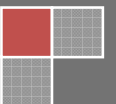


2010

Action Research Project

Hypothesis

Explicit teaching of synonyms and paraphrasing will improve students reading comprehension in grade three students.



Abstract

Many students fall into the category of being able to decode text at an age appropriate level and beyond, but many students will encounter difficulties when they are asked questions about the text or asked literal and critical comprehension questions. It is at this point that some students find it difficult to retell what they have read and also have difficulty making critical analysis of the text. In middle to late primary levels we see that students fall into this category and do not have appropriate strategies to help them comprehend the text.

The hypothesis of this study is that by explicitly teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to year three students it will improve reading comprehension in text. The study compared the results of two groups of students in each group there was eight students: a control group and an intervention group. These students were taught the paraphrasing strategy using the acronym RAP using both fiction and nonfiction text. A further component of the study was using synonyms to build vocabulary. The objective for including this element to the study is to aid students with enriched vocabulary so that they are able to retell the text in their own words.

The students selected in the intervention group are of mixed ability and sex. This was done intentionally as I was interested to see if both these strategies would help all students regardless at what level they were at. The control group remained in the class with their classroom teacher and the intervention group was withdrawn for an hour with me in the writing block.

The study results did not directly support the hypothesis and it can be said that the results are inconclusive. A further study would need to be taken to see if over a longer period of time, the impact of using paraphrasing would be noteworthy. The results in the development of vocabulary by using synonyms were notable and that by explicitly teaching students' synonyms did improve and develop students' vocabulary.

Introduction

Many students at the middle to late primary levels have achieved age appropriate benchmark for reading text, but they are lacking the skills to comprehend the text. Students are decoding text but they are lacking the knowledge of literal and critical comprehension that is required at this level.

The first three years of a student schooling they are explicitly taught the reading strategies that are needed to decode text and most students will achieve the reading benchmarks that are required at this level. Although, in the process teachers often neglect to explicitly teach students to stop and think about what they are reading. Hagaman(2008) supports this argument and he states that just because a student is proficient in decoding skills it does not mean that they have comprehension skills to match. Students are purely 'barking at print' because the focus is to achieve text reading levels and their comprehension levels do not match their reading accuracy. Unfortunately, comprehension of text is put aside and we see huge gaps in the middle to late years of primary school (Underwood and Pearson, 2004).

In middle to late primary levels students begin to undertake testing that moves away from reading accuracy and teachers now begin to explore what students comprehend when reading text. It is at this point that teachers begin to question what has gone wrong and how students can read with accuracy and yet they are unable to understand the text. Teachers begin to look at strategies to help students comprehend text. Alfassi (2004) suggest that relatively little attention is paid to instruction in comprehension strategies within schools. If teachers in the early years of teaching also included comprehension strategies like visualizing, paraphrasing and vocabulary building to name a few, then student will develop these techniques simultaneously whilst learning to read.

McCray, Vaugh & Neal (2001) suggests that if students do not improve their comprehension levels to a standard that matches their reading accuracy then they are going to experience the difficulties reaching the expectations of interpreting a diverse range of text in the middle to the late years of primary schooling. It is therefore paramount that students are explicitly taught strategies to aid in the comprehension of text both literal and critical comprehension skills. Fisk & Hurst (2003) noted that using paraphrasing strategy not only gives students a reason to read but also encourages them to keep reading and keep learning together. Fisk & Hurst (2003) note that it is when all modes of communication including reading, writing, listening and speaking are used in conjunction then student's are more likely to understand and remember the material.

Providing students with explicit instruction in comprehension strategies can be an effective way to help students overcome difficulties understanding text (Graham & Bellert 2004).

Hagaman(2008) suggest that there is one strategy that meets this criteria, it is the "RAP" paraphrasing strategy (Schumake, Denton & Deshler, 1984). This is the reading comprehension strategy that will be used in this study. This strategy is based on the sound theory utilizing paraphrasing to help improve memory of the main idea and details in text (Hagaman2008). In this strategy students are taught an acronym, "RAP," to help them remember the comprehension strategy. This strategy has three steps to it. The **R** is to - read the text, the **A** - is

to ask questions about the main idea and details and the **P-** is to put the ideas into your own words and to try and change as many words as you can.

Schumaker et al.(1984) reported in this study that students who were taught to use RAP strategies increased their recall of text from 48% to 84%. Katims & Harris (1997) suggest that the **RAP** acronym is an effective strategy for students to use because acronyms are taught to students in order to trigger or activate their inner, cognitive dialogues. They continue to say that the acronym reminds students who use the strategy to keep “rapping” or talking to themselves as a way to improve their reading comprehension.

In conjunction with paraphrasing strategy I also used synonyms as a component of this study. The focus of introducing synonyms with paraphrasing is to build on word development and to also give students the vocabulary to put the text in their own words. Biemiller (2003) suggests that students need to be explicitly taught vocabulary and it should not be left to chance and that the acquisition of phonological skills and learning mathematics is explicitly taught, so too should the acquisition of vocabulary knowledge. Biemiller(2003) then continues to say that acquiring a normal vocabulary is a prerequisite for reading comprehension and that the impact that low vocabulary has on reading comprehension is apparent in grades three and above, when comprehension of written material begins to exceed many children’s vocabulary.

The present investigation aims to explore the effects of teaching the paraphrasing strategy to a small group of eight students in grade three, with a particular focus on the use of synonyms as a skill that will assist in paraphrasing. The purpose of explicitly teaching synonyms in conjunction with paraphrasing is to promote vocabulary growth for students and improve in their choices of words in their oral and written language. Katims & Harris (1997) noted that the paraphrasing strategy has been demonstrated to significantly increase the reading comprehension of students with or without learning difficulties.

Prediction

Teaching eight middle year students of mixed ability paraphrasing and synonyms development will improve literal comprehension in all students regardless of their academic ability.

Method

Design

The study uses an OXO design in which the gain in literal comprehension following the explicit teaching of synonyms and paraphrasing is monitored for Year 3 students. The study compares two groups of students, a control group and an intervention group.

Participants

The participants in this study were sixteen grade three students with eight students in each group. The groups chosen were of mixed ability and gender. Refer to Table 1 below for the participants in the study. The reason for selecting mixed ability and gender was because I wanted to observe if all students benefit from using the strategies and if there was a significant effect on their comprehension of text. The reason for this study is that the school focus for the next three years is to improve the literal and critical comprehension of text in the middle to late primary levels within the school. Concerns have been raised with the scores from the schools NAPLAN testing in recent years and it substantiated that students performed low in the comprehension of text. The students were chosen based on their Torch scores testing which was administered at the beginning of the year by their classroom teacher.

Table 1: Participants in the study

Intervention Group	Age in Months	Gender	Years of Schooling
Student 1	101	Female	4
Student 2	101	Male	4
Student 3	105	Female	4
Student 4	103	Male	4
Student 5	106	Male	4
Student 6	97	Male	4
Student 7	104	Female	4
Student 8	101	Female	4
Control Group	Age in Months	Gender	Years of Schooling
Student 1	95	Male	4
Student 2	110	Female	4
Student 3	104	Female	4
Student 4	95	Female	4
Student 5	105	Female	4
Student 6	118	Male	5
Student 7	111	Male	4
Student 8	119	Female	5

Materials

The students were given two tests for this studies both pre and post testing was administered. The first test was assessing the reading comprehension of each student and the Torch test was also administered. The text used for this test was Grasshopper text. The second test was the

Synonym Task (Munro 2005) the pre testing of this test was done individually as I was unaware that it could be done as a whole group test and the post testing of the synonym test was performed as a whole group. The results for the difference in the administration of the test was significant for one student who has learning difficulties, he scored better at the pre test than at the post test.

Material Used in the lessons are as follows:

- **Collection of Fiction Text from Aesop's Fables:**

- The Fox and the Leopard
- The Ant and the Grasshopper
- The Tortoise and the Hare
- The Farmer and the Stork
- The Boy Who Cried Wolf

- **Non Fiction Text from Rigby Literacy Collection Phase 1: What Are Lizards?**
Rigby Literacy Collection Phase 1: Middle Primary "Water Dragon" - Mind Map and Literary Description
- **Thesauruses**
- **Activities for synonym component of the lesson** (look at lesson plans for details)
- **Whiteboard and markers**
- **Computer**

Procedure

Eight Students with mixed ability were chosen to see the effects that the paraphrasing strategy using the acronym RAP has on improving reading comprehension of text. There was then a second component of explicit instruction in the use of synonyms to aid students with putting ideas into their own words. The eight students were withdrawn from the classroom during the writing block for one hour. The students had four lessons in a week and ten lessons were taught with another two sessions for pre and post testing. Students in the classroom continued to participate in the regular classroom program with instruction that paraphrasing and synonyms were not to be taught.

The first and last session were dedicated to pre and post testing. The Torch test for the pre testing was administered by the classroom teacher three weeks before I began teaching the lessons so I used the results and did not administer another test for Torch. I did however administer the Synonym test (Munro 2005) individually in the pre test as at this stage I was

unaware that there was a group test to administer. The marking of the synonym test was as prescribed by Munro (2005). During final session for the post testing I administered both Torch and Synonym test to the students. The control group remained with the classroom teacher and she administered the test and I administered it to the control group. This was to maximise time.

The ten sessions were broken up into two sections. During first half hour the focus was to develop their use of synonyms. The second half of the session was focused on paraphrasing using the RAP acronym. Refer to Appendix 1 for full details of the lesson plan. The duration of each session was an hour with the last five minutes the students shared what they had learnt in the session that day with the whole group.

The first two sessions were to introduce the students to synonyms. They were introduced to the term and a series of different activities were provided to the students so that they could become immersed in the concepts. I also introduced the students to a thesaurus and we spent time using the thesaurus as a group. I felt that the students needed to have a firm grasp of how to use a thesaurus. I did not introduce the RAP acronym in these sessions as I wanted to see how the students performed with paraphrasing text. I had no benchmark of what they could do as I am not the classroom teacher. Some students found paraphrasing the text extremely difficult and many were unable to remember parts of the text. I found that this gave me an insight into what the students were capable of.

In the remaining sessions the students used the acronym RAP and I explicitly taught the students step by step how to paraphrase using fiction text and non-fiction text. During each session the students reflected on the reading material from the session before. At the start of each session we revised what a synonym is and we also revised the acronym RAP and used the text from the session before to revise the step before introducing a new text for the day.

The next five sessions I used fiction text, from the collection of Aesop's Fables and in the remaining sessions I used non-fiction text from the Rigby Collection. The focus for the nonfiction text was reptiles as the students were very interested in this topic. In each session the teacher first models the reading of the text whilst the students follow reading the text silently. Then we reread the text for a second time as a whole group. A general discussion was had and then students worked individually to find the synonyms from the text that was underlined. Once they had found all the synonyms they then rewrote the text with the new synonyms. Then in pairs the students read the text to each other discussing if the correct synonyms were picked. A few students would then read the text with the new synonyms out to the whole group and we had a quick discussion about words used. The final stage was that the students would hand up the text they had written and they would then paraphrase the text

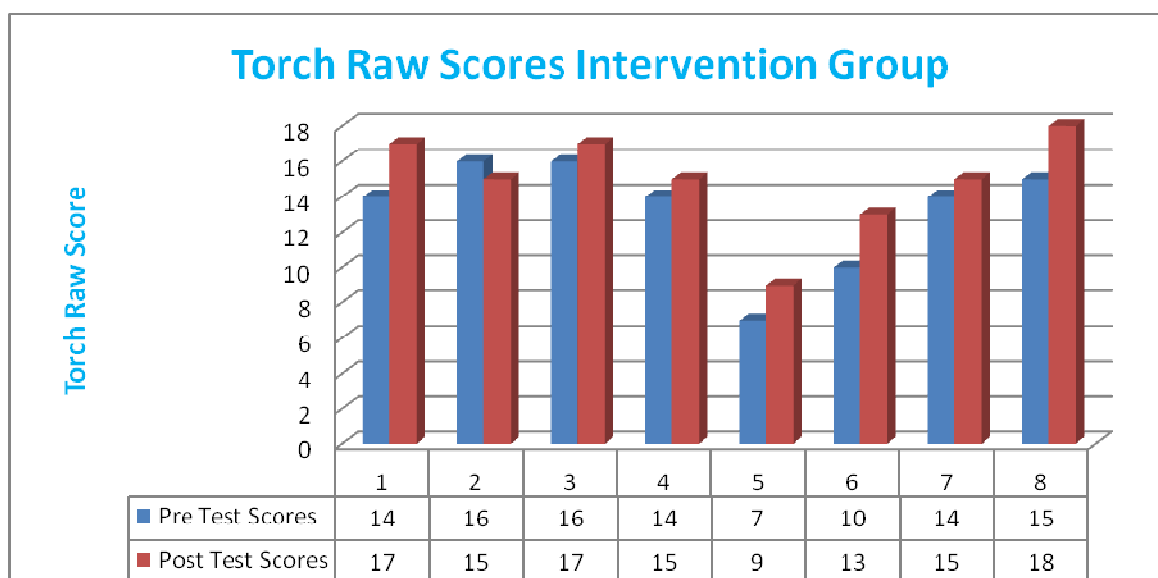
using their new words. The focus of this was to see how much of the text they could remember and if the new synonyms learnt for the day were being used.

The students made steady progress each session and I began to see dramatic improvement with the speed at which the students would complete the set task and how they were becoming more independent as each session passed. At the end of the sessions when students had share time they would say that they felt confident to use the RAP strategy at home and in the classroom. They felt that it really helped them remember the text. This was affirming to hear the students reflecting their thoughts with the group as a whole and to get positive feedback about using the strategy.

RESULTS

The results indicate that the hypothesis was inconclusive and that a longer study would need to be undertaken to see the effectiveness of explicitly teaching grade three students to use the paraphrasing strategy in conjunction with the acronym RAP. There was however, a significant increase in the development of vocabulary in the intervention group through the explicitly teaching synonyms. The results show that students from both groups displayed varying degrees of increase in reading comprehension levels in the post testing. Although the intervention group made marginal gains in the Torch test and it can be said that the post testing results are inconclusive and that the more substantial gains were made in the synonym test.

Figure 1: Torch Scores for the Intervention Group Pre and Post Testing



In Figure 1 the students in the intervention group displayed marginal improvement in their Torch Score with the exception of student two who scored lower in the post testing. This student in the post testing scored one less than the pre testing. It is apparent that this student has not made any movement the intervention group. It is interesting to note that the remaining seven students all made varying degrees of improvement. Students three, four and seven all made a 5% increase in their Torch Score which is not significant enough to say that the strategy has helped to improve their reading comprehension. Student one showed a 7.9% increase and student five made an 11% increase which is somewhat notable as the student has been identified at being at risk. Students six and eight made a substantial increase at 16% in their reading comprehension over a short period of time.

It is plausible to say that looking at the results above the students' have benefited from this study and that to see the effectiveness of the strategy a longer study would need to be performed. Students would need a longer time to consolidate the strategy to develop a greater understanding for the strategy. If a longer time frame was allowed and the students had more time to consolidate the strategy it would be plausible to say that they would continue to make further improvement. This is something that I would like to continue to monitor this year using the intervention students.

Figure 2: Torch Scores for the Control Group Pre and Post Testing

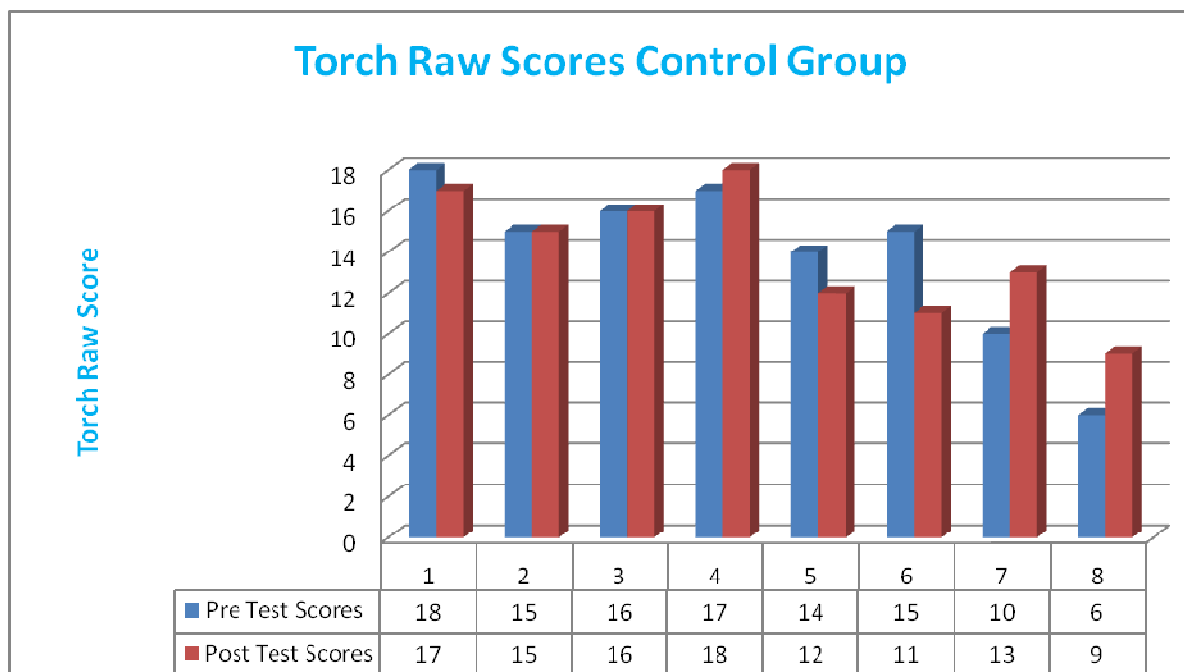


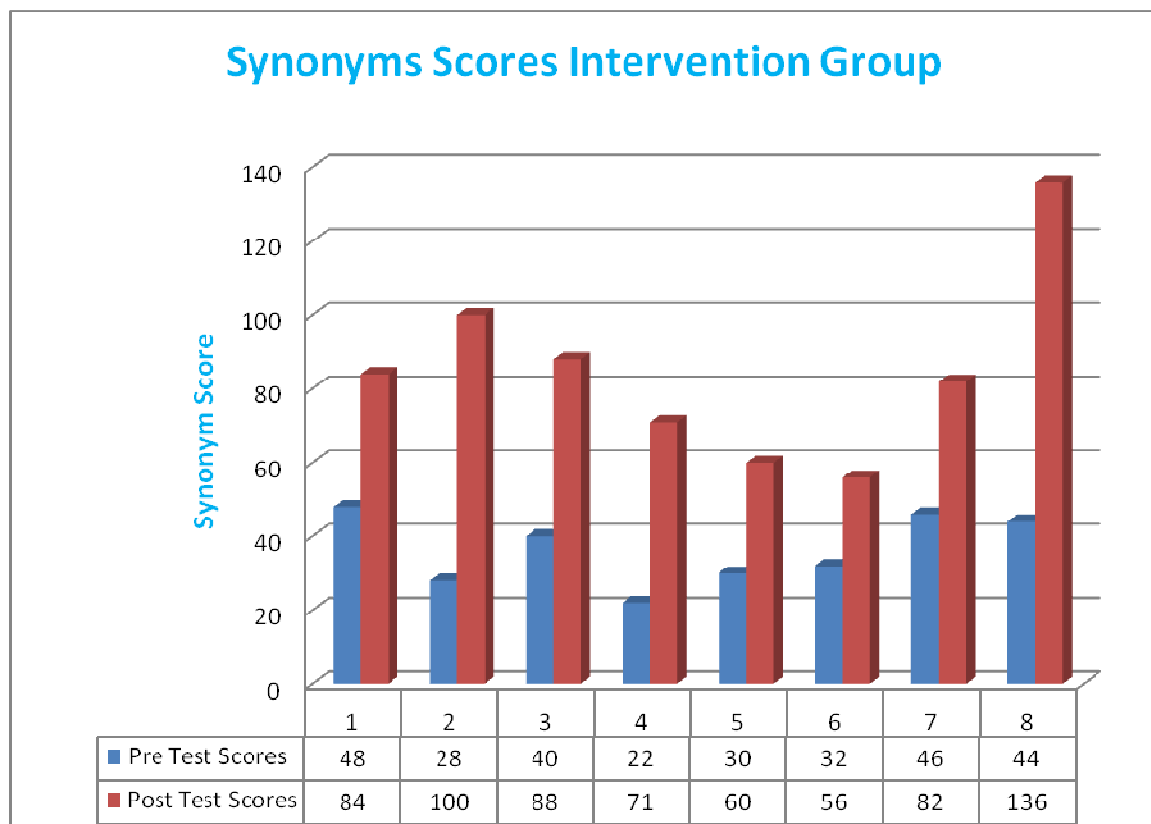
Figure 2 shows the results of the control group Torch scores and there are varying gains in this group with half the students making slight gains or remaining at the same level. Students seven and eight made a 16% increase in post testing which is a substantial gain. Both these students are identified as being students at risk and are being closely monitored in the classroom with both on individual learning plans. Students five and six made substantial decrease in the test which will need to be discussed with the classroom teacher. It is then credible to say with comparing both the intervention and control group using figures 1 and 2 that the intervention group post testing results indicate an upward trend with the performance of the comprehension task and that the hypothesis that paraphrasing using the RAP acronym does improve comprehension levels. It is at this point that I would like to now continue using the strategy and then retest and see the results and if it is a plausible strategy.

Figure 3: The average score for the Torch Test Pre and Post Testing

Torch Test	Intervention Group	Control Group
Pre Test Scores	13.25	13.87
Post Test Scores	14.87	13.87

Figure 3 shows that the intervention group displayed a slight growth in the average score for the Torch test for both pre and post testing. The results did not support the hypothesis that the paraphrasing strategy using the RAP acronym would improve reading comprehension, the results are inconclusive. The control group made no increase or decrease in the average score of the pre and post testing of the Torch Test. Although the scores for the Torch Test were inconclusive I felt that the students did improve in the comprehension of the text that they read during the lessons. This was evident in the final activity when the students had to rewrite the text in their own words with no support using the new synonyms. The students were completing this task quickly towards the end of the session and the accuracy to which they wrote the text was impressive. I also found that students felt that they used the strategy both in the classroom and at home. I believe that if it was a longer study that the results would have been different and the students would have had time to consolidate what they had learnt. This is an avenue that I would like to continue at a later date.

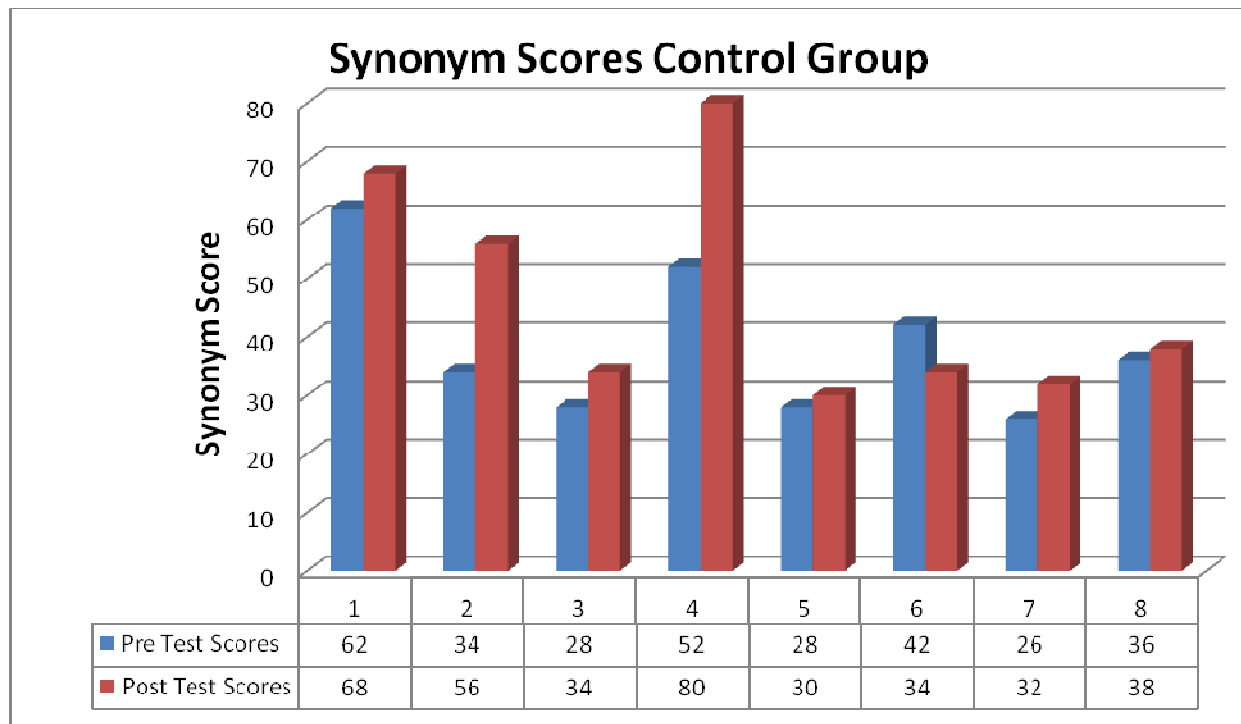
Figure 4: Synonym Test for the Intervention Group Pre and Post Testing



On the post testing of synonyms test, students in the intervention group obtained considerably accelerated scores compared to the control group. When analysing Figure 4 it is evident that the students in the intervention group have made significant gains in the development of vocabulary through the explicitly teaching synonyms. The teaching of synonyms have not supported the hypothesis of this study and although the students have made significant gains in vocabulary development their reading comprehension did not improve enough to say that the hypothesis is supported. A longer study would need to be undertaken in this area to see if by developing student's vocabulary will improve reading comprehension in text. Harmon (1998) reinforces this point as he states that students who have an enriched vocabulary are more likely to be competent readers than those with a limited vocabulary. The need for a rich vocabulary is paramount as students move up into the middle to upper levels of schooling. In having a vast vocabulary students will be able to paraphrase more effectively as they have the vocabulary knowledge required.

Student eight showed significant improvement in the development of synonyms, the student more than tripled her score from her pre testing score and the student's Torch test increased by 16% which is a substantial increase over a short period of time.

Figure 5: Synonym Test for the Control Group Pre and Post Testing



In Figure 5, the results show that there were varying gains made by students in the control group. Student two and student four made the most sizeable improvement with no intervention, the remaining six students made minor progress in their vocabulary. It is reasonable to say that the control group has shown that with no intervention and explicit teaching of synonyms that vocabulary development was minor compared to that of the intervention group except in the case of student two and four.

Synonym Test	Intervention Group	Control Group
Pre Test Scores	36.25	38.5
Post Test Scores	84.63	46.5

Figure 6: The average score for the Synonym Test Pre and Post Testing

Figure 6 illustrates the vast improvement made between the intervention group and the control group. The pre and post test scores show that the intervention group average was more than doubled and it is plausible to say that a substantial improvement was made in the development of vocabulary through the explicit teaching of synonyms. The control group made a marginal increase in the post testing however scores demonstrate that if students are not explicitly taught vocabulary development then the progress will be minor. For students to have an enriched vocabulary it is paramount that they are explicitly taught such strategies.

Discussion:

The purpose of this study was to see whether teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to students using the RAP acronym would improve reading comprehension of grade three students. The improvement was assessed by comparing the performance of the students in two tests The Torch Test and the Synonym Test (Munro 2005) with both the pre and post test scores. There were two groups in this study and the hypothesis was that the intervention group was the group who were explicitly taught paraphrasing and synonyms to improve reading comprehension. The results to this study are inconclusive as the teaching of paraphrasing has shown little impact on the students reading comprehension.

A plausible argument can be made that the students reading comprehension did not improve as the length of time for the study was not adequate. During the ten sessions I could see the improvement that the students made with their understanding of text. All students seemed to have a better understanding of the text and were able to recall more information from the text. This was evident in the recounts the students made at the end of each session. I noticed that as the sessions progressed the students' recounts were more accurate. The students' use of synonyms to change words in the text helped them to develop a deeper understanding of the text; it also enriched their vocabulary development. This point was illustrated by the students

when we had reflection time at the end of each session. They said that they were using the RAP strategy and were using their thesaurus to change words. I believe that this is an excellent achievement over a short period of time and that by giving students appropriate strategies to use, that further development will follow. Therefore, the immediate results have not been seen but I wonder if in the future with consolidation of this strategy, improvement would be evident. This is something that I would further like to do with all the class this year and retest at the end of the year to see if a longer study will show improvement in this area.

The most significant improvement in the performance of the students was in the Synonym Test where the result for the intervention group for the post testing was of a substantial nature. The students all made impressive gains and their vocabulary development reached well beyond my expectation for such a short period of time. It can be said that the students in the intervention group appeared to have made noteworthy gains with the explicit teaching of synonyms. Biemiller (2003) suggests that the primary grade teacher should devote at least half an hour a day to developing vocabulary because building vocabulary is as important as learning to identify printed words. He continues to say that children need to acquire vocabulary knowledge the same way they acquire phonic skills, spelling and learning mathematics. Through this study I have come to realize that not enough emphasis on vocabulary developmental skills in the classroom is being achieved in the early years of primary school. This could be the reason we are facing that students from grade three and up are finding that they can read text but have very poor comprehension skills.

Biemiller (2003) states that by the time students get to grade three the gap in reading skills become too large for many children to catch up and that we cannot leave vocabulary acquisition to incidental factors such as oral language, chance and television. Rupley, Logan & Nicholas (1999) suggest that an interactive vocabulary instruction encourages children to discuss, elaborate and demonstrate meanings of new words and this would improve their overall reading comprehension.

Although the results to the hypothesis are inconclusive the work of Katims & Harris (1997), Fisk and Hurst (2003), Graham & Bellert (2004), Hagaman (2008) and Alfassi (2004), McCray, Vaughn & Neal (2001), Underwood & Pearson (2004), Hagaman (2008) all suggest that teaching a paraphrasing strategy will improve the comprehension of text. The results although inconclusive in this study appear to be positive as students showed improvement in the retell of text in each session, however, it did not impact on their Torch Test results. If the study was extended it would be interesting to see the results.

Katmis & Harris (1997) state that it is beneficial to use the RAP acronym so that the students can remember the steps when paraphrasing and the students did achieve this extremely well as they associate RAP with music. The students were able to articulate the step of paraphrasing at the beginning of every session and the students all wanted a laminated poster to take home refer to Appendix 2. Many students stated how the strategy helped them remember to improve the comprehension of the text.

In summary, it is plausible to say that although the results are inconclusive and the students reading comprehension did not improve that the students have learnt a valuable strategy that will be of use when reading at school and at home. The students in the intervention group have developed an enriched vocabulary and the results from the post synonym test support this. Biemiller (2003) confirms this, that student need to be explicitly taught vocabulary to cope with the complexity of reading comprehension from grade three up. I believe that this would be an excellent study to undertake in the future.

Future direction and Implication for teaching practice:

As a Literacy Leader I would like to work on the six areas below with the staff at the school:

- Have early years teachers provide explicit instruction in the comprehension strategies eg: visualisation, paraphrasing and synonyms to name a few. As a result of adding this into the curriculum, students reading comprehension will develop at a younger age and when they reach grade three, there comprehension skills will be age appropriate and beyond.
- It is also important that teacher's structure time on reflection on what the student's have learnt in the literacy sessions. This will allow students time to consolidate and verbalise there learning so that the strategies will be reinforced after each session.
- Provide students with cue cards that remind them of the strategies learnt. This will assist them in comprehension of text.
- Share the success of the research project with other teachers.
- Extend the current study of longer duration over a term and recheck the findings.
- Develop a study of longer duration which will examine the development of students vocabulary and if that has an impact on the reading comprehension of students.

These six points will give me direction for the future with the teachers at my school and it will give us a focus and direction to follow so that we can improve and raise the standards for reading comprehension in the school. This study has provided me with an excellent insight into ways that students can improve reading comprehension and the strategies that need to be explicitly taught by teachers so that students can achieve this.

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Appendix 1

Action Research- Synonyms and Paraphrasing Text

Explicit teaching of synonyms and paraphrasing skills will assist Year 3 students reading comprehension.

Lesson Plan: Session One

Whole Group Activity:

Focus: What is a synonym?

Introduction to what a synonym is read the definition together.

Look at the word BIG on the definition sheet and write some synonyms for that.

Students use a thesaurus to help them learn new words some examples are:

(large, huge, gigantic, big, vast, enormous, whopping, considerable, massive)

Write the words on the laminated sheet.

Practise using the thesaurus with other words this is done with the whole group:

Common- ordinary, general, regular, familiar, normal, frequent, universal.

Write the words as a whole group, these words are also written on the laminated sheet so we can revise them on the next session.

Group Activity:

Explain the five synonym activity rotation to the students. The focus for this will be to immerse the students with synonyms and give them the opportunity to use a thesaurus. My role is to roam between groups and to explicitly teach the students how to use a thesaurus and to observe if they have understood what a synonym is. Each activity will then be used at a later session and will be taught explicitly.

The students will do 5 activities with synonyms each activity will last for 5 minutes with a total time of 25 minutes.

Activity 1: Memory Game: flashcards with synonyms and the students need to match them the one with the most matches win.

Activity 2: Match the words with its synonym- draw lines to match words.

Activity 3: Connect the synonyms: Draw lines to match the synonyms.

Second activity uses the thesaurus to find the synonyms.

Activity 4: Circle the synonym: pick the correct synonym for the word.

Activity 5: Memory Game: flashcards with synonyms and the students need to match the words, the student with the most matches win.

Whole Group Activity:

Text Used: "The Leopard and the Fox."

Teacher has an A3 sheet with a short text and students have an A4 sheet with the same text. The text will have highlighted words that students need to find synonyms for.

- Teacher reads the text while the students follow.
- Teacher and students read the text together.
- Read together the highlighted words.
- Students find synonyms for the words in the text.
- Read to see if it makes sense.
- Swap with another student to and read the words they added in.
- Pick a student to read the text with the new synonyms.

The Final Stage:

The students will write a recount of the text in their own words hopefully using the new synonyms they have learnt.

Pick a student to read out their recount to the class.

Concluding game: Hangman- Pick a card from the memory game and show the students the word and its match then I will pick another synonym and they will need to guess it.

Lesson Plan: Session Two

Whole Group Activity:

Introduction: ask the students to tell me what a synonym is. As a group read the definition together.

Revise the word BIG that we looked up yesterday ask each student to tell me a synonym for the word.

(large, huge, gigantic, big, vast, enormous, whopping, considerable, massive)

Practice using the thesaurus as a group by looking up another word. Write the words on the laminated sheet.

Command- control, authority, rule, dominate, power, sway, lead, direct, be in charge.

Group Activity:

The students will do 5 activities with synonyms each activity will last for 5 minutes with a total time of 25 minutes. This will be last time the students will do these activities as a rotation.

Activity 1: Memory Game: flashcards with synonyms and the students need to match them the one with the most matches win.

Activity 2: Match the words with its synonym- draw lines to match words.

Activity 3: Connect the synonyms: Draw lines to match the synonyms.

Second activity uses the thesaurus to find the synonyms.

Activity 4: Circle the synonym: pick the correct synonym for the word.

Activity 5: Memory Game: flashcards with synonyms and the students need to match them the one with the most matches win.

Whole Group Activity:

Text Used: "The Leopard and the Fox."

Teacher has an A3 sheet with a short text and students have an A4 sheet with the same text. The text will have highlighted words that students need to find synonyms for.

- Teacher reads the text while the students follow.
- Teacher and students read the text together.
- Read together the highlighted words.
- Students find synonyms for the words in the text.
- Read to see if it makes sense.

- Swap with another student to and read the words they added in.
- Pick a student to read the text with the new synonyms.

The Final Stage:

The students will write a recount of the text in their own words hopefully using the new synonyms they have learnt.

Pick a student to read out their recount to the class.

Concluding game: Hangman- Pick a card from the memory game and show the students the word and its match then I will pick another synonym and they will need to guess it.

Lesson Plan: Session Three

Whole Group Activity:

Introduction: the focus of this session is to introduce the students to the strategy of paraphrasing.

Things you can do that will help you to remember what you read.

1. *Make a picture in your mind.*
2. *Another thing is called paraphrasing.*

This is what you can do - tell yourself what you have read. After you have read the sentence, you say it to yourself, in your own way. You try to change as many words as you can.

Let's practice it as whole group:

Sentence read	Teacher	Students paraphrase
A monster came to live in a city. He wanted to find a place to live.	Read sentence twice Model paraphrasing: This monster moved to a new town. He needed to get a house for him to stay in. Now you try saying it in your own words	
He needs to get to know the city. After he bought a map he looked for a bus.	Read sentence twice Model paraphrasing: He wants to find what is in the town. First he got a map. Then he searched around for a bus stop.	

Use the text from yesterday "**The Leopard and the Fox**" and get the children to paraphrase the text sentence by sentence. This will be done as a whole group.

The teacher will pick various students to paraphrase the sentence from the text to monitor if they have understood how to paraphrase.

Introduce the new text for today and as a group we will paraphrase together.

New Text: "The Ant and the Grasshopper"

Once we have done the paraphrasing together and I am happy that they have grasped the concept, they can then go to their tables and find new synonyms in the text. Then they will rewrite it and retell the story in their own word to the partner they are working with.

Pick two students to read the text with new synonyms and then get them to paraphrase the whole text in their own words.

I will collect the text and the students will rewrite the text using new synonyms.

Pick a student to read out their recount.

Whole Group Activity: Memory Game on the floor and mix both GROUP 1 & GROUP 5 cards together. Talk about the meanings of words as we go.

Lesson Plan: Session Four

Whole Group Activity:

Revise the strategy of paraphrasing and also what is a synonym.

Synonyms:

Students look up a synonym.

Then reread it for a second time and paraphrase the text sentence for sentence. The teacher picks different students to paraphrase the sentences. At the end pick two students to paraphrase the text.

The students then go back to their tables and find synonyms for the words in the text.

Then they read the text to a partner to see if it makes sense.

Final Stage is that they then write the story in their own words hopefully using the new synonyms.

Pick three students to read the recounts to the whole group.

Lesson Plan: Session Five

Whole Group Activity: Synonyms

Revise the strategy of paraphrasing and also what is a synonym, the children will say in their own words

1. What is a synonym? 2. What do we do when we paraphrase?

Write in point form what is the process of paraphrasing.

Activity One- Synonyms:

As a whole group using the word wheels find synonyms for words in the thesaurus. The students will pick the words to investigate. Talk and discuss the words as we go. Pick three words.

The students then will put one of these words in a sentence.

Activity Two- Synonyms Worksheet:

The students need to circle the synonym for each given word. Students do this individually and then as a class come together and have a discussion about it.

Whole Group Activity: Paraphrasing

FOCUS: Paraphrasing at sentence level using factual text.

Text: "The Farmer and the Stork"- Aesop's Fable

As a group read the text together.

Then reread it for a second time and paraphrase the text sentence for sentence. The teacher picks different students to paraphrase the sentences. At the end pick two students to paraphrase the text.

The students then go back to their tables and find synonyms for the words in the text.

Then they read the text to a partner to see if it makes sense.

Final Stage is that they then write the story in their own words hopefully using the new synonyms.

Pick three students to read the recounts to the whole group.

Lesson Plan: Session Six

Whole Group Activity: Synonyms

Introduction: Read and revise a definition of synonym.

Activity 1: Students sit in a circle each child gives a word and someone in the group suggest a synonym.

Activity 2: In pairs children have two f flashcards with words; they need to write 4 synonyms for each word. Come together as a group and write the synonyms on a A3 sheet of paper.

Whole Group Activity: Paraphrasing

FOCUS: Paraphrasing at sentence level using factual text.

Revise what paraphrasing means. Introduce what R.A.P means and how we can use it when reading text. Text: "The Hare and Tortoise.

Read the text together and ask if they have heard this story before as it is a well known text. Paraphrase the text at sentence level picking different students to paraphrase the text.

Then reread it for a second time and paraphrase the text sentence for sentence. The teacher picks different students to paraphrase the sentences. At the end pick two students to paraphrase the text.

The students then go back to their tables and find synonyms for the words in the text.

Then they read the text to a partner to see if it makes sense.

Final Stage is that they then write the story in their own words hopefully using the new synonyms.

Pick three students to read the recounts to the whole group.

Lesson Plan: Session Seven

Whole Group Activity: Synonyms

FOCUS:

Introduction: Read and revise a definition of synonym.

Activity 1: The activity from the previous lesson the children had a flashcard with a word and in groups they had to find four synonyms for that word. We placed the synonyms on the whiteboard as shown below.

huge
massive big large
king size

Today's lesson I will remove the cards from the middle of the words and they will need to place the flashcard with the correct synonyms.

Activity 2: Worksheet form group work in lesson1&2 – Draw a line to match the synonyms. Students do this individually. Then as a group, go through the words together having a discussion about each word and if they know any other synonyms for that word.

FOCUS: Paraphrasing a t sentence level using factual text.

Revise what is paraphrasing and revise what R.A.P is and how we use it.

Short passage Amazing Lizards – Rigby Literacy Collection Phase 1: “What Are Lizards?” Page 2-3

Teacher reads the text aloud will the student follow the text.

Student and teacher read the text together and paraphrase every third sentence. At the end of the short paragraph select two students to paraphrase the passage.

Activity : Students now will go and paraphrase the text.

Pick three students to come out and read it to the group.

Lesson Plan: Session Eight

FOCUS: Paraphrasing at sentence level using factual text.

Revise what is paraphrasing and revise what R.A.P is and how we use it.

Short passage Amazing Lizards – Rigby Literacy Collection Phase 1:

Each page has a description of a type of lizard from page 4 – 21, every student will pick a type of lizard and they will read the text and then paraphrase the text and write it in their own words. Each student will read their recount out to the group.

Lesson Plan: Session Nine

FOCUS: Paraphrasing a t sentence level using factual text.

Revise what is paraphrasing and revise what R.A.P is and how we use it.

Rigby Literacy Collection Phase 1: Middle Primary “Water Dragon” Mind Map and Literary Description. Page 56 – 57

Whole Group Activity:

Water Dragon Mind Map – Using the words from the Mind Map each student makes a sentence with the words and the student writes it on a sentence strip. They then read the sentence they wrote to the group. In pairs they swop the sentence strip and each student needs to paraphrases the sentence the other student has written. The teacher then picks a few students to read it out.

Then as a group read the Literary Description of the Water Dragon.

In pairs student will get a sentence strip with a sentence from the literary description that the teacher has written. The students need to pick two words to find synonyms and then paraphrase that sentence. Each group will come up and read the sentence that is paraphrased with the new synonyms.

At the end of the session each student will tell the group what they have learnt from today's session and how paraphrasing has helped them.

Lesson Plan: Session Ten

FOCUS: Paraphrasing at sentence level using factual text.

Revise what is paraphrasing and revise what R.A.P is and how we use it.

Introduction: Circle game – One student says a word and the next person gives a synonym for that word.

Thesaurus Race- one person says a word and there is a race to find a synonym in the thesaurus.

Individual Group Activity:

As a whole group we will read the text - "Water Dragons." (From Rigby Collection 1) This text was used in lesson 9. Four students will do activity sheet 1 and five students will do activity sheet 2.

The activity sheet has half of the text written on it and they need to read the text, find synonyms for the underlined words and then rewrite the text in their own words.

Each student will read their paraphrased text to a partner and then out to the class. When they read it to their partner the focus will be if it makes sense and if any adjustments need to be made.

Concluding Activity:

Each student will write a reflection on how the ten lessons have helped them in their comprehension of text.

What have we done to understand our reading?

How does it help?

When will you use these strategies?

Have you already used them and when?

APPENDIX 2

R.A.P

Read the sentence

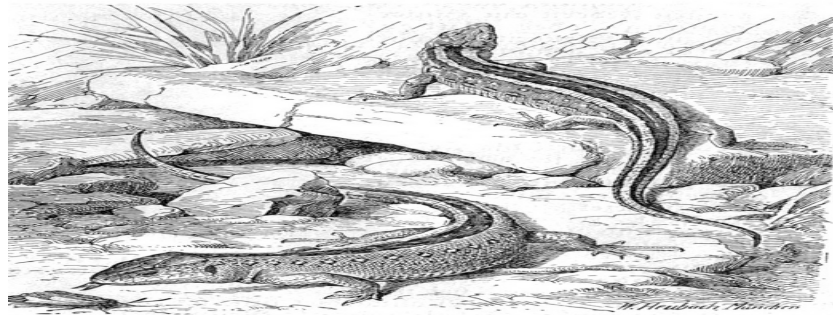
Ask what it means

and

Put it in your own

words

WHAT ARE LIZARDS?



WATER DRAGONS

The lizards were water dragons. They were ***big*** with ***wide***, flat bodies shaped like ***great broad*** leaves. Their tails were ***thin***, like whips and the dragons could move as ***fast*** as a whip.

big _____

wide _____

great _____

broad _____

thin _____

fast _____

Rewrite the text using a new synonym.

WATER DRAGONS

If they were frightened, they lifted their heads and opened their mouth very wide. Then they could see their pink tongues, and a long row of small, flat teeth. With the spiky bristles under their chins, they looked fierce, but really they were friendly and a little bit shy.

frightened _____

small _____

flat _____

spiky _____

fierce _____

shy _____

Rewrite the text using a new synonym.
