

The improvement in the vocabulary and oral retell performance of Year One students due to explicit teaching of visualization strategies

Abstract

The teaching of reading and linked literacy components is a complex process.

The importance of this process is manifested in the life-long development of language and the broad implications of full interaction with society. Contemporary research in the teaching of oral language has suggested that visualization is important in the development in oral language. However, current teaching practices in Literacy do not have explicit teaching methods in this area.

The hypothesis, on which this research is based, is that explicit teaching of this factor will lead to an improvement in oral language and a broader and more enriched vocabulary. Twelve students were selected to participate in the project where one group of six would receive explicit teaching in visualization and the other group of six would not receive explicit teaching but be part of the regular Literacy teaching program. The project was conducted over a period of ten lessons in a mainstream primary school classroom.

The data collected suggested that there was a measurable change in the explicit teaching group but the control group did not display any measurable change. The conclusion drawn from the research was that the explicit teaching was the key factor in the changes observed.

Implications for the teaching of Literacy are that there is a measurable benefit in the use of explicit teaching in the methodology.

Introduction

Learning to read in the early years at school is awareness that print contains a message along with the illustrations and for some students this acquiring of knowledge and reading strategies can be a long term, effortful practice.

As educators we know that reading is a complex process and, for young children learning to read, requires more than a motivation or a desire to understand print.

From a very early age children are drawn to books and will read a story purely from discussing the illustrations and making meaning of the events they see in them. Eventually they begin to understand that there is more to reading than just looking at the pictures and they become inquisitive about the print, and their focus shifts. When they enter school they become even more aware that the print can be read and contains meaning and quite often become more focused on the decoding and reading of it. Current teaching focus and classroom practice tends to be on isolated word recognition skills of students with constant letter and word identification assessments and achieving specific text levels within the students' first two years of school. Reading for meaning is the focal point of any reading experience and should be of our teaching. We not only want students to understand what they are reading but also to gain enjoyment, and be able to interpret and apply their learning to other areas.

Many readers assume comprehension is inherent in the words. Gough, Hoover and Peterson (1996 as cited in Center, Freeman, Robertson & Outhred, 1999) proposed that reading can be viewed in two parts; one being at word level, decoding and the other is abstracting meaning from print, comprehension. The child seen as a proficient reader extracts meaning from the print not just through

decoding, but through interpreting and making connections to themselves and the world around them. The child seen as a poor reader, or of average ability at comprehension, fails to make these connections and is generally of average ability at the word level too, and expends too much time and effort extracting meaning from a written passage. Oakhill & Patel (1991) also found that the child with poor reading comprehension does not make inferences or integrate ideas from different parts of the texts to form a coherent representation in the same way as skilled comprehenders. Cornoldi & Oakhill (1996) suggest that as texts become progressively more complex in higher grades these comprehension difficulties will be more apparent and have a greater impact on any effective learning. Therefore comprehension reading strategies explicitly taught should not be only about the words presented, but also about extracting meaning from the images of story character, events and settings.

One successful technique, which Oakhill & Yuill (1996) described for improving reading comprehension, was training in visual imagery. It has been suggested that teaching children to construct mental images as they read enhances their ability to generate inferences, make predictions and remember what has been said (Gambrell, 1981; Gambrell & Bales, 1986; Pressley, 1976; Sadoski, 1985). It has also been assumed that children with poor comprehension may benefit from such a technique as it offers them an alternative means to extract and integrate information from a text by using a non-phonological strategy (Oakhill & Yuill, 1995). However, research shows that imagery training with the view to improve reading comprehension, may not be as effective with children younger than eight years of age (Guttman, Levin & Pressley, 1977) as their ability to

decode and generate images simultaneously may be impaired by cognitive overload, and is a strategy not frequently used at this age but one that would need to be explicitly taught and modeled (Oakhill & Patel, 1991). Gleeson (2007) supports this view that text within the lower end of reading series doesn't allow for engagement of the reader or to make broader connections because of the use of basic words. She suggests that there was *"no pondering of layers of meaning or subtlety, little drama and certainly no poetry."*

This action research therefore became a challenge to engage students of this age group, with a wide range of reading ability, and explicitly train them in the comprehension strategy of visualization, specifically identifying keywords and encouraging discussion of synonyms to enrich the students' vocabulary and their retell performance.

Green (1994) suggests that students come to school today growing up in a time where their exposure to stories is through the viewing of illustrated picture books, videos, television and films, which leaves little opportunity for them to personally interact with literature through visualizing the characters, settings and actions.

Although reading aloud has made a comeback in recent years in the literacy blocks, there is as much dependency for meaning upon viewing the illustrations as in listening to the text. Furthermore Green (1994) argues that as adult readers we can sometimes take the use of visualization for granted and can readily picture in our minds the characters, settings, and major events in any piece of literature that we read. It is suggested that teaching imagery to children can be more effective than with adults because children are uninhibited about sharing fantasies (Richardson, 1982). The use then of visualization and mental imagery

aids readers to compose ideas that contribute to and elaborate upon the meaning of the text, and seems to be a powerful link between the author's language and the reader's thoughts.

As the strategy of visualization or mental imagery focuses on the reader or listener being able to engage and create mental images from the words they read or hear, paraphrase to discuss their images and then evaluate these thoughts, with a partner or a group, what may also need to be considered is how the student feels and behaves when they are learning at such a young age?

Self-efficacy is a person's confidence to perform a task successfully and is linked to initial engagement, persistence and achievement (Bandura, 1993; Pajeres, 1996 as cited in McCrudden et al., 2005). Research into this aspect of self-efficacy has proven there is a link between reading comprehension and retention of successful strategies. Reading strategy instruction is one way to increase self-efficacy for reading comprehension and persistence at difficult tasks. On the other hand, explicit affirming comments, and conversation with students during and after any reading or retell performance is another way to build the students' perceptions of themselves as learners. As already stated children are often willing to share their fantasies and embellish a story just read or heard. The challenge then is to keep the imagery and the retell about comprehension. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of explicit teaching of visualization strategies to Year One students as an aid to improve their vocabulary and oral retell performance.

Method

Design

An OXO design was used in this study to monitor the explicit teaching of the visualization strategy of R.I.D.E.R. (Read, Imagine, Describe, Evaluate, Read On) to assess the improvement of Year One students' vocabulary and their spontaneous oral retell performance.

Participants

The participants in this action research project were twelve Year One students. The teaching group consisted of six students from a Prep/One class where whole class instruction used the comprehension strategy of R.I.D.E.R. The control group was from another Prep/One class where no whole class instruction or explicit teaching of R.I.D.E.R took place. Both groups included two students who were considered to be good readers who were reading well above the expected level at this stage of Year One, two who were considered capable readers who were reading around the expected level at this stage and two who were reading well below the expected level and were experiencing difficulties. Gender balance of the groups was not relevant to this research. Students 1 to 4 in both groups were working at an age appropriate level with their word accuracy. Students 5 and 6 in both groups were working below the desired level of accuracy. One student in the teaching group was in a Reading Recovery intervention program due to an auditory processing disorder. Other relevant details for the participants are in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 Teaching Group Data

| | Age | Text level | Burt Word Reading Test | Position in Family | Independent Variables |
|-----------|-------|------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Student 1 | 6y9m | 24 | 41=7.10y | Eldest of 2 | N/A |
| Student 2 | 6y9m | 23 | 39=7.08y | Middle child of 3 | N/A |
| Student 3 | 6y4m | 14 | 29=6.10y | Youngest of 2 | N/A |
| Student 4 | 6y2m | 10 | 22=6.03y | Twin/only | N/A |
| Student 5 | 6y2m | 3 | 12=<6.01y | Only child | Profiled for R.R. |
| Student 6 | 6y10m | 1 | 14=<6.01y | Middle child of 3 | A.P.D & R.R. |

Table 2 Control Group Data

| | Age | Text level | Burt Word Reading Test | Position in Family | Independent Variables |
|------------|------|------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Student 1a | 6y6m | 16 | 32=7.01y | Eldest of 2 | N/A |
| Student 2a | 7y2m | 10 | 32=7.01y | Eldest of 3 | N/A |
| Student 3a | 6y7m | 8 | 27=6.08y | Eldest of 2 | N/A |
| Student 4a | 6y8m | 8 | 27=6.08y | Middle of 3 | N/A |
| Student 5a | 6y8m | 3 | 18=<6.01y | Only child | N/A |
| Student 6a | 6y8m | 3 | 20=<6.01y | Youngest of 2 | N/A |

Materials

Alternative Record of Oral Language (ROL) (Munro 2005)

This task was administered as a pre-test and post-test to both the teaching and the control group, to determine their levels of receptive language and their understanding of complex grammatical structures.

Listening Comprehension (Munro 2005)

This task was administered as a pre-test and post-test to both the teaching and the control group, to determine the level of listening comprehension of the students.

Burt Word Reading Test

This task was administered as a pre-test to both the teaching group and the control group, to determine word accuracy for high frequency words and phonological and orthographic knowledge is age appropriate.

Synonym Word Test (Munro 2005)

This task was administered as a pre-test and post-test to both the teaching and the control group to determine their ability to offer alternative words for selected vocabulary.

Spontaneous Retell (Munro 2005)

This task was administered to the teaching group after Lesson five and repeated after Lesson ten using the same text as an assessment.

Visualization/R.I.D.E.R cue cards

Used during each teaching session with whole class and teaching group.

These tests, excluding Burt Word Reading Test, are included in the Appendix 1.

A complete list of the given lessons is included in Appendix 2.

Compact Tape Recorder

This was used in pre-testing and post-testing recordings of spontaneous oral retells and Listening Comprehension responses.

Texts

The following texts were used during whole class and group teaching sessions:

PM+ "Kitty Cat and Fat Cat" Annette Smith. Nelson Aus Pty Ltd. 2000

PMG "Fussy Heron" Beverley Randell. Nelson Aus Pty Ltd. 2006

PM "Sarah and the Barking Dog" Jenny Giles. Nelson Price Milburn. NZ. 1997

Procedure

After discussions with both classroom teachers of the teaching group and the control group and the reviewing of literacy assessment already administered, students were chosen who exhibited varying strengths and weaknesses; both within these class groups and within themselves. The teaching sessions took place during the Literacy block each morning at the same time. The whole class teaching of the comprehension strategy R.I.D.E.R replaced the Shared Reading each morning for six sessions. The instruction and modeling of the strategy began at the word level and then progressed to sentences and then to texts. The introduction, explanation and revision of each cue card for R.I.D.E.R were presented during these whole class teaching sessions. The teaching group was explicitly taught as one of the Literacy activity groups within the classroom for four of the six sessions. In all there were ten teaching sessions.

Three of the first four lessons were taught with the whole class introducing and revising the R.I.D.E.R strategy and focusing on the word level and then the sentence level. The third lesson was with the teaching group within the classroom using a whole story and focusing on oral language through discussion of retells and use of alternative words. Lesson five was with the teaching group using a pre-test text for spontaneous retell. The next four lessons were taken with the whole class revising this strategy and focusing on paragraphs and then whole story. Particular attention was paid to phrases and keywords that help create mental images like movie makers using story structure, which make our

stories easier to recall. Lesson ten was the post-test for the spontaneous retell of the same story from Lesson five.

At the conclusion of Lessons five and ten the children in the teaching group were then individually withdrawn to record their spontaneous retell assessment.

Results

The results of both pre and post testing for the teaching and the control groups where the students were measured for their receptive language, listening comprehension and ability to offer alternative words to selected vocabulary are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3 Pre and Post-testing Data Teaching Group

| | ROL Alternative [42] | Listening Comprehension [20] | Synonym Vocab |
|-----------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Student 1 | 27/64% | 10/50% | 26 |
| Post | 32/76% | 7/35% | 32 |
| Student2 | 12/28% | 4/20% | 26 |
| Post | 22/52% | 9/45% | 36 |
| Student 3 | 27/64% | 6/30% | 16 |
| Post | 30/71% | 8/40% | 20 |
| Student 4 | 17/40% | 5/25% | 20 |
| Post | 24/57% | 6/30% | 15 |
| Student 5 | 27/64% | 10/50% | 22 |
| Post | 28/66% | 9/45% | 37 |
| Student 6 | 8/19% | 3/15% | 25 |
| Post | 12/28% | 6/30% | 30 |

Table 4 Pre and Post-testing Data Control Group

| | ROL Alternative [42] | Listening Comprehension [20] | Synonym Vocab |
|------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Student 1a | 28/66% | 13/65% | 10 |
| Post | 33/78% | 11/55% | 12 |
| Student 2a | 27/64% | 12/60% | 14 |
| Post | 32/76% | 14/70% | 7 |
| Student 3a | 32/76% | 6/30% | 24 |
| Post | 40/95% | 13/65% | 23 |
| Student 4a | 15/35% | 5/25% | 13 |
| Post | 19/45% | 8/40% | 15 |
| Student 5a | 23/54% | 4/20% | 19 |
| Post | 21/50% | 0 | 18 |
| Student 6a | 22/52% | 7/35% | 22 |
| Post | 27/64% | 10/50% | 23 |

The data is presented in the following graphs. Each graph indicates the pre and post testing raw score results of the teaching and control groups' assessment scores in receptive language, listening comprehension and alternative words or synonyms for selected vocabulary.

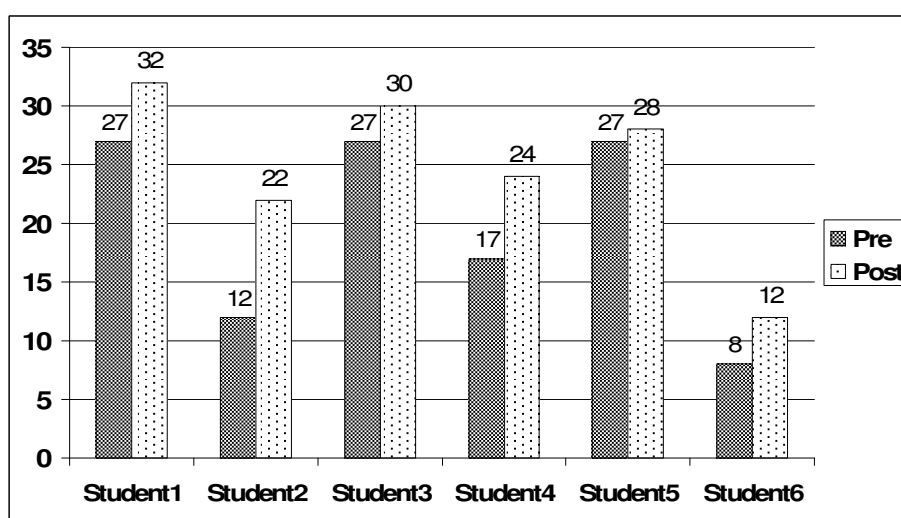


Figure 1 Alternative ROL Pre and Post Testing Teaching Group

This graph indicates that each student's performance with their record of oral language improved at the completion of the teaching sessions. This test was administered to determine the students' ability to listen, retain and repeat sentences of increasingly complex grammatical structures. As this was an alternative test to the one normally administered during the pre and post testing of the junior classes, a number of students responded to the statements rather than repeat them. Student 2 was unable to maintain the correct use of tense, substituted words and omitted sections within the level two sentences. His reaction to the first statement in level one *"My mother's arms are cuddly"*

was to laugh and respond “*No they’re not*”. Student 4 was unable to maintain the correct use of tense and omitted or substituted pronouns. Student 6 struggled with this task as he was very aware of his limited capabilities and the implications for him in this form of assessment.

Students 1, 3, and 5 had difficulty maintaining the correct use of tense in the more difficult level three sentences and often altered the whole statement with substitutions and omissions of pronouns and adjectives.

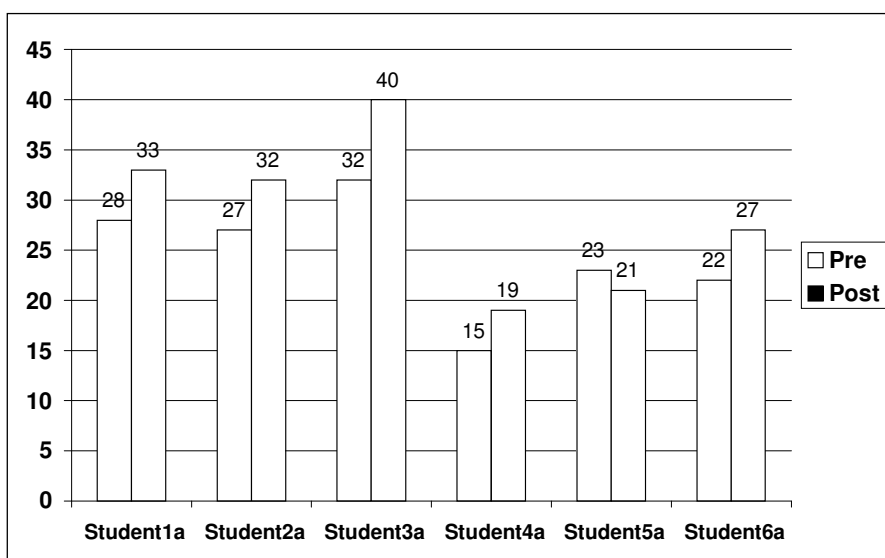


Figure 2 Alternative ROL Pre and Post Testing Control Group

This graph indicates that all students, except for Student 5a, improved their scores in record of oral language. Each student, except for Student 4a, attempted and completed the three levels of sentences. Each of these students maintained the correct use of tense in the less difficult sentences in levels one and two with errors such as contractions of words and substitutions of prepositions. All students had difficulty maintaining the correct use of tense in the

sentences of level three and omitted adjectives and phrases as well as substituting pronouns and prepositions. Student 4a maintained the correct use of tense in the sentences he attempted but made errors with substitutions, omissions and admissions of pronouns, adjectives and some prepositions or would not attempt a response.

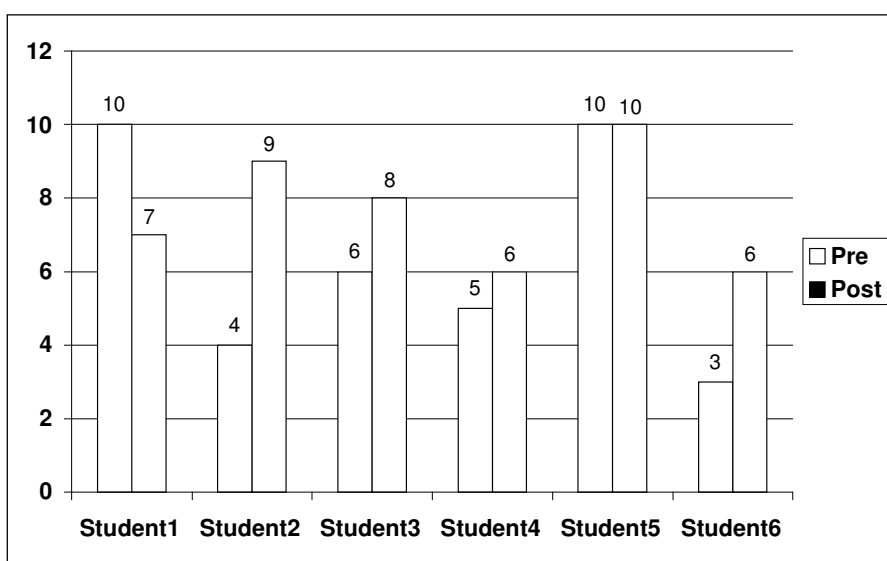


Figure 3 Listening Comprehension Pre and Post Testing Teaching Group

This graph indicates that for all students, except Student 1, listening comprehension improved or was maintained using the rehearsal of mental imagery and visualization. Student 1 was absent for the ninth lesson which impacted on his results.

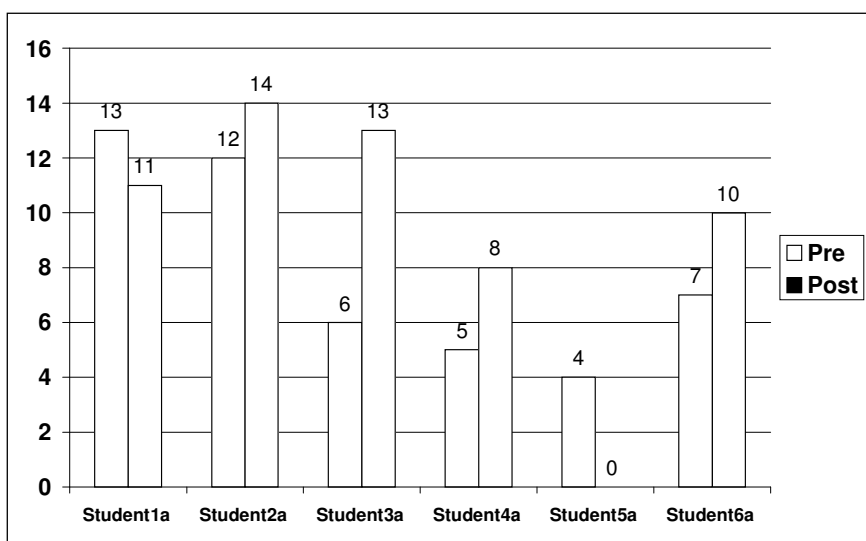


Figure 4 Listening Comprehension Pre and Post Testing Control Group

This graph indicates a range of scores for the control group in the preparedness of the students for the task.

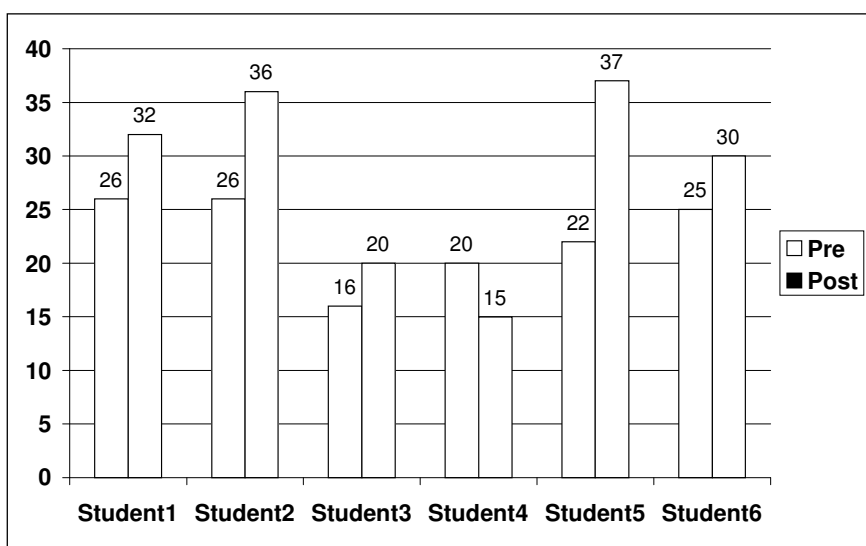


Figure 5 Synonym Vocabulary Pre and Post Testing Teaching Group

This graph indicates that the teaching of mental imagery and discussion with the use of paraphrasing and synonyms changed the students' choice of alternative

words for given vocabulary. When this task was administered as the pre-test, all the students found some difficulty with the words offered and resorted to words associated with the given word but not a synonym. Student 4 did not understand the concept of synonyms. Student 5 was very enthusiastic with her visualization learning and presented more than a word for her responses in the post-test.

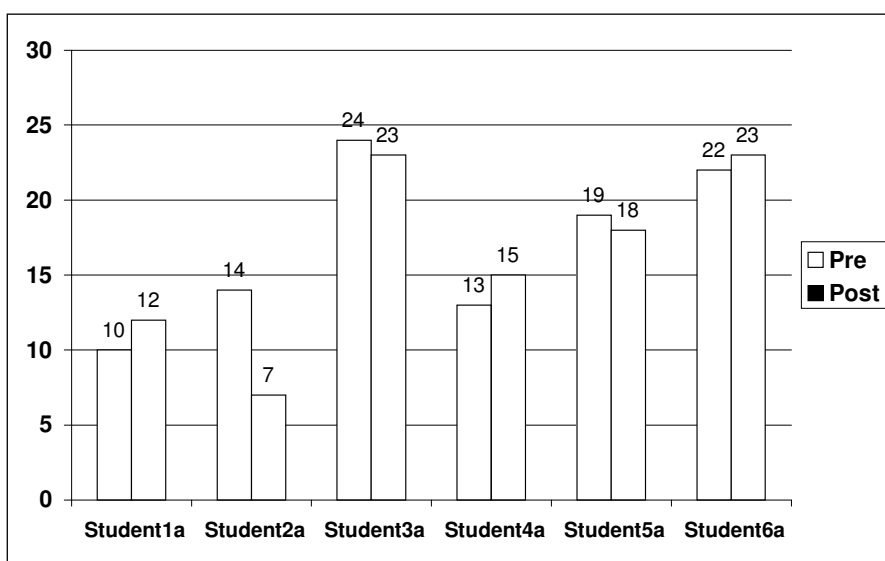


Figure 6 Synonym Vocabulary Pre and Post Testing Control Group

This graph indicates that students with no explicit teaching in the use of mental imagery and discussion of synonyms made very little or no improvement. Student 2 in the post-test was reluctant to commit to any response and began to offer rhyming words instead.

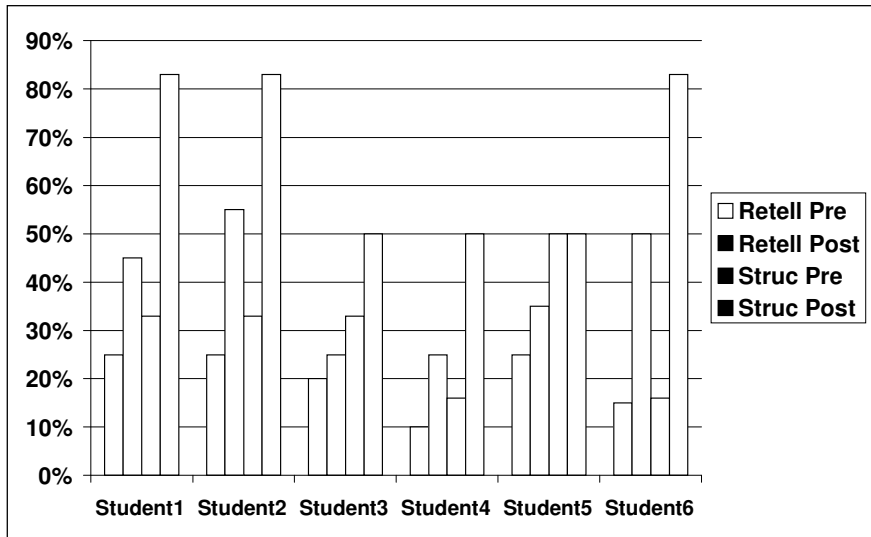


Figure 7 Spontaneous Retell Pre and Post Testing Teaching Group

This graph indicates the teaching groups' change in scores of their individual spontaneous retell during their learning and at the completion of the comprehension strategy teaching. The data indicates that explicit teaching of the comprehension strategy of visualization and the use of alternative words maintains or improves the students' recall of events that make up the elements of story structure.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to determine whether teaching students the strategy of visualization and the use of synonyms would improve their vocabulary in an oral story retell. Changes were assessed and monitored by comparing the students' performances on pre and post test material and from observations made and recorded during teaching sessions. Overall, the results showed the benefits of teaching the reading strategy of visualization and the use of synonyms. It was observed that during the last two sessions, in particular the post-testing, Students 2 and 6 displayed a variety of behaviours and their preparedness for the tasks changed. This change in confidence, or developing self-efficacy, may have impacted on scores as suggested in Bandura (1993) and Pajeres (1996) as cited in McCrudden et al (2005).

Student 1's results were affected by his being absent for one session and then his return to school while still unwell. His listening comprehension scores decreased in post testing and his synonyms only increased by 6. His retell score rose 20% and his story structure rose 50%. Student 1 found the spontaneous retell difficult. He had a large number of pauses and repetitions of phrases similar to a running record where a student may hesitate to gather information before moving onto the next word or event in the story. This behaviour is discussed by Gough, Hoover and Peterson (1996 as cited in Center, Freeman, Robertson & Outhred, 1999) highlighting good readers extract meaning by linking ideas and personal experiences.

Student 2 increased his scores across all his assessments. His listening comprehension rose 25%, synonyms increased by 10, his retell score rose by

30% and his story structure rose by 50%. This student had a high text level of 23 coming into this research with a record of oral language score of 12. A child with a score of twenty, or below, for a record of oral language would be identified as a child at risk.

Student 3 made only small gains across all areas. Her listening comprehension score rose by 10%, synonyms increased by 4, her retell improved by only 5% and her story structure by 17%. When presented with making the scenes as part of the visualization teaching, Student 3 was content with this task and needed prompting for contributions to any discussions.

Similarly, Student 4 made lower gains in comparison in listening comprehension, but improved by 15% in her retell score, and an increase of 34% in her story structure score.

Student 5 was the only participant whose score decreased in listening comprehension. Her retell score improved by 10% but she was the only participant whose story structure score remained the same. However, her synonym score was the largest increase across the cohort.

Student 6 made a 15% increase in his listening comprehension score which was caused by a doubling of his raw scores. His synonym score rose by 5, retell score increased by 35% and his story structure score was 67%.

In a more detailed review of student's performance it may be possible to suggest causes for some of the unexpected scores in the final data. Student 4, by having the only score in synonyms that decreased, may support the view of Guttman, Levin & Pressley (1977) that children under the age of eight may not be able to generate images due to cognitive overload. With the results from Student 5, there

is a decrease in listening comprehension which supports Oakhill & Patel (1991) who suggested that children with poor comprehension do not make inferences or integrate ideas from different parts of the text to form a coherent representation as do skilled comprehenders. Student 6 presented to the research project with the diagnosed learning disability of auditory processing disorder. He was included in the project to provide an opportunity to determine if an alternative teaching strategy would have implications for his learning. The listening comprehension doubling of raw scores, unlike any of the other participants, may be an indication of the success of this intervention.

The research project presented opportunities for comparison across several classes within the same school. Initially, this was a workable situation with minimal disruption across the classes and to the teachers. However, after reflection, there may have been issues with cross contamination due to the participants having had previous possible prior exposure to these strategies. This is not clearly evident in the data but it is still a consideration. An improvement of the project could use participants from separate but like schools. This may give a clearer difference in the data presented. The issue of gender was not pursued in this project as a separate factor because of the relatively low number of participants. If the project was repeated with a larger number of participants even though that presents time management issues, the role of gender could be highlighted during data collection. The classes from which the participants were drawn included a set of identical twins. Research of the type of this project may be enriched by the inclusion of the twins but it was deemed to be not appropriate at this time. Student 5's maintenance of scores in story structure may be due to

her observed enthusiasm while her significant increase in synonyms may be linked to what Richardson (1982) alluded to in regard to sharing of fantasies and embellishment.

The implications from this research project can be categorized in two separate components. The first is the influence of such research has on the practice of teaching in the classroom. That is, the transfer of theoretical information gained from research to the practicalities of teaching methodology. Because this hypothesis has been generally supported by the research, how then is this going to find a place in the teaching pedagogy? There may be the need to allow more teaching time in the explicit teaching of visualization and synonyms. The use of paraphrasing was not explicitly taught but may be a deeper enrichment of oral language and further support of the initial hypotheses.

The second component is the separateness issue of a teacher coming in to a classroom and delivering the program. If the success of this project is to be repeated across classrooms, the program will need to be delivered by the regular classroom teacher and become an added component of the Literacy teaching strategies already in place.

Further projects along similar theoretical pathways will continue to develop the teaching of Literacy and to enrich the learning experiences of all students.

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Appendix 1

Alternative Record of Oral Language

John Munro

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| NAME: _____ | GRADE: _____ |
| RECORDER: _____ | |
| DATE: _____ | STUDENT'S AGE: _____ years |
| _____ months | |

RECORD OF ORAL LANGUAGE
ALTERNATIVE LEVELLED SENTENCES

| LEVEL 1 – PART 1 | LEVEL 1 – PART 2 |
|--|---|
| A. <i>My mother's arms are cuddly.</i> [] | A. <i>My brother's television is noisy.</i> [] |
| A. <i>Kitty is eating some food.</i> [] | B. <i>Mummy is pushing her pram.</i> [] |
| B. <i>Jessie is playing at school.</i> [] | C. <i>David is going to soccer.</i> [] |
| C. <i>Dad is giving me a book.</i> [] | D. <i>Sally is making me a cake.</i> [] |
| D. <i>I bet she's in there.</i> [] | E. <i>I know she's here.</i> [] |
| E. <i>There's another chapter book.</i> [] | F. <i>There are some other toys.</i> [] |
| F. <i>He's eating his lunch slowly.</i> [] | G. <i>She's riding her skateboard very fast.</i> [] |

Total for Level 1

RECORD OF ORAL LANGUAGE
ALTERNATIVE LEVELLED SENTENCES

| LEVEL 2 – PART 1 | LEVEL 2 – PART 2 |
|---|--|
| A. <i>That small car over there is going to be my mother's.</i> [] | A. <i>The old bike in here used to be my sister's.</i> [] |
| B. <i>The girl near the park was walking her dog.</i> [] | B. <i>The boy from over there was calling a dog.</i> [] |
| C. <i>The car drove to the edge of the road.</i> [] | C. <i>The cat went under the chair in the house.</i> [] |
| D. <i>For the holidays Kerry got her a kite.</i> [] | D. <i>For the wedding Aunty gave us a vase.</i> [] |
| E. <i>Will you buy what is sitting on the shelf?</i> [] | E. <i>The lady heard what the man was saying to the boy.</i> [] |
| F. <i>There goes a small animal with feathers sticking out its tail.</i> [] | F. <i>Here is my sister driving in her motorcar.</i> [] |
| G. <i>My sister cooked the eggs up very slowly.</i> [] | G. <i>The boy hit the ball far across the field.</i> [] |

Total for Level 2

RECORD OF ORAL LANGUAGE
ALTERNATIVE LEVELLED SENTENCES

| LEVEL 3 – PART 1 | LEVEL 3 – PART 2 |
|---|--|
| A. <i>Be as alert as you can</i> when your mother's alone. [] | A. Be very careful diving where there's a deep pool. [] |
| B. <i>My nanna and pa</i> want to start going to the shops. [] | B. <i>That man and the one over there</i> like to read the paper. [] |
| C. <i>The three boys</i> ran across the park in a fast time. [] | C. Some of the people spoke quickly to each other [] at the football. |
| B. <i>The greengrocer</i> gave my daddy some big plums. [] | D. The old teacher told his class a funny story. [] |
| C. <i>The girl heard</i> who her brother was taking the toys to. [] | E. The mother knows how much milk we will need for [] the cake. |
| D. <i>Here are the games</i> that you were playing in my class. [] | E. <i>There goes the policeman</i> who caught out the thief at the bakery. [] |
| F. <i>My father often puts</i> the bike behind the shed at night. [] | G. <i>My sister</i> usually puts some meat outside for the dog. [] |

Total for Level 3

Level 1

Level 2

Task: Listening Comprehension**John Munro**

Instruction to student: I am going to read you a story. Listen carefully. When I have finished I am going to ask you to tell the story back to me.

Read the first story below aloud to the student. Read it as a story.

When you have finished, ask the student to tell you what happened. Say Now tell me the story.

Say all you can about it. You can say it in your own way.

After 5 minutes ask the child to retell again. Use the chart to note changes in the students recall.

If required, use a prompt: Can you tell me any more? What happened next?

Jane was at school and went out to sit on the seats and eat her lunch.

As she opened her lunch box, it fell over and her lunch went on the ground

Jane wondered what she was going to do. Her sandwiches now had dirt all over them. She told her friend, Susan.

Susan took one of the sandwiches from her lunch-box and shared it with Jane.

After lunch, Jane and Susan went into the playground and had a good time playing chasey.

Teacher record sheet

The student needs to retell events in sequence to score points.

| | ✓ or X | after 5 mins | | ✓ or X | after 5 mins | | ✓ or X | after 5 mins |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|--|--------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Jane | | | at school | | | went out | | |
| sit | | | on seats | | | lunch | | |
| opened lunch-box | | | fell over | | | lunch on ground | | |
| sandwiches | | | dirt | | | told friend | | |
| Susan | | | Susan took sandwich from her lunch-box | | | shared it with Jane | | |
| after lunch | | | Jane and Susan | | | went into playground | | |
| had a good time | | | playing chasey | | | | | |

Scores: Immediate Recall: / 20

| | ✓ or X | after 5 minutes ✓ or X |
|---|--------|---------------------------|
| Setting (<i>school, playground</i>) | | |
| Initiating Event (<i>Jane dropped her sandwiches</i>) | | |
| Internal Response (<i>Jane wondered what to do</i>) | | |
| Attempt (<i>She tells her friend Susan</i>) | | |
| Consequence (<i>Susan gave her a sandwich</i>) | | |
| Ending (<i>They went off to play</i>) | | |

Score: / 6

Synonyms task**John Munro**

Administer the set of words below to one child at a time. Say to the child: *I am going to say some words. After I say each word, I want you to think of another word that says the same thing. I would like you to tell me the word you think of. You can take as long as you need.*

Go through the practice words below first. Then read each of the target words and ask the child to say another word that 'says the same thing'. Write the child's first response in the column provided.

After the child has responded, ask "*Did you think of any other words that mean the same as...? Could you say them, please?*" Write down any other words the child mentions in the response column.

The words in the second column are possible synonyms. Use these to correct the child's responses.

DO NOT SAY ANY OF THE TARGET WORDS IN A SENTENCE. SIMPLY SAY THE WORD. REPEAT IT IF NECESSARY.

Practice: *Thin. Tell me another word that says the same as thin.* Acceptable answers would be *skinny or slim*. If the child gives a correct response, ask "*Did you think of other words that also mean thin?*" "*Could you say them?*" Record these.

If the child hesitates or provides an incorrect response, say "*You could say skinny or slim. Other words that say the same as thin are skinny or slim.*"

Here is another word. *Dog. Tell me another word that says the same as dog.* Acceptable answers would include *puppy, hound, or terrier*. If the child hesitates or provides an incorrect response, say "*You could say puppy, hound, or terrier. Other words that say the same as dog, puppy, hound, or terrier.*"

Here is another word. *Slide. Tell me another word that means the same as slide.* Acceptable answers would be *slip or skid*. Repeat the instructions above.

Here is another word. *Talk. Tell me another word that means the same as talk.* Acceptable answers would be *speak, natter, chat or say*. Repeat the instructions above.

Instruction: *Now have a go at each of these words. I will say a word and I want you to say another word that says the same thing. You can take as long as you want. If you don't hear a word that I say the first time, just tell me and I will say it again. I will write down what you say.*

| | Practice word | Possible correct responses | Child's response |
|----|---------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. | thin | skinny or slim | |
| 2. | dog | puppy, hound, or terrier. | |
| 3. | slide | slip or skid | |
| 4. | talk | speak, natter, chat, say | |

Synonyms task: Student form

John Munro

Student name: _____ **Grade:** _____

Date: _____

| | Target word | Possible correct responses | Child's response |
|-----|-------------|--|------------------|
| 1. | small | tiny, little, wee, mini, miniature, short, shrimp, slight, stunted, teensy, minor, trifling | |
| 2. | fast | quick, rapid, brisk, snappy, speedy, hasty, swift | |
| 3. | old | aged, ancient, elderly, experienced, geriatric, senior, veteran, outdated, stale | |
| 4. | leave | go, clear out, scam, stop | |
| 5. | car | vehicle, automobile, sedan | |
| 6. | shoe | boot, slipper, runners, sneaker | |
| 7. | child | boy, girl, infant, tot, baby, youngster, brat, kid, kiddie, toddler | |
| 8. | fat | rotund, plump, overweight, burly, corpulent, obese, oversize, paunchy, portly, stout, blubbery, bulk, lard | |
| 9. | walk | stroll, amble, hike, march, pathway, amble, tramp | |
| 10. | cat | kitten, moggy, puss, leopard, lion, tabby | |
| 11. | fatigued | tired, all in, beat, exhausted, weary, worn-out, zonked, sapped | |
| 12. | boat | ship, types of boats | |
| 13. | clean | neat, tidy, clear, flawless, trim, sparkling | |
| 14. | sick | ill, unhealthy, unwell, weak, queasy, diseased | |

| | | | |
|-----|------------|--|--|
| 15. | tiger | cat, cheetah, cougar, jaguar, leopard, lion, panther | |
| 16. | engine | motor machine, apparatus, appliance, gadget | |
| 17. | ignore | disregard, avoid, cut, neglect, omit, overlook, reject | |
| 18. | precious | expensive, dear, prized, treasured, valued, invaluable, prized | |
| 19. | angry | mad, irate, crazy, cross, out/enraged, fiery, fuming, furious, storming | |
| 20. | hit | slap, strike, punch, bat, smack, smash, sock, swipe, success, achievement, triumph | |
| 21. | give | donate, provide, contribute, dole out | |
| 22. | stop | prevent, bar, impede, halt, end, block, close, finish, terminate, rest, still | |
| 23. | cage | pen, cell, prison, enclosure, coop, cavity, chest | |
| 24. | adolescent | teenager, immature, juvenile, youthful, minor | |
| 25. | station | terminus, headquarters, stop, base, depot, terminal | |
| 26. | release | free, liberate, acquit, let go | |
| 27. | flow | run, move, drift, ooze, stream, abound, progress | |
| 28. | liberate | free, let out, loosen, release | |
| 29. | a building | a construction, edifice, home, house, dwelling, structure | |

SCORING

Synonym Task Scoring Criteria

First Correct Response

2 points: Same meaning as the target word both semantically and grammatically

1 point: Has the same meaning as the target word semantically (not grammatically) including informal words

0 points: others

Breadth of Vocabulary: For all of the Responses

1 point for each response that has the same meaning as the target word both semantically and grammatically

Additional Rules for Scoring

1. Only include the first five words that the child wrote for each item
2. If a child provides varied word forms as his or her response, e.g. leave: go / going / gone, only accept the root form “go”
3. Accept plural if the response is distinctly different from the target word e.g. For the word child: children / little people, accept “little people” but not “children”

COMPREHENSION - SPONTANEOUS AND CUED RETELLING

At the completion of reading (or listening to) a story/passage, ask the student to provide a spontaneous retelling of the story/passage in his own words. Give 1 point to each main idea in the text. The key

literal ideas and the ones you could infer have been given for the sample passage below.

A sample passage

"No matter where you are on these islands", Sam said, " the beach is never far away".

"But some are better than others", Tom said.

Yes, that's right, Pat agreed. "Some are good for swimming. Others, the ones with big waves, are great for surfing".

"How is the beach we are going to?" Rob asked. " I've seen a lot of pictures of your beaches".

You'll like this one", Tom said.

The road went over a hill. Rob could hear the sound of the waves and smell the sea.

| Characteristic of retelling | Ideas in the story | No of ideas/ points |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Main characters | The main characters are Sam, Tom, Pat and Rob | 4 |
| Theme of story | About boys who were going to the sea | 1 |
| Plot of the story | One of the boys is new to the island and the others are taking him to a beach | 2 |
| Events of the story | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever you are on the island you're close to the sea • Some of the beaches are good for swimming and others, with big waves, for surfing • They are going along a road to a beach • Tom said Rob would like this beach • Rob could hear the waves and smell the sea | 1 1 2 1 1 |
| Inferential ideas (infer, predict, explain, read between the lines) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The island was small. • All the boys except Rob lived on the island. • Some beaches were ocean beaches. • The land near the beach they were going to was hilly. • The boys liked the sea / surfing/ swimming/ both. | 1 1 1 1 1 |

Following the spontaneous re-telling, use directed questioning to examine further comprehension (cued

retelling), for example; for a narrative you can ask

- *Who else was in the story? What did they do? Did happen first?*
- *Why did..... happen? What did they do?*

Examine inferential knowledge by asking questions that go beyond the information given:

- *Why do you think..... happened? Would it have happened it.....*
- *How do you think.....?*

Examine topic knowledge by asking questions that involve a summary of the information given:

- *Make up a headline to say the main ideas in the story.*
- *What is a good title for the story?*

Then score the child's answers, adding a new column next to the scores for the spontaneous answers.

Student's can be taught to spontaneously use these strategies while reading, to scaffold comprehension.

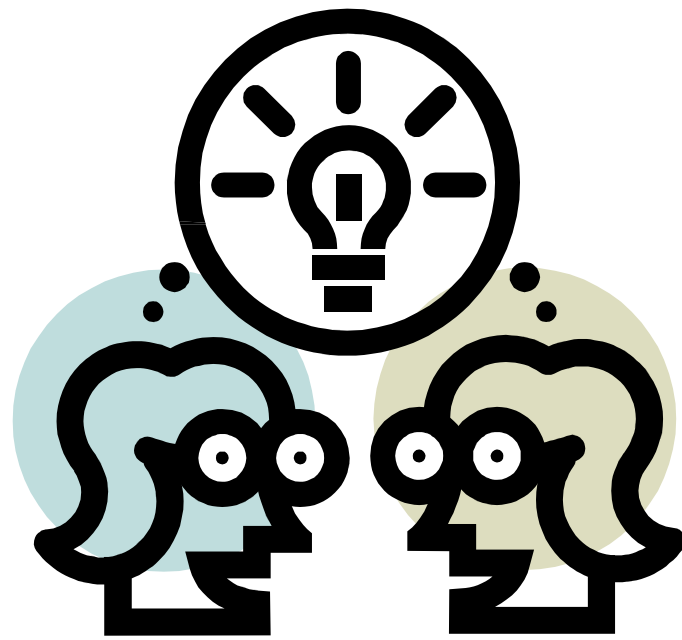
R.I.D.E.R Cue Cards



**READ
OR
LISTEN**



**MAKE
A
PICTURE**



**TALK
ABOUT
THE
PICTURE**



**THINK
SOME
MORE**



**READ
ON**

Appendix 2

Lesson 1

Focus: Introduction of the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening - *word*

- Whole class
 - Half hour duration
1. During this session it was explained why I was in the classroom and how I was going to be working with them over a series of lessons.
 2. The children were then asked to recall their favourite story that they love to hear read to them.
 3. Discussion followed of different types of stories and fairy-tales.
 4. Children were then asked if they recalled a picture of that story in their mind while they were talking.
 5. Teacher modelled her favourite story recall and how she could 'see' the front cover of the book, where the story took place and the characters of the story.
 6. It was then explained that during the reading of a story it was important to keep a picture/movie of the story in your mind using the information given to you from the story.
 7. Teacher then gave the children the word, 'house' and asked them to imagine a house in their minds. Discussion followed with a partner then whole class sharing.
 8. Teacher gave another word, 'cat' and discussion followed again with a partner then whole class. The teacher guided the discussion this time to similarities and differences in their images.

Lesson 2

Focus: Review and then rehearsal of the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening - *sentence*

- Whole class
 - Half hour duration
1. Teacher revised strategy of making a picture/movie in your mind and drew discussion from the children of what they had experienced in the lesson before. Teacher explained that in that lesson the children had been asked to focus on a *word*.
 2. Teacher now introduces a sentence "*The boy fell over*". The children were then asked to discuss with their partner what they could 'see'.
 3. Whole class discussion followed with children again talking about and comparing similarities and differences in their stories.
eg. use of words, ***fell/tripped/stumbled***,
what or why the boy fell over,
where the boy ended up, *at the hospital, in bed, in sickbay*

Lesson 3

Focus: Review and rehearsal of the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening – *whole story/synonyms*

- Target group
 - 30 min duration
 - PM Story “*Kitty Cat and Fat Cat*”
1. Revision of visualization/mental imagery strategy and retell similarities and differences.
 2. Group introduced to a story, without sighting the book. Group asked to listen carefully to the story using the strategy talked about.
 3. Group asked to discuss retell with a partner first, then to whole group.
 4. Differences and similarities discussed and use of *other* words.
 5. Reread of story.

Lesson 4

Focus: Using the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening to retell a story – *whole story/story structure*

- Whole class
- Half hour duration

Equipment: Cue cards
PM Story “*Fussy Heron*”

1. Children recalled the strategy they had been using in their previous lessons.
2. Teacher introduced the class to visual prompts/cue cards for the R.I.D.E.R strategy that had been implemented so far i.e. *read, imagine, discuss, evaluate, reread or read on.*
3. Story introduced and orientated with the class: “*What’s a heron?*” “*What does **fussy** mean?*” Teacher did not indicate correct or incorrect responses; to allow children to ‘*draw*’ their own meanings from story.
4. Children reminded to use the strategy and keep the story in their mind as they listen, so they can retell their mental image, to a partner.
5. Retell with partners, then sharing with the whole class.
6. Discussion on above word meanings i.e. **fussy**, and similarities and differences i.e. *which parts all partners included, which parts of the story no-one had mentioned or parts that had been altered.*
7. Reread of story.

Lesson 5

Focus: Using the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening to retell a story- *sentence/paragraph paraphrasing*

- Target group
- Half hour duration

Equipment: Paper & pencils

Compact Cassette recorder

Story: “*Sarah and the Barking Dog*”

1. Children reminded to use the strategy and keep the story in their mind as they listen, so they can retell their mental image.
2. Story read sentence by sentence with visualizing and discussion at end of each sentence, then paragraph.
3. Children given paper and pencils and asked to draw their mental image.
4. Each child individually recorded to retell the events in the story.
5. Children shared retells with group.
6. Reread of whole story.

Lesson 6

Focus: Using the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening to retell a story – *whole story/synonyms/story structure*

- Whole class
- Half hour duration

Equipment: Cue cards

Paper & pencils

Story “*Fussy Heron*”

1. Teacher revised visual prompts/cue cards for the R.I.D.E.R strategy that had been implemented so far, i.e. *read, imagine, discuss*.
2. Next two parts of strategy introduced and explained, i.e. *evaluate, read on*.
3. Story reintroduced to class. Children reminded to use the strategy and keep the story in their mind as they listen.
4. Story read with time to visualize on each page. Discussion of keywords on each page. e.g. **fussy, old, best, tiny, spots**. Children encouraged to express similar words [*synonyms*] for these.
5. Reread of whole story without interruption.
6. Whole class drawing their individual mental imagery – *the movie makers*.
7. Attention drawn to the *who/where* element in their retell or mental imagery
 - *who are the characters you could/would have in your drawing?*
 - *where does the story take place?*

Lesson 7

Focus: Using the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening to retell a story – *whole story/story structure*

- Whole class
- Half hour duration

Equipment: Cue cards
Paper & pencils
Story “*Kitty Cat and Fat Cat*”

1. Revision of visual prompts/cue cards for the R.I.D.E.R strategy.
2. Children reminded to use this while story is being read.
3. Whole class discussion on *scenes* in the story and their mental images matching the text.
4. Children drawing their individual mental imagery of story – *the movie makers*
5. This time children encouraged to fold paper into four sections to allow for *movie making* to develop in *scenes*, as discussed.
6. Sharing time and presentation of *movies* with retell.

Lesson 8

Focus: Using the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening to retell a story – *identifying keywords/phrases that help create vivid mental images*

- Whole class
- 30min duration

Equipment: Cue cards
Paper & pencils
PM Story “*Sarah and the Barking Dog*”

1. Story read sentence by sentence. Pausing at each to discuss which key words help create the best parts of their pictures.
2. Words similar to keywords discussed e.g. **walked, frightened, waiting, fence**, and used in retell of each sentence.
3. Story then reread and children drawing their *scenes*/mental images.
4. Children encouraged to fold paper into four sections to allow for *movie making* to develop in *scenes*, as discussed.

Lesson 9

Focus: Using the comprehension strategy of visualization/mental imagery for reading/listening to retell a story – *identifying keywords/phrases that help create vivid mental images*

- Whole class
- 30min duration

Equipment: Cue cards
PM Story “*Fussy Heron*”

1. Story read sentence by sentence. Pausing at each to discuss which key words help create the best parts of their pictures.
2. Words similar to keywords discussed and used in retell of each sentence.
3. Story then reread and children drawing their *scenes*/mental images.
4. Children individually retelling the story to the whole class, referring to their *scenes* drawn as prompts.

Lesson 10

Focus: To assess if using the R.I.D.E.R strategy, and prior discussion of keywords and synonyms, changes the children’s retell of a story

- Target group
- 30min duration

Equipment: Cue cards
PM Story “*Sarah and the Barking Dog*”
Compact Cassette Recorder

1. Story reread with no discussion during or after.
2. Children drawing their *scenes*/mental images.
3. Children individually recorded retelling the story.
4. Comparing and discussing mental images/*scenes*.