

# **The explicit teaching of synonyms to Year Two students will improve reading comprehension.**

## **ABSTRACT**

There has been research carried out which has shown a close correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary development. There are many students who are able to decode at a higher than expected level however find it difficult to comprehend and find meaning in what they have read. The purpose of this research project was to prove that explicitly teaching synonyms to Year Two children would improve their reading comprehension skills.

The research project was carried out with a whole class of Year Two students for the Control group and another whole class of Year Two students for the Intervention group. As the grades are 1/2 composites, there were 14 Year Two students in each group. Each group was given the same pre and post testing, which comprised of the Reading Progress Test, Synonyms Test (Appendix 1&2), Text Level and Word Meaning Assessment (Appendix 3). The Intervention group participated in ten consecutive whole class lessons where the focus was on synonyms over a 2 week period. The Control group however did not participate in the lessons.

The results demonstrated that gains were made in the Intervention group's synonym knowledge and the ability to generate synonyms. Some students made small gains in their reading comprehension however it was not a significant gain and not all students in the Intervention group improved.

The research project therefore suggests that teaching students to use synonyms to improve their reading comprehension would need more time and additional opportunities throughout the day. Small focused groups may also assist in these gains.

## **INTRODUCTION**

As each year passes we are constantly being faced with Year Two children who are reading at a higher than expected Text Level (often Text Level 28) however are having difficulties in their reading comprehension. Neufeld (2005) believes that “comprehension can be defined broadly as the process of constructing a supportable understanding of a text” (p.302) With the constant focus and push to have students reading at such a high Text Level by the time they are at the end of Year Two, the comprehension aspect seems to be forgotten or not have as much emphasis placed on it.

An important aspect of reading comprehension “is influenced by text type, prior knowledge, and mode of reading as well as passage level” Dewitz & Dewitz (2003, p.423). Similarly, Rupley and Nichols (2005) believe that children’s ability to learn vocabulary is crucial for improving comprehension and reading development. They state that struggling readers often lack the experiences associated with texts encountered in schools (p.242). A possible strategy to combat this is the explicit teaching of synonyms. Munro (2004, p386) has suggested that the reader is required to “generate a literal representation of a sentence read by substituting as many words and phrases in it.” In order for the students to do this they need to be able to draw upon an extensive vocabulary bank as well as make meaningful links with words they have stored in their prior knowledge.

A misconception that many parents and even teachers face, is that reading difficulties are not an indication of intelligence but a lack of vocabulary knowledge, which Blachowicz (2004) believes is dependent on their experiences. She believes that this can be remedied in classrooms with high literacy learning and good vocabulary instruction. Most people would agree that vocabulary is developed through wide reading however Richek (2005) observed that it must be taught.

The teaching of these strategies must be explicit as this is when students will learn a new reading strategy. The teacher must verbalise what these strategies are and how and why good readers use them. It is also important for the teacher to articulate the process of reading and thinking that occurs at the time of reading. This provides a good model for the students encouraging them to replicate the teacher's actions. As Snowball (2006) found, "several studies show that students who verbalise their strategies while reading score significantly higher on comprehension tests." (p.63)

Another important aspect in the teaching of a new reading strategy is the idea of scaffolding, which was first developed by the theorist Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky is best known for the creation and development of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p.84). The ZPD infers that students master a skill and use it independently when they have assistance and guidance from an expert who has already developed that skill. This is therefore why the ten lessons focus on the scaffolding approach to assist students to work independently without assistance, and will therefore have reached the Zone of Actual Development.

When reading strategies are being taught it is imperative that the teacher models and explains the strategy and allows time for children to practice and apply these reading strategies with a variety of texts. "Effective teachers have an understanding of how reading occurs and are able to plan learning experiences and instruction that supports students to become more successful readers (First Steps Resource Book p.112). The ten lessons on synonyms will scaffold the students to use their new skills independently, and aim to have a positive affect on their ability to comprehend a text more fully.

The students selected for this research project, both the Intervention and Control group, are all currently Year Two students in different Year One/Two composite classes. They are mostly proficient at decoding texts and the majority of the students chosen are at or near Text Level 28. However results from pre tests at the beginning of the school year (PROBE testing) indicate that the Year Two students as a whole have difficulty re-telling a text or answering literal comprehension questions. After the completion of the ten lessons it is hoped that the reading comprehension of the Intervention group will have improved.

This present research project aims to investigate the influence that explicitly teaching synonyms has on reading comprehension to Year Two students who are proficient decoders. The project will use earlier research to develop a sequence of ten lessons that are focused on synonyms. The ten lessons will actively engage the students by focusing on all aspects of literacy learning- reading, writing, speaking and listening in a supportive and encouraging environment.

### **PREDICTION**

*The explicit teaching of synonyms to Year Two students will improve reading comprehension.*

### **METHOD**

#### **Design**

This research project uses a case study OXO design in which the gain in reading comprehension following the explicit teaching of synonyms over ten lessons, is monitored for Year Two students who are able to decode at a high level however have difficulty with reading comprehension.

## **Participants**

The participants chosen were two different Year Two classes (14 students in each) They were selected as the majority of the students in the Year Two classes were able to decode at a high level (most at Text Level 28) however were having trouble with reading comprehension. One of the two Year Two classes was selected to be the Intervention group in which they received 10 explicit lessons with a focus on synonyms during the reading hour. The other Year Two class, the control group, did not receive the lessons and allowed for comparison to indicate if the intervention led to an improvement in the post test results.

## **Materials**

Materials used include the following:

- **Reading Progress Test-** to determine student's comprehension of texts
- **Synonym Task (Munro, 2005)-** to test students ability to generate synonyms  
(Appendix 1 and 2)
- **PM Benchmarks Kits 1 & 2 (Nelley & Smith, 2000 & 2002)-** to establish instructional Text Level
- **Word Meaning Assessment (devised by teacher)-** to assess student's ability to make meaning of unknown words by using the text (Appendix 3)
- **Flashcards-** used to play Synonym Charades (Appendix 4)
- **1 big book-** used during shared reading in the lessons 4-9 inclusive
- **Interactive Whiteboard-** to be used for synonym games and activities during the warm up phase and the beginning of the lessons
- **Synonyms cut and paste-** to be used during the initial lessons where children could play concentration/snap etc after matching the synonyms with their pair (Appendix 5)
- **Synonym Worksheet-** children had to match synonyms and write them in a sentence (Appendix 6)
- **Butchers Paper-** used to record students thoughts and reflections

- **Whiteboard and whiteboard markers-** used as a tool to record ideas and answers

### **Procedure**

Both the Year Two classes (Intervention and Control group) were given the same pre tests and they were done individually. They included the Reading Progress Test, Munro's Synonyms Task, Running Records to determine Text Level and the Word Meaning Assessment (designed by classroom teacher)

The ten lessons for this research project were conducted with the Intervention group during the morning literacy block in the first hour, which is the reading block. The lessons went for between 35-45 minutes in duration over a 2 week period, in which the whole class participated.

The ten lessons were devised with a scaffolding approach whereby the support given to the students was gradually reduced allowing the students to take more control for their learning. They experienced lessons where the teacher played the main role and then eventually the students played more of that role. They also experienced activities as a group, in pairs and finally on their own.

The first lesson introduced the students to the term synonyms. They were asked if they had heard the word before and/or knew what it meant. Together we looked up the definition of the word on the Interactive Whiteboard so that all children could read it together. They then played a synonyms matching game in pairs, devised by the teacher.

Lessons two and three revisited the term synonyms and the students understanding of the word was added to a big piece of butcher's paper to be displayed. This would be revisited in the last session to see if their understanding had changed or improved. The students were given posters with a word in the middle and in groups they had to brainstorm as many synonyms as they could matching the word in the middle.

Lessons four and five continued to revisit the meaning of the word synonym and the big book was introduced during shared reading. Words were chosen from the text that the children had to find synonyms for.

Lessons six to eight continued to use the big book however the words that were chosen from the text were unknown words. The students were taught the strategy of looking at the picture and the other words in the sentence to work out the meaning of the unknown words.

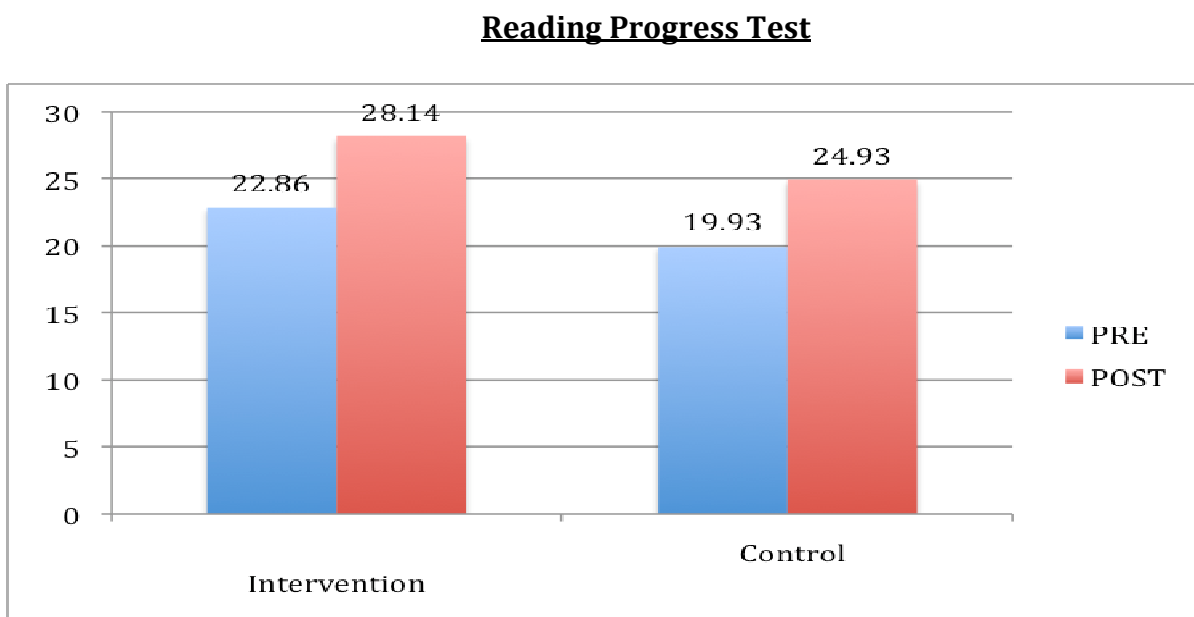
Lesson nine and ten revisited the butcher's paper where students had previously recorded their meanings and ideas for the word synonym. New ideas and findings were added. The students continued to work out synonyms for unknown words in their own texts.

Following the ten lessons, the Intervention and Control group were given the same tests as the pre test, however this would now be the post test.

For a more detailed account of these lessons please refer to Appendix 7- Lesson Plans.

## **RESULTS**

Results support the hypothesis that explicitly teaching synonyms to Year Two students will improve their reading comprehension. Fourteen out of fourteen intervention students improved in their reading comprehension and all students from this group made impressive gains in their ability to generate synonyms. Figure 1 shows the pre and post test results for the reading comprehension for both the Control and Intervention group. As can be seen, both groups made similar gains.

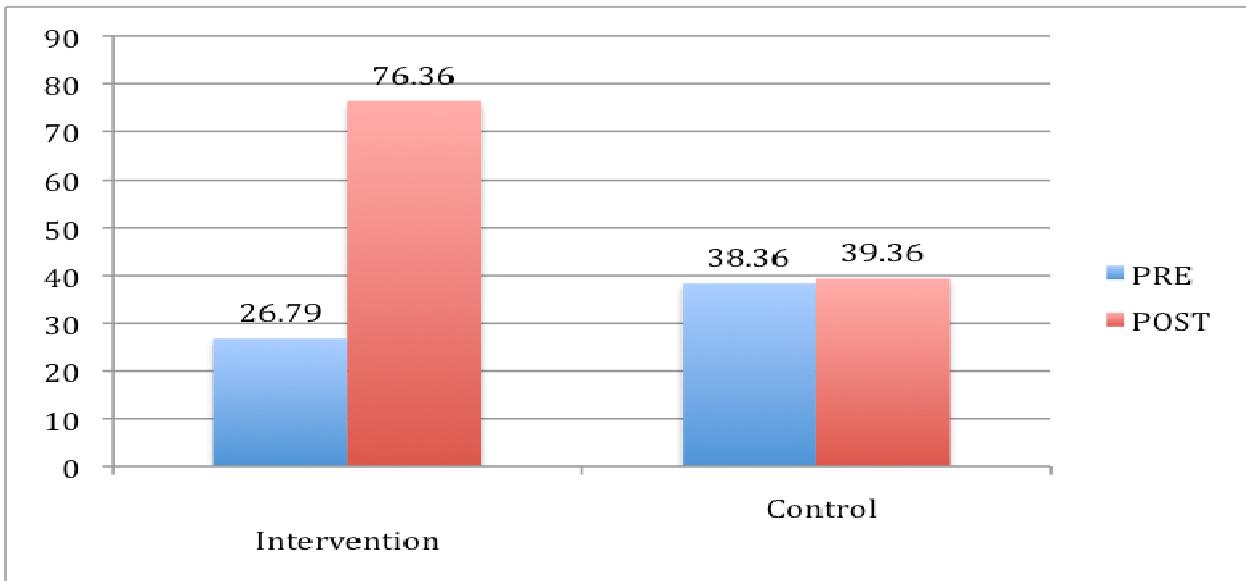


*Figure 1; Average pre and post test raw scores recorded by students in the Intervention and Control group for the Reading Progress Test*

The Reading Progress Test was chosen as the means of testing as it is aimed at students at the age of the students involved in the research project. The test measures the reading comprehension of students and requires answers to a variety of questions. The test also provides a description of the student's reading age, which will be discussed further in this section and also shows that most students made impressive gains.



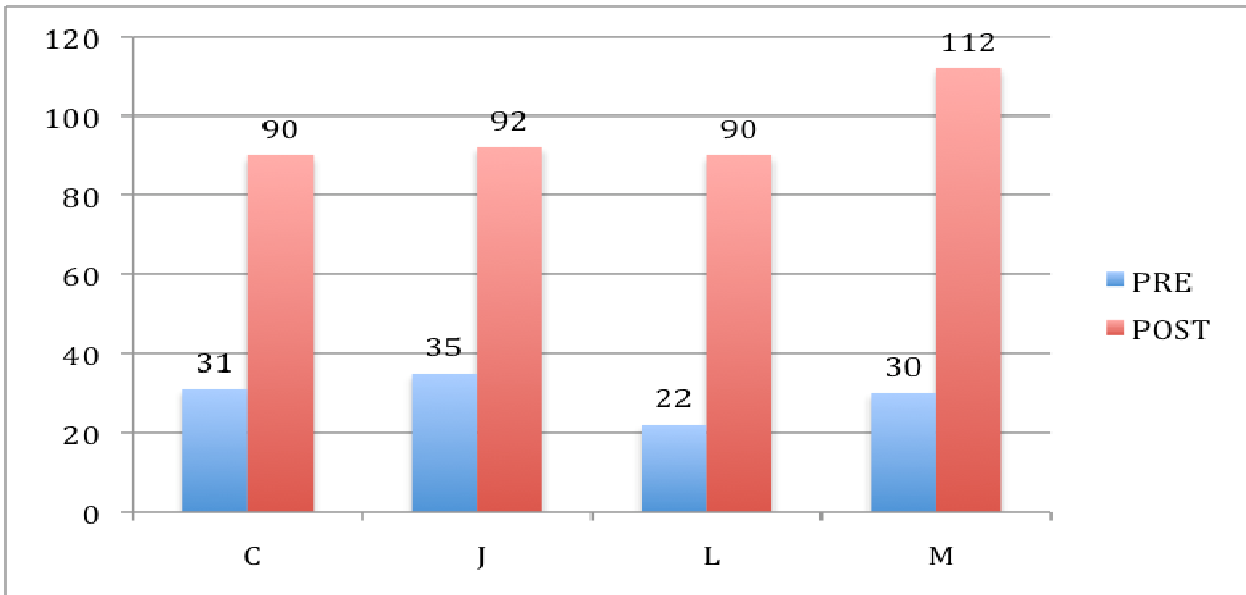
## Synonyms Task



*Figure 2; Average pre and post scores recorded by students in the Intervention and Control group for the Synonyms Task*

Impressive gains were made by the Intervention group when given the Munro's Synonyms Task as a post test as can be seen in Figure 2 above. All students made gains however the most noteworthy were Students C, J, L and M. Figure 3 (below) shows these students gains in the pre and post test for the Synonyms Task. It was interesting to note that these four students were all reading at a Text Level 28 and all had an above expected ROL score. The average age of the students in the Intervention Group was 95 months (7:11 years) however students C, J, L and M were all older than the average age. C (96 months), J (97 months), L (99 months) and M (98 months).

### Synonyms Task



*Figure 3; Scores recorded by students C, J, L and M in the pre and post test for the Synonyms Task*

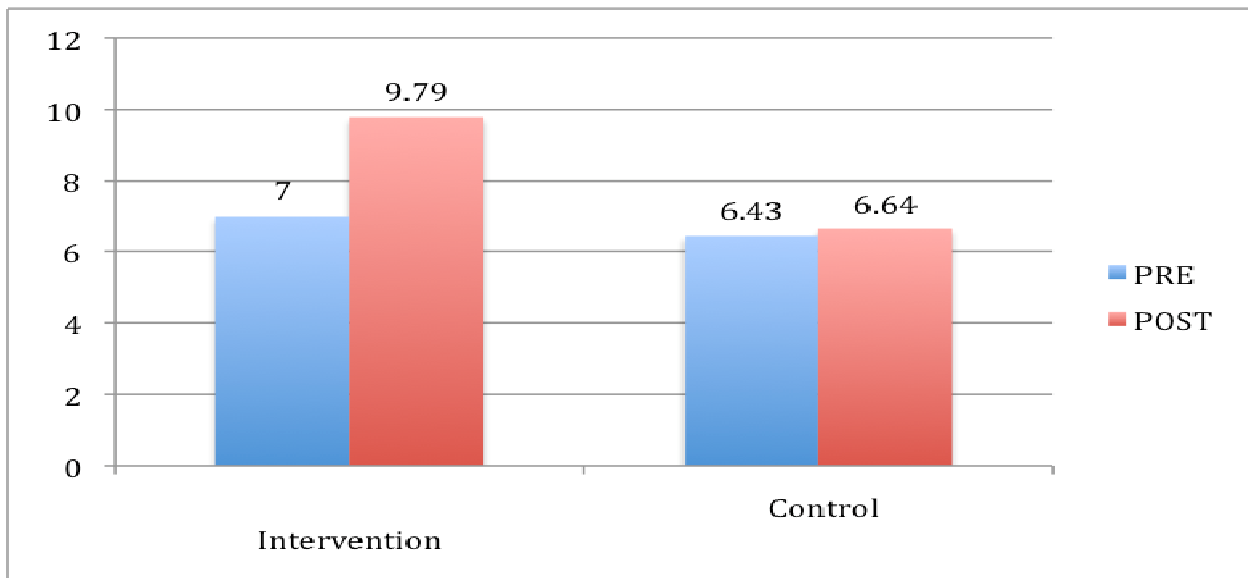
When marking the Synonyms Test, children were awarded a maximum of 2 points for each correct answer. The test was altered so that the students were only given 20 words and there was a maximum possibility to generate 4 synonyms. This meant that the total score achievable was 160.

The students in the Intervention group who did not begin on a Text Level 28 all increased their reading levels however in the Control group there was either no, or very little improvement in the text levels of the students.

When given the Word Meaning Assessment to the Intervention group as a post test, only one student did not improve, student B. It is interesting to note that student B also has a lower reading Text Level of 14 pre test and 16 post test and has a low ROL score (22) compared to the other students. Student M also did not improve as he scored the maximum score in the post test.

Figure 4 (below) indicates the average gains in the Word Meaning Assessment for both the Intervention and the Control group, comparing both the pre and post test results. It is interesting to note the impressive improvements made by the Intervention group.

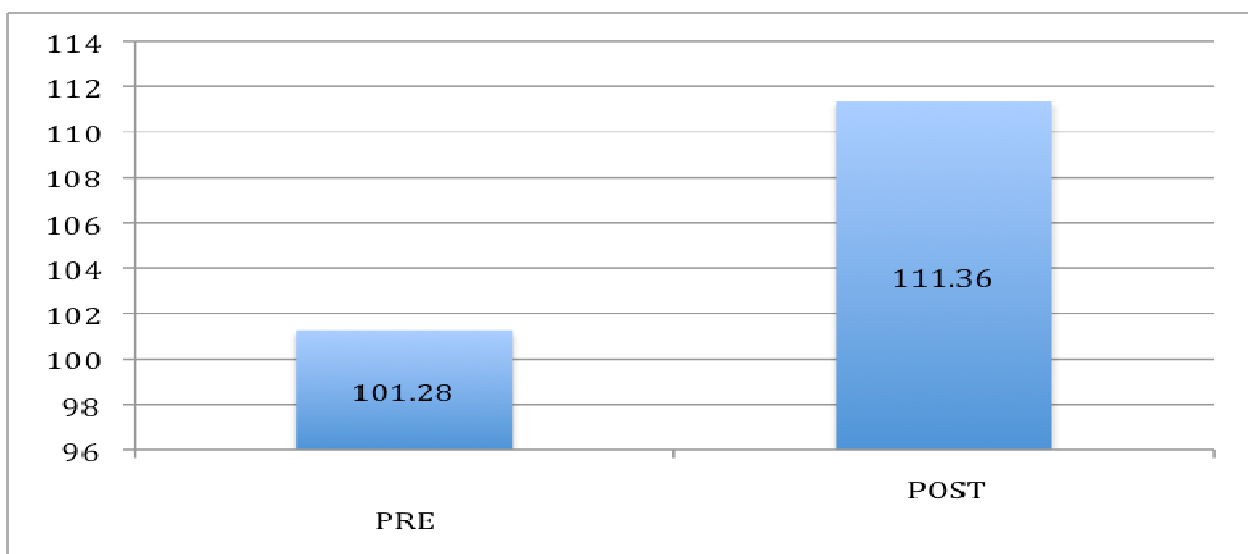
### **Word Meaning Assessment**



*Figure 4; Average pre and post scores recorded by students in the Intervention and Control group for the Word Meaning Assessment*

Another area of interest was the pre reading age of the intervention group, calculated by completing the Reading Progress Test.

### **Reading Age in Months- Intervention Group**



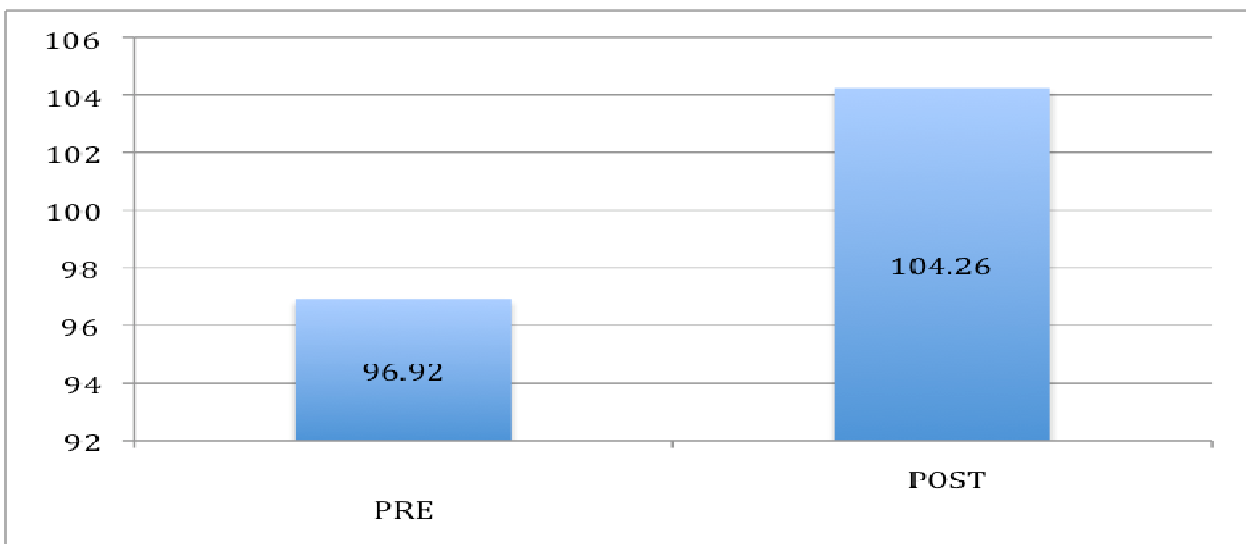
*Figure 5; Average pre and post scores recorded by students in the Intervention group for the reading age in months*

The average reading age of the Intervention Group was 101.28 months, which equates to approximately 8:4 years.

Seeing as the average chronological age for this group was 95.8 months (7:11 years) the students were already reading and comprehending on average 7 months ahead of their chronological age and above the expected level. The post results for the average reading age jumped to 111.35 months, which is approximately 9:2 years. This is therefore 1:3 years above the expected reading achievements for their chronological age, which therefore places these students at an above average level.

Figure 6 shows the pre and post scores recorded by students in the Control group for the reading age in months. Similarly to the Intervention group, gains were made in this area despite not being taught the 10 lessons on synonyms. This was the only area of testing where the Control group produced similar gains to the Intervention group.

**Reading Age in Months- Control Group**



*Figure 6; Average pre and post scores recorded by students in the Control group for the reading age in months*

All the results can be seen in more detail in the Data Chart (Appendix 8).

## **DISCUSSION**

Results support the hypothesis that explicitly teaching synonyms to Year Two students will improve their reading comprehension. All students in the Intervention group made gains in their reading comprehension as well as their ability to generate synonyms. The use of synonyms was a new concept for these children so it was expected that possible gains would be made. The extent to which the gains were made for most children was extremely encouraging and positive.

The Intervention group students were all from the same class so a strong familiarity and relationship between them had already been established. The students were comfortable in their own classroom settings, which allowed for some rich discussion and sharing of ideas. The students were already aware of the courteous behaviour that is expected, which again allowed for an open and friendly discussion. When the students were asked to work in pairs or small groups, the work was cooperative and productive and there was a strong sense of good communication. Students enjoyed sharing and comparing their ideas. These working habits supported Neufeld's (2005) idea that when teaching a reading strategy it is best to be "providing student's with numerous opportunities to practice the strategy they are learning in an environment where support and feedback are readily available." (p.309)

The variety of materials used throughout the ten lessons helped to engage the students and create an exciting learning environment. The students were able to use highlighters and whiteboard markers to record their work and were able to record it on poster paper, butcher's paper and their own personal whiteboards. Allowing the children to use different materials created engagement and excitement, as they do not normally record their work using these materials. Another powerful tool used in the ten lessons was the Interactive Whiteboard. This allowed children to play games and sing songs to learn about synonyms.

The use of a wide range of materials catered for the students who learn in different ways. The students were also able to be an interactive part of the learning, as well as the whole class being able to see what was happening. The big books that were chosen supported the Integrated Unit of “Toys and Moving Things”, which assisted with their oral and experiential knowledge. Munro (2007) believes that readers use their existing knowledge to scaffold and support their reading (p.10) so the use of the big books supported Munro’s belief.

While the ROL was not used as a pre and post test I still included the student’s scores to see whether this may have impacted on the students results. It was interesting to note that the student’s with the most amount of gains in both the Intervention and Control groups, all had high ROL scores and the students who did not achieve as impressive gains had relatively low ROL scores. Rupley and Nichols (2005) believe that students beginning school with low vocabularies have difficulties in developing their reading skills. This should perhaps therefore be a focus for pre school learning and become more of a focus when teaching students how to read in the early years of schooling.

It was interesting to see that the only area of testing where the Control group made similar gains to the Intervention group was the Reading Progress Test. As the Control group did not receive the ten lessons on synonyms, it begged the question “why did the Control group still make similar gains in the Reading Progress Test as the Intervention group”. There could be a number of possibilities for this and perhaps the main reason is that while the Control group did not receive the ten consecutive lessons on synonyms, reading and reading strategies were still being taught in the classroom by the classroom teacher. Had the Control group not gone to school at all during the Intervention group’s ten lessons, the results may have been different.

The ten lessons that were devised all had elements of reading, writing, listening and speaking as these are all elements of literacy development. This also allowed all the students the opportunity to express their ideas and thoughts in a way that suited them, rather than being given only one way. This may have increased the results, as not all students are able to write or on the other hand verbalise their thinking. Fisk and Hurst (2003) state that, “paraphrasing for comprehension works so well because it integrates all modes of communication- reading, writing, listening and speaking- which leads to deeper understanding of the text” (p.182)

Overall, the results for the Intervention Group were impressive however an issue or question was raised. The pre average reading age of the students in the Intervention Group was already above the student’s chronological age, which poses the question “are we expecting too much from these children?”

There is such a push and concern for Year Two students to be comprehending texts, however the results prove that they are in fact comprehending the texts, not only at the expected level but above. I would be interested to carry out this research project at another school with a different socio economic status where there are children who are comprehending at a below average reading age, to see whether these ten lessons had an impact on them.

## **Implications**

There are numerous implications that have arisen from this current research project. Explicit teaching of synonyms throughout the day providing more opportunities for the students to practice their skills may help to improve their reading comprehension. The introduction of the paraphrasing strategy to students to use when reading to gain information from texts, may also help to improve their reading comprehension. If students are encouraged to self question, i.e. “What is the authors message?” “How could I put this in my own words?” then an opportunity is created for students to identify and discuss key ideas and details in their own words. The ten lessons focused mainly on whole class activities so if the opportunity arose for children to work in small pullout groups where the teaching is more focused then the results may be different. Students also need to be exposed to a variety of comprehension tasks that require the students to answer through meaning gained from the text. For example retelling, cloze activities, multiple choice questions or illustrations. This provides the students with a variety of ways to present their thinking.

## **Future Research**

Future research could be conducted over a longer period of lessons to see if it made any further impact. It could also be included in normal classroom lessons and results could be measured to see what influence it made with different groups of children. It would be interesting to see the results with students that came from a lower soci economic area and began with lower decoding and reading comprehension levels. A variety of strategies could be implemented in different groups or classrooms to identify the best approaches to use to help all students learn and apply new words.

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# **APPENDIX**

**APPENDIX 1:****Synonyms Task: Target Words and Possible Responses**

(Adapted by Teacher)

**Teacher's Sheet**

Target word		Possible correct responses
1.	small	tiny, little, wee, mini, miniature, short, shrimp, slight, stunted, teensy, minor, trifling
2.	talk	speak, natter, chat, say
3.	fast	quick, rapid, brisk, snappy, speedy, hasty, swift
4.	old	aged, ancient, elderly, experienced, geriatric, senior, veteran, outdated, stale
5.	leave	go, clear out, scam, stop
6.	car	vehicle, automobile, sedan
7.	shoe	boot, slipper, runners, sneaker
8.	child	boy, girl, infant, tot, babyyoungster, brat, kid, kiddie, toddler
9.	fat	rotund, plump, overweight, burly, corpulent, obese, oversize, paunchy, portly, stout, blubbery, bulk, lard
10.	walk	stroll, amble, hike, march, pathway, amble, tramp
11.	cat	kitten, moggy, puss, leopard, lion, tabby
12.	fatigued	tired, all in, beat, exhausted, weary, worn-out, zonked, sapped
13.	boat	ship, types of boats
14.	clean	neat, tidy, clear, flawless, trim, sparkling
15.	sick	ill, unhealthy, unwell, weak, queasy, diseased,
16.	tiger	cat cheetah, cougar, jaguar, leopard, lion, panther
17.	engine	motor machine, apparatus, appliance, gadget
18.	ignore	disregard, avoid, cut, neglect, omit, overlook, reject
19.	precious	expensive, dear, prized, treasured, valued, invaluable, prized
20.	angry	mad, irate, crazy, cross, out/enraged, fiery, fuming, furious, storming

APPENDIX 2:

Synonyms Task: Student's Sheet

(Adapted by Teacher)

**Name:**

Small				
Fast				
Old				
Leave				
Car				
Shoe				
Child				
Fat				
Walk				
Cat				
Fatigued				
Boat				
Clean				
Sick				
Tiger				
Engine				
Ignore				
Precious				
Angry				
Hit				

APPENDIX 3:

Word Meaning Assessment

(devised by Teacher)

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

WORD	SENTENCE	MEANING
peered	He smacked his lips and <b><u>peered</u></b> down from his tree at the hut below.	
briskly	She tied her floral bonnet, stepped <b><u>briskly</u></b> out onto the street and hurried towards the village market .	
delectable	The air filled with a <b><u>delectable</u></b> smell and monkey’s stomach rumbled, grumbled and groaned.	
commotion	Monkey climbed down for a closer look at all the <b><u>commotion</u></b>	
heaved	Mama Marie moaned as she <b><u>heaved</u></b> herself slowly to her feet.	
nipping	The dogs chased Monkey, snapping and <b><u>nipping</u></b> at Monkey’s heels	

**APPENDIX 4: Flash Cards**

<b>DARK</b>	<b>LOUD</b>	<b>QUIET</b>
<b>SAD</b>	<b>HAPPY</b>	<b>WASH</b>
<b>SLOW</b>	<b>FUNNY</b>	<b>GOOD</b>

APPENDIX 5: Synonym cut and paste cards

seat

chair

simple

easy

mad

angry

tiny

little

stone

rock

toss

throw

enjoy

like

hop

jump

shut

close

tidy

clean



silent

quiet

begin

start

chat

talk

weird

strange

clever

smart

skinny

thin

loud

noisy

middle

center

ill

sick

huge

big

difficult

hard

late

tardy

friendly

kind

naughty

bad

finish

end

APPENDIX 6: Synonyms Worksheet

## Synonyms: Words with Similar Meanings

Use the words in the box to find synonyms for the italicized words:

close	quiet	smart	kind
strange	start	center	talk
noisy	end	hard	clean

The room was very *tidy*.

(1) Tidy is another word for clean.

I'm cold. Can you *shut* the window?

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

The question was *difficult*.

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

She doesn't like to *chat* on the telephone.

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

The race will *begin* in two minutes.

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

I found a really *weird* sea creature at the beach today.

(6) \_\_\_\_\_

He is very *friendly*. Everybody likes him.

(7) \_\_\_\_\_

Jenny is quite *clever*. She can probably answer the question.

(8) \_\_\_\_\_

The night was *silent*. I couldn't even hear the wind.

(9) \_\_\_\_\_

The students were so *loud* that I couldn't hear the teacher.

(10) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know what time the movie will *finish*?

(11) \_\_\_\_\_

There was a ghost in the *middle* of the room.

(12) \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 7: Teaching sequence used in the ten teaching lessons**

(Devised by teacher)

### **Lesson 1**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Activity Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to brainstorm anything they know about synonyms or what they think it might mean in small groups. They are to use the butcher's paper and textas to write down their thoughts or thinking. Children to share their thinking and ideas to the whole class group.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Review Synonyms</b>	Together with the teacher, children to investigate the meaning of "synonyms" using the interactive whiteboard.	<b>5-7 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	Children are to work with a partner and cut out the synonyms cut and paste cards (Appendix 5). They are to play a matching game first where one partner turns over one word and their partner has to look at all the other words and try to find one that matches. Once children have matched all the synonyms they are to play concentration or snap with their synonym cards. After they have played this game they are to stick the words down next to their synonyms on a piece of butcher's paper to create a synonyms poster. Teacher to rove to observe students.	<b>15-20 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	In children's workbooks, they are to write the word "synonym" in a bubble record what they have learnt. They are also to write 2 words from this lesson along with one or two synonyms to match.	<b>5 minutes</b>

## Lesson 2

Activity	Activity Description	Time
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-visit the poster with the brainstormed ideas and any new ideas or thoughts are to be added.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children are to be given a word on a piece of paper i.e. small, and they are to list as many words as they can think of that mean the same thing. Different words are given to different children so that a variety of words are being looked at.</p> <p>Children are to share their synonyms with the whole class to share their ideas and to also see what the other children had come up with.</p> <p>Children to play Synonym Charades using the flash cards (appendix 4), where two children are up the front and decide together on two synonyms i.e. big, huge. They then try to act out their synonyms, obviously doing the same actions. The other children need to work out what word the children are trying to convey, and also what a possible synonym could be.</p> <p>Children to add any new synonyms to the Synonyms Poster.</p>	<b>15-20 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to ask themselves “what have I learnt today?” and “what have I enjoyed today?” They are to write their thoughts in their journals. Children to also write down any new synonyms they have learnt today and when might these use synonyms themselves?	<b>5-7 minutes</b>

### Lesson 3

Activity	Activity Description	Time
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-visit the poster with the brainstormed ideas and any new ideas or thoughts are to be added.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children are to be given a different word on a piece of paper i.e. nice, and they are to list as many words as they can think of that mean the same thing. Different words are given to different children so that a variety of words are being looked at.</p> <p>Children are to share their synonyms with the whole class to share their ideas and to also see what the other children had come up with.</p> <p>Children to complete the worksheet “Synonyms Worksheet” (appendix 6) in small groups. Children to discuss with each other their thoughts about which words would match, and then complete the sheet independently.</p> <p>Teacher to rove around the classroom listening to the discussion between children and taking anecdotal notes on the children’s understandings and ability to match synonyms.</p> <p>Once finished children are to play concentration or snap with the Synonym Word Cards.</p>	<b>20-25 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to ask themselves “what have I learnt today?” and “what have I enjoyed today?” They are to write their thoughts in their journals. Children to also write down any new synonyms they have learnt today and when might these use synonyms themselves?	<b>5-7 minutes</b>

### Lesson 4

Activity	Activity Description	Time
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-visit the poster with the brainstormed ideas and any new ideas or thoughts are to be added.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children to play Synonym Sam’s Lab on the Interactive Whiteboard as a whole class. See: <a href="http://pbskids.org/lions/games/synsam.html">http://pbskids.org/lions/games/synsam.html</a></p> <p>Teacher to introduce and begin reading the class big book, pages 2 and 3. Teacher to mask a selection of adjectives that the children will need to work out. The adjectives that are selected should be known words to the children i.e. pretty, happy etc</p> <p>When the teacher gets to the masked words, she asks the children “how can we work out this word?” Children are to investigate by talking to each other how they could work out the masked words.</p> <p>Strategies to be taught and encouraged here are looking at the picture, re-reading the sentence and paraphrasing. By looking at the rest of the words we might be able to work out the unknown word.</p> <p>Children to come up with some possibilities as a whole class and they are to read the sentence back with their possible word to see “does it make sense?” and “does it fit with the meaning of the story?”</p> <p>The word is then revealed and children are to think of as many synonyms for the word. These synonyms are then substituted for the masked word to see if the meaning is still maintained.</p>	<b>20-25 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to ask themselves “what have I learnt today?” and “what have I enjoyed today?” They are to write their thoughts in their journals. Children to also write down any new synonyms they have learnt today	<b>5 minutes</b>



## Lesson 5

Activity	Activity Description	Time
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-read the pages from the previous lesson to identify the words that have numerous synonyms.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children to play Synonym Sam’s Lab on the Interactive Whiteboard as a whole class. See: <a href="http://pbskids.org/lions/games/synsam.html">http://pbskids.org/lions/games/synsam.html</a></p> <p>Teacher to read pages 4 and 5. Teacher to mask a selection of adjectives that the children will need to work out. The adjectives that are selected should be known words to the children i.e. sad, mean etc</p> <p>When the teacher gets to the masked words, she asks the children “how can we work out this word?” Children are to investigate by talking to each other how they could work out the masked words.</p> <p>Strategies to be taught and encouraged here are looking at the picture, re-reading the sentence and paraphrasing. By looking at the rest of the words we might be able to work out the unknown word.</p> <p>Children to come up with some possibilities as a whole class and they are to read the sentence back with their possible word to see “does it make sense?” and “does it fit with the meaning of the story?”</p> <p>The word is then revealed and children are to think of as many synonyms for the word. These synonyms are then substituted for the masked word to see if the meaning is still maintained.</p>	<b>20-25 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to ask themselves “what have I learnt today?” and “what have I enjoyed today?” They are to write their thoughts in their journals. Children to also write down any new synonyms they have learnt today and when might these use synonyms themselves?	<b>5-7 minutes</b>

## Lesson 6

Activity	Activity Description	Time
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-read the pages from the previous lesson to identify the words that have numerous synonyms.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children to play Synonym game on the Interactive Whiteboard as a whole class. See: <a href="http://www.firstschoolyears.com/literacy/word/other/synonyms/interactive/synonyms.htm">http://www.firstschoolyears.com/literacy/word/other/synonyms/interactive/synonyms.htm</a></p> <p>Teacher to read pages 6 and 7. Teacher to mask a selection of words that the children will need to work out. The words that are selected are now unknown words to the children i.e. bonnet, mutter etc</p> <p>When the teacher gets to the masked words, she asks the children “how can we work out this word?” Children are to investigate by talking to each other how they could work out the masked words.</p> <p>Strategies to be taught and encouraged here are looking at the picture, re-reading the sentence and paraphrasing. By looking at the rest of the words we might be able to work out the unknown word.</p> <p>Children to come up with some possibilities in a small group and they are to read the sentence back with their possible word to see “does it make sense?” and “does it fit with the meaning of the story?” They are to share to the whole class.</p> <p>The word is then revealed and children are to think of as many synonyms for the word. These synonyms are then substituted for the masked word to see if the meaning is still maintained.</p> <p>Children to write sentences in their workbook using the new synonyms learnt.</p>	<b>20-25 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to ask themselves “what have I learnt today?” and “what have I enjoyed today?” They are to write their thoughts in their journals. Children to also write down any new synonyms	<b>5 minutes</b>

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### Lesson 7

Activity	Activity Description	Time
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-read the pages from the previous lesson to identify the words that have numerous synonyms.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children to play Synonym game on the Interactive Whiteboard as a whole class. See: <a href="http://www.firstschoolyears.com/literacy/word/other/synonyms/interactive/synonyms.htm">http://www.firstschoolyears.com/literacy/word/other/synonyms/interactive/synonyms.htm</a></p> <p>Teacher to read pages 8 and 9. Teacher to mask a selection of words that the children will need to work out. The words that are selected are now unknown words to the children i.e. bonnet, mutter etc</p> <p>When the teacher gets to the masked words, she asks the children “how can we work out this word?” Children are to investigate by talking to each other how they could work out the masked words.</p> <p>Children to come up with some possibilities in small groups and they are then to read the sentence back with their possible word to see “does it make sense?” and “does it fit with the meaning of the story?” The small groups to share their ideas.</p> <p>The word is then revealed and children are to think of as many synonyms for the word. These synonyms are then substituted for the masked word to see if the meaning is still maintained.</p> <p>Children to write sentences in their workbook using the new synonyms learnt.</p>	<b>20-25 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to ask themselves “what have I learnt today?” and “what have I enjoyed today?” They are to write their thoughts in their journals. Children to also write down any new synonyms they have learnt today	<b>5 minutes</b>

## Lesson 8

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Activity Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-read the pages from the previous lesson to identify the words that have numerous synonyms.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children to play Synonym game on the Interactive Whiteboard as a whole class. See: <a href="http://www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/match/matchgeneric.asp?filename=kderittesyonyms">http://www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/match/matchgeneric.asp?filename=kderittesyonyms</a></p> <p>Teacher to read pages 10 and 11. Teacher to mask a selection of words that the children will need to work out. The words that are selected are now unknown words to the children i.e. plucking, twitch etc</p> <p>When the teacher gets to the masked words, she asks the children “how can we work out this word?” Children are to investigate by talking to each other how they could work out the masked words.</p> <p>Children to come up with some possibilities in small groups and they are then to read the sentence back with their possible word to see “does it make sense?” and “does it fit with the meaning of the story?” The small groups to share their ideas.</p> <p>The word is then revealed and children are to think of as many synonyms for the word. These synonyms are then substituted for the masked word to see if the meaning is still maintained.</p> <p>Children to write sentences in their workbook using the new synonyms learnt.</p>	<b>20-25 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to ask themselves “what have I learnt today?” and “what have I enjoyed today?” They are to write their thoughts in their journals. Children to also write down any new synonyms they have learnt today and when might these use synonyms themselves?	<b>5 minutes</b>

## Lesson 9

Activity	Activity Description	Time
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-read the pages from the previous lesson to identify the words that have numerous synonyms.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children to play Synonym game on the Interactive Whiteboard as a whole class. See: <a href="http://www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/match/matchgeneric.asp?filename=kderittesyonyms">http://www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/match/matchgeneric.asp?filename=kderittesyonyms</a></p> <p>Teacher to read the final pages, 12 and 13. Teacher to mask a selection of words that the children will need to work out. The adjectives that are selected are now unknown words to the children i.e. trod, sly etc</p> <p>When the teacher gets to the masked words, she asks the children “how can we work out this word?” Children are to investigate by talking to each other how they could work out the masked words.</p> <p>Children to come up with some possibilities independently and they are then to read the sentence back with their possible word to see “does it make sense?” and “does it fit with the meaning of the story?” They children are to share their ideas to the whole class.</p> <p>The word is then revealed and children are to think of as many synonyms for the word. These synonyms are then substituted for the masked word to see if the meaning is still maintained.</p> <p>Children to write sentences in their workbook using the new synonyms learnt.</p>	<b>20-25 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to ask themselves “what have I learnt today?” and “what have I enjoyed today?” They are to write their thoughts in their journals. Children to also write down any new synonyms they have learnt today and when might these use synonyms themselves?	<b>5 minutes</b>

## Lesson 10

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Activity Description</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>Warm Up</b>	Children to play word balloons on the Interactive Whiteboard. See: <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/starship/english/games/word_balloons/small_sound/standard.shtml</a>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Re-visit Previous Lesson</b>	Children to re-visit the poster with the brainstormed ideas created in lessons 1,2 and 3. Any new ideas or thoughts are to be added. Children to see whether their understanding has grown or changed since the initial lessons.	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Main Activity</b>	<p>Children to play Synonym Charades using the flash cards, where two children are up the front and decide together on two synonyms i.e. big, huge. They then try to act out their synonyms, obviously doing the same actions. The other children need to work out what word the children are trying to convey, and also what a possible synonym could be.</p> <p>Children to read independently and as they are reading they are to highlight the words they are not sure of. They are then to use the strategies that have been taught over the past 10 lessons to work out what the word is. They are then to see if they could think of a synonym for the unknown word.</p> <p>Children to share their experiences to the whole class where the teacher scribes on the Synonyms Poster created in lesson 1.</p>	<b>20-25 minutes</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	Children to reflect over the past 10 lessons and are to ask themselves “what new things have I learnt?” and “how might this help my reading?” They are then to think about the meaning of the word synonym and write a definition in their journals.	<b>5 minutes</b>