use 1 action sentence frames to produce sentences from vocabulary given during the picture chat. (Sentence Production) Illicit from another child what the sentence means. (Sentence Comprehension, e.g. include drama)	<u>Child G</u> The old man and old woman are hungry. <u>Child B</u> The Gingerbread man is running.
10 minutes READ TO	Children are instructed on how to organise themselves as good listeners and how to be a disciplined listener. Teacher reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.	Children joined in “Run Run as fast as you can, you can’t catch me I’m the Gingerbread man”  Children ran on the spot acting out part of gingerbread man.
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Retell story in order with a partner. Picture Cues	<u>Child A</u> Once upon a time there was a little old man and a little old woman. <u>Child C</u> The man and woman made a gingerbread man because hungry. <u>Child F</u> The gingerbread hopped out of the oven and run away.
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	

### Teaching Procedure -Sessions 8 – The Gingerbread Man

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION - RETELL	Oral Sequencing of story. Children are handed a picture and come to the front of the class in the correct order and retell.	<u>Child F</u> Once upon a time an old man and an old woman were hungry. <u>Child D</u> They made a Gingerbread man. <u>Child B</u> He jumped out of the oven and ran fast. <u>Child H</u> The man and the woman and the boy and the girl and the cat and dog chased the Gingerbread man. <u>Child A</u> The Gingerbread got to the river and there was no bridge. <u>Child C</u> The fox carried him on his head. <u>Child E</u> The fox ate the Gingerbread all up and said Thank you.
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	Using pictures associated with the theme of the story encourage children to produce 1 or 2 sentences using known vocabulary. 1 action sentence frames will be used. (Sentence Production) Illicit from another child what the sentence means. (Sentence Comprehension, e.g. include drama)	
10 minutes READ TO	Children remind themselves orally how to be a good listener. Teacher re-reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Children in small groups acted out the story. Characters had to share what they would have said during the story.	
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	

### Teaching Procedure –Session 9

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
10 minutes INTRODUCTION  RETELL	Oral Sequencing of story. Children are handed a picture and come to the front of the class in the correct order and retell.	
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	<p><u>Action Sentences</u> Action sentences modelled to children. Children use 1 action sentence frames to produce sentences from vocabulary given during the picture chat. (Sentence Production) Illicit from another child what the sentence means. (Sentence Comprehension, e.g. include drama)</p> <p><u>Who? Questions</u> Teacher asks children 'Who Questions' and the children respond. Children ask each other 'Who Questions'.</p>	<p><u>Child C</u> Who made the Gingerbread man?</p> <p><u>Child D</u> The old man and woman made the Gingerbread man.</p>
10 minutes READ TO	Children are instructed on how to organise themselves as good listeners and how to be a disciplined listener. Teacher reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Retell story in order –Drama presentation. In small groups act out story. Each child becomes a character in the story. Characters then share with class what they said during their acting. (Small groups)	<p>NOTE:</p> <p>An extra drama session was given to The Gingerbread Man because there are a large number of characters.</p>
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	

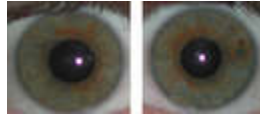


### Teaching Procedure -Session 10 – The Gingerbread Man

ACTIVITY TIME	Description	Data Collected
5 minutes INTRODUCTION	Oral Sequencing of story. Children are handed a picture and come to the front of the class in the correct order and retell.	
10 minutes SYNONYMS	RAN of vocabulary from sessions 1 and 2 to determine whether children have automatic recall of vocabulary and synonyms. (Picture flash cards. Child A gives a label, Child B gives a synonym for that label etc)	
10 minutes SENTENCE WORK	Children will play Progressive Memory game. "In the story the ...." Sentence Production and progressive memory.	
10 minutes READ TO	Children are instructed on how to organise themselves as good listeners and how to be a disciplined listener. Teacher reads story to children using enlarged text. While Reading/Post Reading – Individually and in group repeat sentences heard during the listening.	
5 minutes LISTENING COMPREHENSION	Retell story in order. Story map – Children draw story map and share with a partner/teacher.	Children demonstrated good retells of the story. No data recorded.
5 minutes REVIEW	Children review what they have learned in the session. (Store and retrieve from Long Term Memory) Similar to share time in ClaSS.	

# A Good Listener:

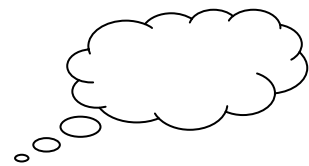
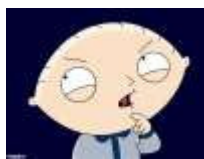
Looks at the person  
talking



Listens to what is  
being said



Thinks about what is  
said



Puts it in their own  
words



## Teaching Unit

## Listening Comprehension

Teaching Grade 1 students' vocabulary and sentence structure improves listening comprehension.

- A teaching sequence of 3 - 4 lessons accompanying a text.
- Texts used The Little Red Hen (3 Sessions)  
Goldilocks and the Three Bears (3 Sessions)  
The Gingerbread Man (4 Sessions)

### Procedure Session 1

#### Materials needed:

Story, Enlarged Pictures from story, Vocabulary Word Cards, Lists of Synonyms, Sentence Frames, 'How to be a Good Listener' chart, Small Pictures to sequence.

#### Introduction – Picture Chat

Let's have a look at some pictures from a story that I am going to read to you today. What can you tell me is happening in these pictures?

What could you tell me about the characters in this story?

**Teacher to stick on vocabulary labels as they are mentioned during this time.**

#### Synonyms

From our words that we have found during our discussion, let's try to find different words which have the same meaning.

**Synonyms are generated by children from vocabulary in picture chat. Teacher introduces new examples of synonyms. Lists are displayed.**

#### Sentence Work

Choose a word from our lists and put it into a sentence.

**Teacher models a 1 Action sentence. Sentence frames are provided for children. Children construct sentences and share with class.**

Who can act out the sentence that has been given?

#### Read – To

As the story is being read we all need to be good listeners. This is what we need to do to be a good listener. (See 'How to be a Good Listener' chart)

**Children listen to the story and join in repeating phrases and acting parts of the story.**

#### Retell

Using these pictures sequence the story and retell it with a partner

#### Conclusion

What things have you learned today?

**Children take turns to share what they learned at any stage of the lesson. "Today I learned ..."**

## **Procedure Session 2**

### **Materials needed:**

Story, Enlarged Pictures from story, Vocabulary Word Cards, Lists of Synonyms, Sentence Frames, 'How to be a Good Listener' chart, Small Pictures to sequence.

### **Introduction – Retell**

Here are our pictures from yesterday's story. Who can help me put them in the correct order? Can you make up a sentence for the picture.

**Children volunteer to put pictures in order and make up a sentence to match. Story is retold in order.**

### **Sentence Work**

Choose a word from our lists and put it into a sentence.

**Teacher models a 1 Action sentence. Sentence frames are provided for children. Children construct sentences and share with class.**

Who can act out the sentence that has been given?

We are going to make some sentences now that begin with 'Who' and then answer them in a full sentence.

**Teacher asks 'Who?' questions. Children construct sentences and share with class. Children then ask a partner a 'Who question'**

### **Read – To**

As the story is being read we all need to be good listeners. This is what we need to do to be a good listener. (See 'How to be a Good Listener' chart)

**Children listen to the story and join in repeating phrases and acting parts of the story.**

### **Retell**

Here are character masks from the story. In small groups you are going to act out the story that we have been reading. Think about what you would say as your character and how they would act.

**Children act out stories wearing character masks.**

### **Conclusion**

What things have you learned today?

**Children take turns to share what they learned at any stage of the lesson. "Today I learned ..."**

### **Procedure Session 3**

#### **Materials needed:**

Story, Enlarged Pictures from story, Vocabulary Word Cards, Lists of Synonyms, Sentence Frames, 'How to be a Good Listener' chart, Small Pictures to sequence.

#### **Introduction – Retell**

Here are our pictures from yesterday's story. Who can help me put them in the correct order? Can you make up a sentence for the picture?

**Children are given a picture and have to arrange themselves in order. Make up a sentence to match.**

#### **RAN Activity**

I am going to show you some pictures of the words we have learned while we have been reading this story. I want you to give me the name of the picture. Now, who can give me another word that means this?

Children take part in rapid naming of items.

#### **Sentence Work**

We are going to play a game where you have to say a sentence about the story in the right order. This is how you start, "In the story..."

Children play progressive memory game.

#### **Read – To**

As the story is being read we all need to be good listeners. This is what we need to do to be a good listener. (See 'How to be a Good Listener' chart)

**Children listen to the story and join in repeating phrases and acting parts of the story.**

#### **Retell**

Here are character masks from the story. In small groups you are going to act out the story that we have been reading. Think about what you would say as your character and how they would act.

**Children act out stories wearing character masks.**

#### **Conclusion**

What things have you learned today?

**Children take turns to share what they learned at any stage of the lesson. "Today I learned ..."**

## **APPENDIX 4**

Table 3 Test Scores of all Students  
Comparisons of Pre and Post Scores

<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>Pre-Test</b>	<b>Post-Test</b>	<b>Pre- Test</b>	<b>Post- Test</b>
	<b>ROL</b>	<b>ROL</b>	<b>Synonyms</b>	<b>Synonyms</b>
A	14	18	14	30
B	9	15	2	22
C	2	10	2	20
D	9	15	10	30
E	6	8	10	20
F	8	17	6	22
G	8	18	16	24
H	11	22	14	30
<b>CONTROL</b>				
I	7	8	4	4
J	7	14	2	2
K	20	15	2	2
L	10	14	14	18
M	20	24	10	12
N	9	12	10	10
O	6	8	4	8
P	5	9	6	10

<b>STUDENTS</b>	<b>Pre – Test</b>	<b>Post - Test</b>	<b>Pre - Test</b>	<b>Post - Test</b>
<b>Test</b>	<b>Listening Comprehension Out of 6</b>	<b>Listening Comprehension Out of 6</b>	<b>PPVT III Standard Score</b>	<b>PPVT III Standard Score</b>
A	1	5	93	91
B	4	5	62	78
C	2	5	70	90
D	5	5	81	98
E	1	5	93	99
F	2	6	92	98
G	2	4	99	101
H	4	6	82	103
<b>CONTROL</b>				
I	2	0	67	76
J	5	6	67	70
K	2	1	67	90
L	2	3	91	86
M	4	4	84	91
N	3	4	71	77
O	4	3	64	64
P	3	3	92	92