

Teaching Year Four students with learning difficulties the Paraphrasing Strategy, with the explicit teaching in the use of synonyms improves reading comprehension.

Abstract

Not all students in the early years of schooling experience success when learning to read. These students that exhibit early learning difficulties will continue to struggle with reading and comprehension in the middle years of primary school and they will have difficulty in acquiring reading skills and reading comprehension.

Existing research on the teaching of comprehension emphasizes that teaching cognitive strategies to students and in particular, to students with learning difficulties, improves reading comprehension. This study hypothesizes that teaching Year Four students with learning difficulties the Paraphrasing Strategy, with explicit teaching in the use of synonyms, improves reading comprehension.

This study uses the Paraphrasing Strategy to help students retell the facts they read in non-fiction texts. The acronym RAP: 1) Read the Text 2) Ask yourself questions about the main ideas and details 3) Put the main ideas and details into your own words, was used to help students remember the steps in the process. The teaching unit also included explicit teaching in the use of synonyms and contributed to increasing comprehension.

Eight Year Four students participated in the study. Four students were in the intervention group and four students were in the control group. The intervention group with learning difficulties were withdrawn to participate in the teaching unit. The other group of four Year Four students acted as the control group. Intervention sessions followed a predictable format with each lesson including explicit teaching of synonyms, reading the text, identifying key words and main ideas, paraphrasing and reflecting on the learning.

Ongoing monitoring during the teaching and the post testing results showed a significant improvement in paraphrasing, use of synonyms and increased comprehension in the intervention group.

The results suggest that explicit teaching of this strategy for students with learning difficulties improves comprehension.

Introduction

We know that learning to read is not a simple process. Reading is a complex process, one that involves “multi levels of text processing” (Munro, 2006). Most children successfully learn to read and comprehend in the early years of school. However, for students in the middle years of primary school with learning difficulties, reading is a difficult process and consequently, they have poor reading comprehension.

This difficulty is observed in their skill level and often in their motivation. Characteristics may include, neglecting to re-read or neglecting to employ self-correcting strategies, omitting words or inserting inappropriate words, ignoring punctuation or reading without attention to phrasing. Generally, these students cannot read fluently and cannot easily engage in reading.

In examining the research on the teaching of comprehension it has been emphasised that teaching cognitive strategies to students and in particular to students with learning difficulties, improves reading comprehension (Deshler & Lenz, 1989, pg 4, as cited in Katims & Harris, 1997). “Studies investigating the effects of teaching cognitive strategies to readers indicate that this type of awareness facilitates and supports reading comprehension in both average and low-achieving students” (Duffy et al., 1987; Haller, Child, & Walberg, 1988; Palincsar & Brown, 1985, pg. 2, as cited in Katims & Harris, 1997). This suggests that students with learning difficulties will benefit from explicit strategic teaching practice.

Teaching cognitive strategies to students allows them to develop independent learning skills. Katims & Harris (1997) describe teaching strategies as the necessary tools required to problem solve and learn independence, as well as a means of developing independence in student learning and development. “Instruction in strategies should be viewed by teachers and students as a vehicle for enabling students to better acquire, store, and express the information required in the general education classroom.” (Deshler & Lenz, 1989, pg 2, as cited in Katims & Harris, 1997).

Fountas and Pinnell (2006), in identifying that reading comprehension is a complex process, highlight the importance of guiding students in comprehending the literal meaning of texts as the foundation to all reading comprehension. This understanding underpins the importance of teaching students strategies to increase comprehension.

The Paraphrasing Strategy (Schumaker, Denton, & Deshler, 1984, as cited in Katims & Harris, 1997) was identified as the most appropriate strategy to increase comprehension. This strategy is a three step teaching process that allows students to comprehend at the literal level. The acronym RAP is used to remind students of the steps in the process:

1 Read the Text

2 Ask yourself questions about the main ideas and details

3 Put the main ideas and details into your own words

The use of the acronym helps students remember what to do when paraphrasing text by providing the scaffolding to learn the strategy and use it independently.

Lee and Von Colln (2003) found that developing comprehension skills using cognitive strategies in teaching practice was most effective. They also found that using cognitive strategies and showing children how to learn was an effective way of teaching children with a wide range of learning difficulties. Using the acronym RAP, assisted students to know what was required by helping them to think and carry out the steps of paraphrasing. “Cognitive strategies have been defined as how an individual thinks and acts during planning, carrying out and evaluating performance (Deshhler & Lenz, 1989, p.3 as cited in Lee & Von Colln, 2003). Whilst the study supported the Paraphrasing Strategy, Lee and Von Colln (2003) suggested that further study and research was required in order to expand this strategy to a wider student cohort.

Fisk and Hurst (2003) explain that paraphrasing improves students’ comprehension. They found that teaching students the process of paraphrasing successfully reinforces reading skills. They attribute the success of using the Paraphrasing Strategy to the fact that it “integrates all modes of communication-reading, writing, listening, and speaking” (p.182). Fisk and Hurst (2003) expanded upon Schumaker, Denton, & Deshler’s (1984) three step process, by including the four modes of communication:

- Step 1 First Reading and discussion
- Step 2 Second reading with note-taking
- Step 3 Written paraphrases
- Step 4 Sharing paraphrase

They further contended that paraphrasing should be more than an exercise in changing as many words as possible but rather, a strategy to help develop a deeper understanding of meaning.

The objective of the present study, like that of Katims and Harris (1997) was to investigate the effectiveness of explicit teaching of reading strategies on reading comprehension in students with learning difficulties. The present investigation aims to extend the earlier research by examining the effect of teaching the Paraphrasing Strategy (RAP) to include explicit teaching in the use of synonyms. A small group of Year Four students with reading difficulties were identified. Each of these students displayed lower than average reading standards. They had also been diagnosed with learning difficulties.

It was hypothesised that teaching Year Four students with learning difficulties the Paraphrasing Strategy, with the explicit teaching in the use of synonyms improves reading comprehension.

Method

Design

This study is modeled on the OX0 design. It investigates the gains made from strategic and explicit teaching of the Paraphrasing Strategy and the use of synonyms by students from the middle school, with reading difficulties. Two groups of students were targeted for the study, an intervention group and a control group.

Participants

The participants in this study were Year Four students from two classes within the school. Eight students were selected, four students from each class. The four students in the

intervention group were withdrawn from their classroom to participate in ten lessons of the Paraphrasing Strategy. Formal literacy assessment highlighted concerns regarding these students' literacy development and reading comprehension. The group was tested before and after the teaching unit.

The four students in the control group were withdrawn from their classroom for the pre and post testing tasks only. They participated in regular class lessons during the study period.

Table 1

Participants in both Intervention and Control Group

Ages as of (May 2008)

Student Group:	Age years (14/5/08)	Age months	Year Level	Male / Female	Reading Recovery	Entry R. Recovery	Exit R. Recovery	Bridges	Teacher Aid Assisted	Reading Level
Intervention										
A	9y	11m	4	M	✓	7	18	-	-	28+
B	9y	10m	4	M	✓	3	21	-	✓	28+
C	9y	9m	4	M	✓	2	14	-	-	28+
D	9y	8m	4	M	✓	4	16	-	-	28+
Student Group: Control										
E	10y	4m	4	F	✓	-	-	✓	-	28+
F	9y	10m	4	M	-	-	-	✓	-	28+
G	9y	11m	4	M	-	-	-	-	-	28+
H	10y	2m	4	F	✓	-	-	✓	-	28+

Materials

Formal Assessment:

Pre and post testing using Paraphrasing Task (Munro, J 2005)

Pre and post testing using Synonym Task (Munro, J 2005)

TORCH Reading Comprehension – Pre test, *Lizards Love Eggs*

TORCH Reading Comprehension – Post test, *At the Zoo*

Informal Assessment:

PROBE Reading passages – reading age 8-10years

Teaching Texts:

The texts used during the sessions were from KEY into reorganization level one (2003), decoding age 8-10yrs. All texts were non fiction. Eight different texts were used for the ten lessons. (Appendix 1)

Procedure

The students were pre and post-tested using John Munro's, Paraphrasing Task and Synonyms Task and the Torch reading comprehension test. The Synonym Task was administered to both the intervention and control groups at different times. The students knew that spelling was not being assessed and that if they did not know how to spell a word that they should give it their best attempt.

The Paraphrasing Task was administered individually. Attention was given to the consistency of the wording of instructions for all participants during the individual task: *'Read these sentences. Think about what you've read and try to say them in your own words. You can change as many words as you like'*.

The Torch passages were selected from Year Four texts. Students read the text silently and completed a retelling using the cloze activity. They wrote single words or phrases to complete the sentences. This was administered to both groups and completed individually. Two different texts were used for the pre and post test and raw scores were scaled for comparison.

PROBE (Prose Reading Observation, Behaviour and Evaluation of Comprehension) was used to gauge an appropriate reading level for the selection of texts to be used in the teaching sessions. Non fiction texts were used for the teaching unit.

The teaching unit was modeled on John Munro's, sequence for teaching paraphrasing (2006). Included at the beginning of each lesson was the explicit teaching of synonyms. To assist students in learning the Paraphrasing Strategy, the RAP acronym was used:

Read the Text.

Ask yourself what are the main ideas and details and

Put the ideas in your own words.

Students were encouraged to change as many key words as possible when putting the ideas into their own words. Interesting, factual texts were specially chosen to encourage student conversation. The ten lessons followed a consistent format, giving students the opportunity to learn and practice this skill. Each lesson followed a predictable format: (a) Read title and discuss the topic (b) Read the text and discuss (c) Identify keywords and list synonyms (d) Identify main ideas (e) Read one sentence at a time and put the main ideas and details into their own words using the list of synonyms (f) Reflect and share what was learnt. It was emphasised that each sentence may be paraphrased in many ways provided the meaning is not changed.

Discussion before, during and after reading was important in scaffolding the students' comprehension especially in the latter lessons where students read the text silently.

- Before Reading: *What might we expect? Does anyone know about...?*

Has anyone seen...? Who would like to predict?

- During Reading: *Connections were made with the before reading conversation*
- After Reading: *Was there any word that confused you? What did you find interesting? What was new information? How accurate was our prediction?*

Students in the intervention group were withdrawn from the class to participate in the group teaching. Lessons were conducted during the class literacy time. The teaching sessions typically lasted forty five minutes. Students returned to their class in time to join the writer's workshop. The ten lessons spanned a four week period. An eleventh lesson was added to include the whole Year Four class. The four students, who had participated in the

Intervention group returned to their classroom as “experts” in the Paraphrasing Strategy and helped the teacher explain the RAP acronym.

Students in the control group continued their learning in their class’ reading program. Post testing for both groups followed the teaching period.

Results

Figure 1.1 shows the comparison of the Intervention groups’ pre and post testing results in paraphrasing. Students A, B, C, and D, all increased their skill in paraphrasing text. Post testing showed a large increase in all participants.

Figure 1.2 compares the Control groups’ pre and post testing results in paraphrasing. Students’ results varied from increased performance in post testing results to a decline in performance.

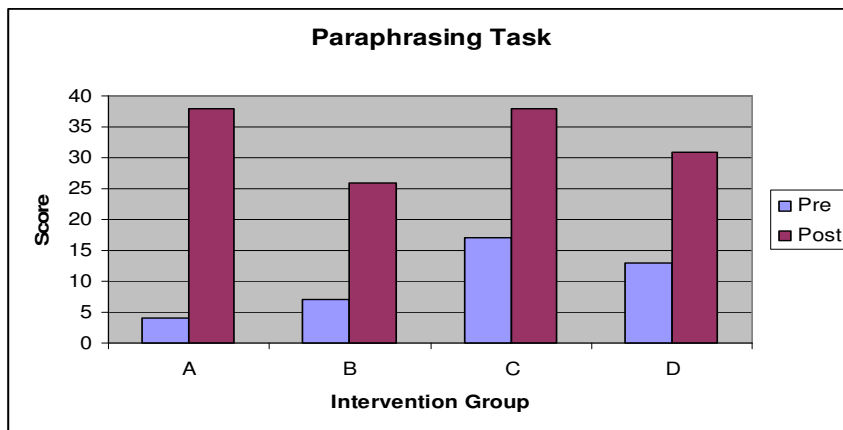


Figure 1.1 Pre and post-testing comparison of Paraphrasing Task in Intervention Group

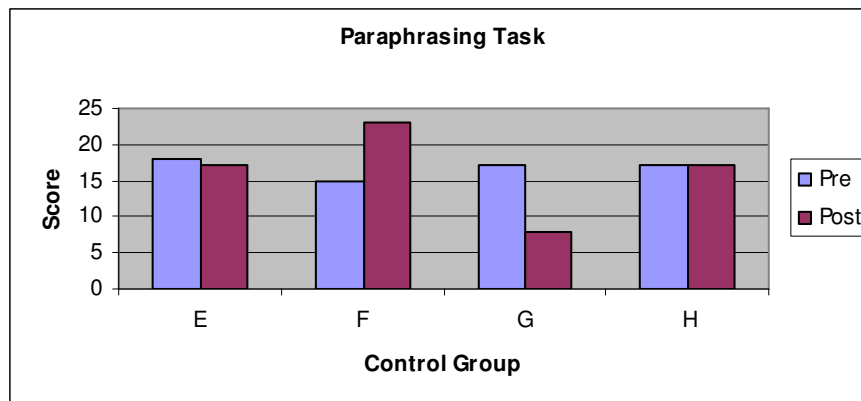


Figure 1. 2 Pre and post-testing comparison of Paraphrasing Task in Control Group

Figure 2.1 shows the comparison of the Intervention groups' pre and post testing results in synonyms. Students B and D recorded zero scores in pre-tests. Student A, B, C, and D, all increased their performance in using synonyms. Post testing showed improvement in all participants.

Figure 2.2 compares the Control groups' pre and post testing results in synonyms. Pre and post testing results showed minor variations.

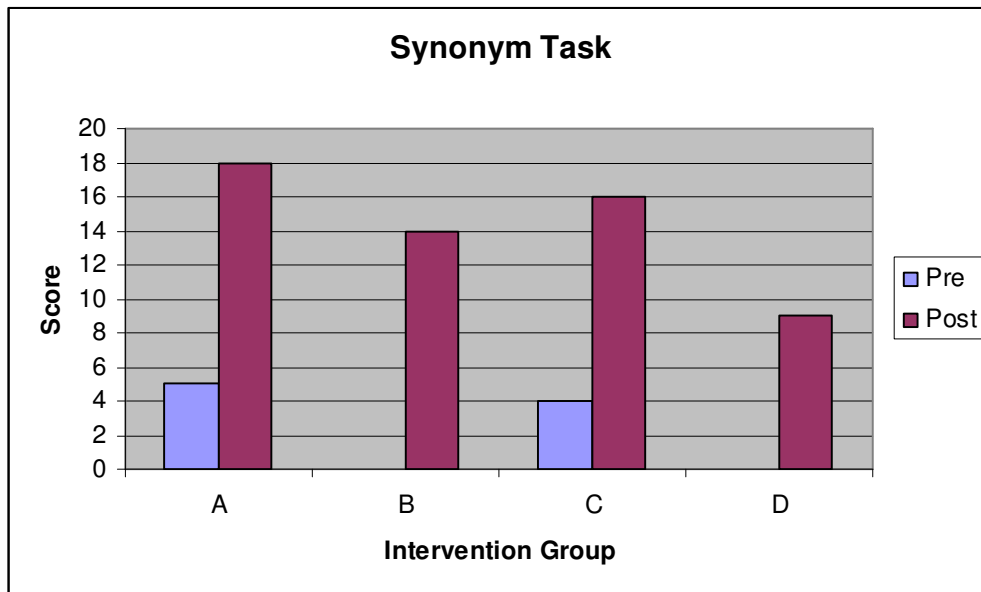


Figure 2.1 Pre and post-testing comparison of Synonym Task in Intervention Group

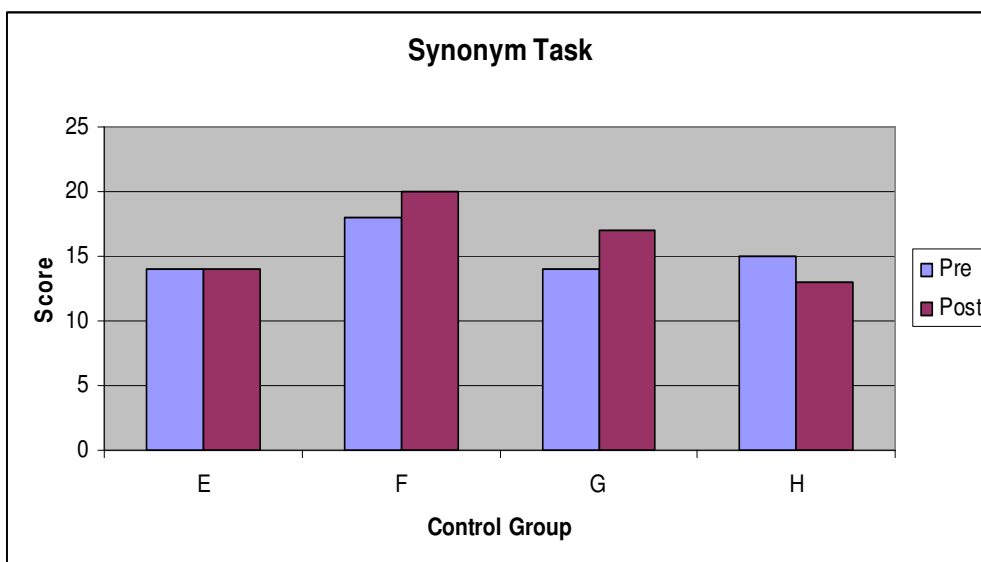


Figure 2.2 Pre and post-testing comparison of Synonym Task in Control Group

Figure 3.1 demonstrates a comparison between pre and post testing results in the Torch reading comprehension test. Student A and C showed improvement, student D made no gains, whilst student B performed better in the pre test.

In Figure 3.2, the control groups' pre and post testing results all show an increase in the post test results. All participants made some gains.

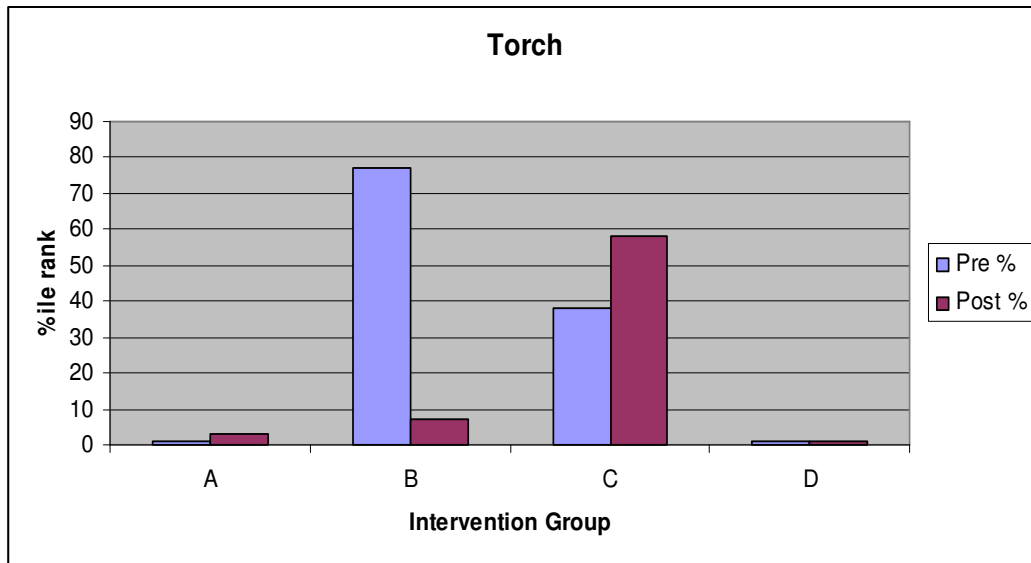


Figure 3.1 Pre and post-testing comparison of TORCH Reading Comprehension Test in Intervention Group

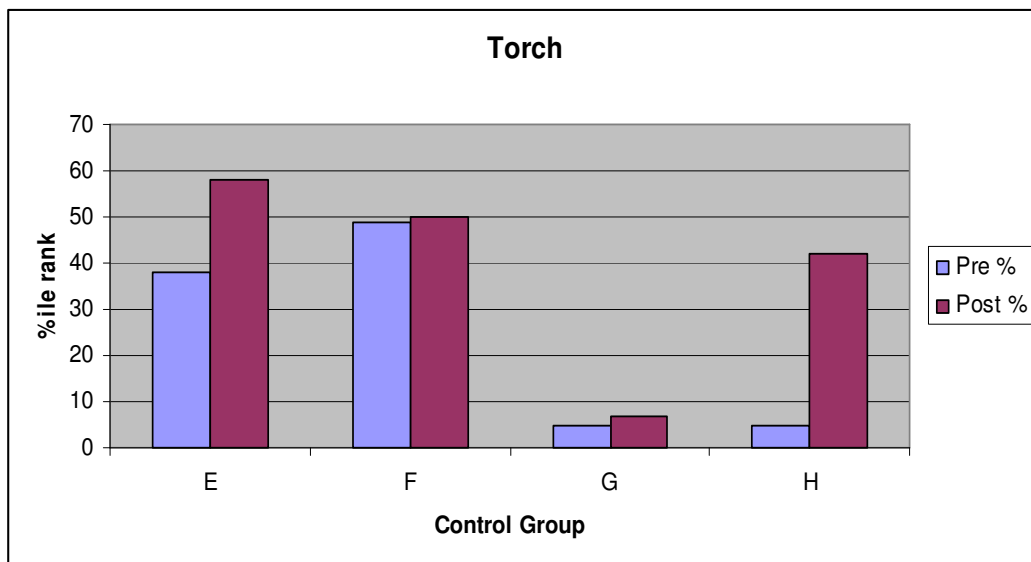


Figure 3.2 Pre and post-testing comparison of TORCH Reading Comprehension Test in Control Group

Figure 4.1 shows the average improvement between the Intervention and Control group in each of the testing tasks, (Paraphrasing task, Synonyms task and Torch reading comprehension). The intervention group greatly increased their performance in the synonym and paraphrasing tests. The control group increased their performance in the Torch test.

Figure 4.2 shows the average improvement between the Intervention and Control group in each of the testing tasks, (Paraphrasing task, synonyms task and Torch reading comprehension), excluding student B. Results of the intervention group greatly increased in the synonym and paraphrasing tasks. With the exclusion of Student B in Figure 4.2 results, the difference between the intervention and control group was reduced.

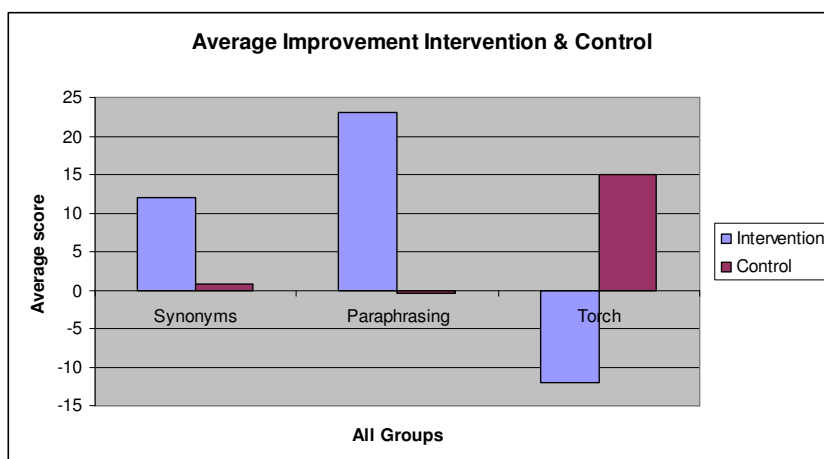


Figure 4.1 Average improvements between intervention and control group for synonyms, paraphrasing and Torch tasks

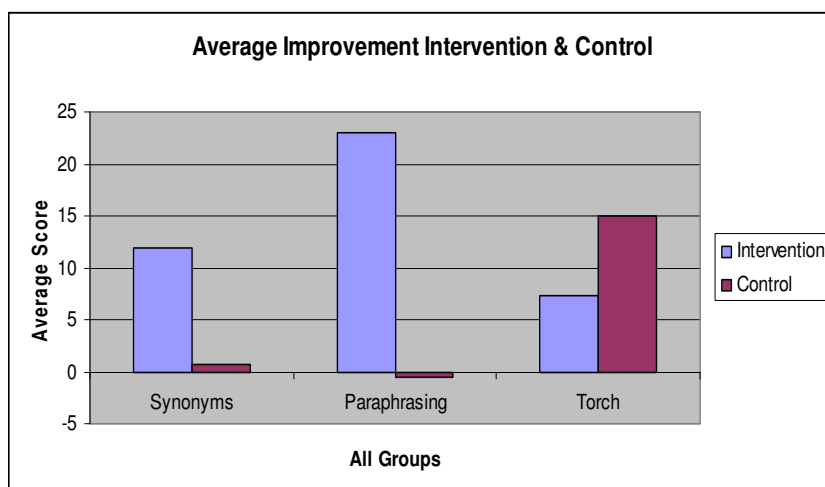


Figure 4.2 Average improvements between intervention and control group for synonyms, paraphrasing and Torch tasks, excluding Student B.

Intervention Group

Student A improved in all areas. The greatest gains were in the paraphrasing and synonym tasks. Some improvement was made in the Torch reading comprehension. (Figure 5.1)

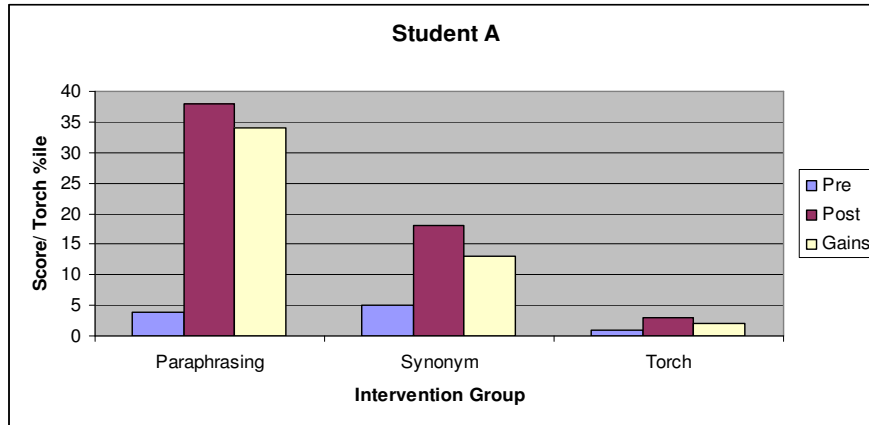


Figure 5.1 Student A. Intervention Group- Pre & Post test Comparisons

Figure 5.2 shows that student B improved in paraphrasing and synonyms tasks. There was no improvement in the Torch reading comprehension.

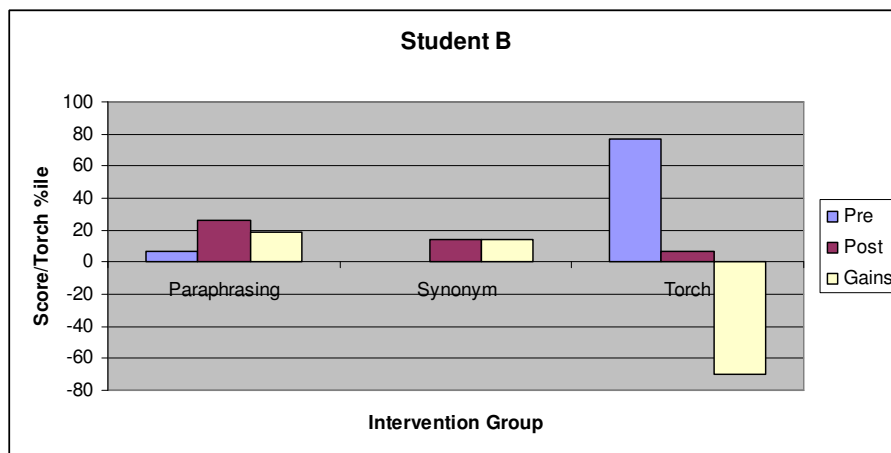


Figure 5.2 Student B. Intervention Group-Pre & Post test Comparisons

Student C, Figure 5.3, improved their performance in all three areas.

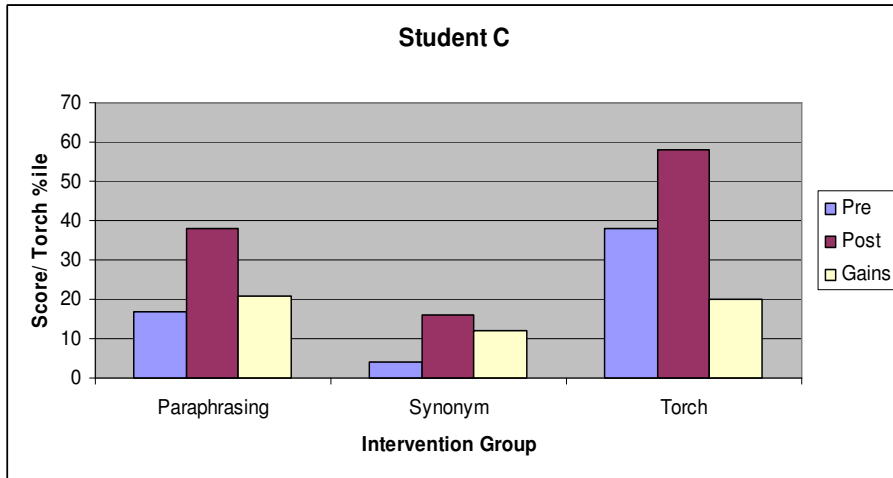


Figure 5.3 Student C. Intervention Group-Pre & Post test Comparisons

Student D improved in all areas. The greatest gains were in the paraphrasing and synonym tasks. No improvement was made in the Torch reading comprehension. (Figure 5.4)

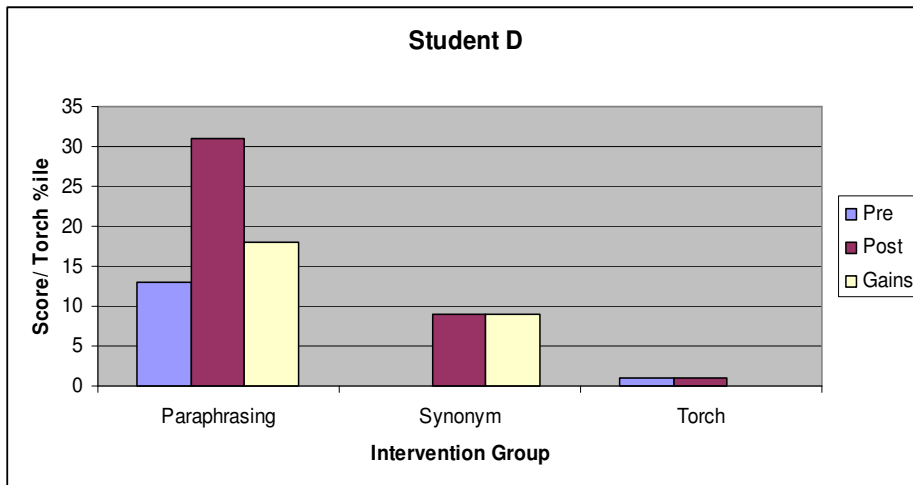


Figure 5.4 Student D. Intervention Group-Pre & Post test Comparisons

Control Group

In Figure 6.1 student E shows improvement in the Torch reading comprehension. There was no improvement in the synonym task and minimal improvement in paraphrasing.

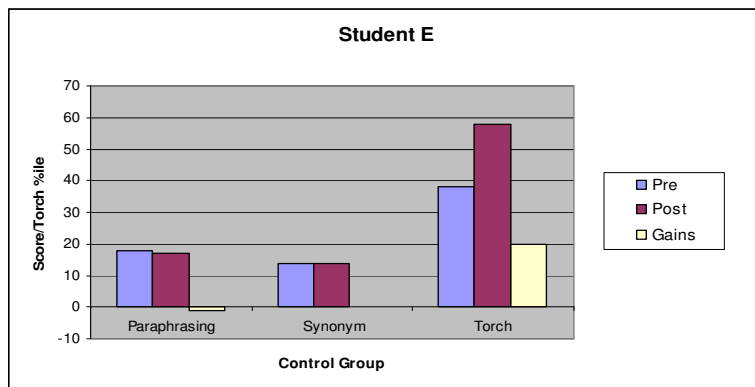


Figure 6.1 Student E. Control Group-Pre & Post tests Comparisons

In Figure 6.2 Student F shows some improvement in all areas. There was little gain in the Torch reading comprehension.

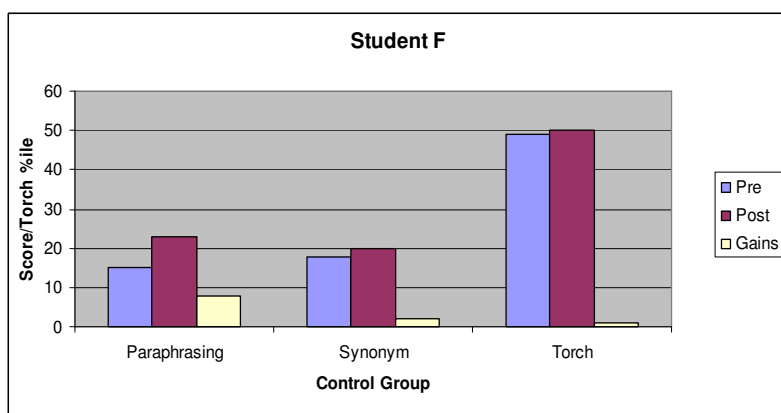


Figure 6.2 Student F. Control Group-Pre & Post tests Comparisons

Student G improved performance in the synonym task and Torch reading comprehension. Performance in the paraphrasing pre testing was higher than in the post testing.

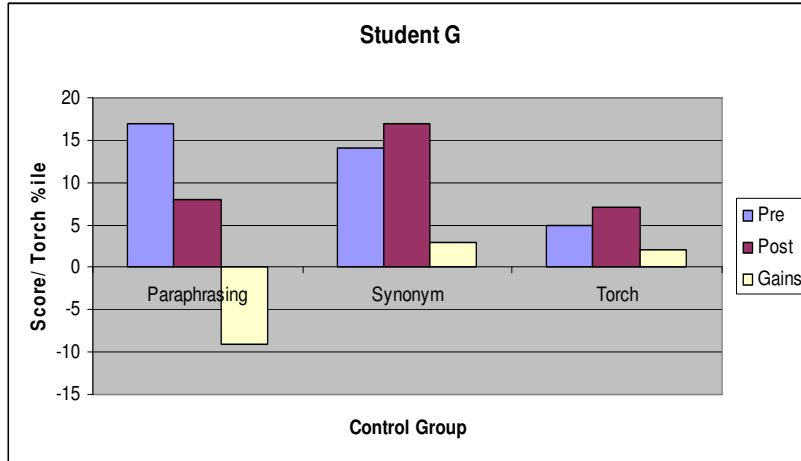


Figure 6.3 Student G. Control Group-Pre & Post test Comparisons

Student H made no improvement in paraphrasing with a slight increase in the synonym task performance. There was a greater improvement between the pre and post test results in Torch reading comprehension.

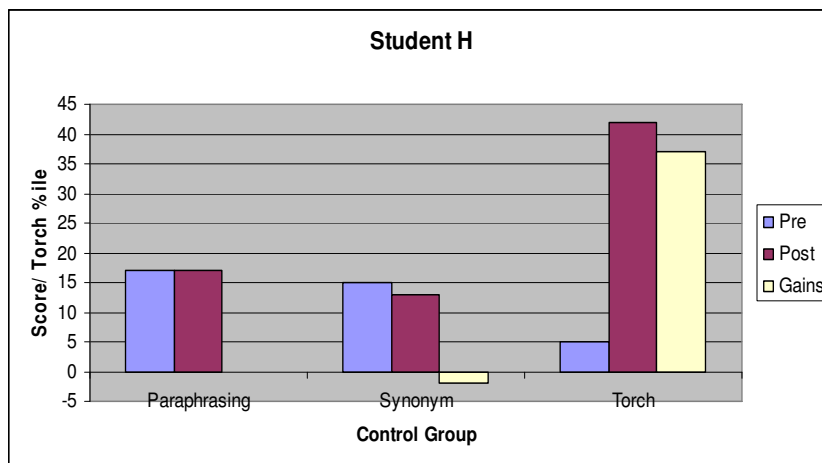


Figure 6.4 Student H. Control Group-Pre & Post test Comparisons

Discussion

The present study supports the hypothesis that teaching Year Four students with learning difficulties the Paraphrasing Strategy, with the explicit teaching in the use of synonyms in non fiction texts, improves reading comprehension. This finding also supports the research that students can increase reading comprehension when teaching strategies are employed (Lee & Von Colln, 2003).

The intervention group improved in the use of synonyms and paraphrasing and some gains were made in improving reading comprehension. (Appendix 2, Table 1). Throughout the lessons, the students displayed increasing improvement in comprehension as they strived to use as many different words as they could when paraphrasing. In the early lessons students were slow to think of synonyms and usually they shared the same word. In subsequent lessons, the students generated more words and increased their word bank. The students also engaged in conversations about the appropriateness of words and whether they could be used in the context of the text. For example in lesson 2, students discussed whether the word “pond” could be substituted with the word “lake” and if so would it maintain the same meaning.

A comparison of the intervention groups’ pre and post test performances showed significant improvement in the use of synonyms and paraphrasing ability. (Appendix 2, Table 2). This was evident during the course of the teaching. The students became increasingly confident during the lessons and applied the RAP strategy with growing assurance (Appendix 1). In using the RAP acronym, the students were given the opportunity to talk about words, phrases and sentences and link ideas to the topic. Using the acronym helped them to remember the steps of the RAP process and to think about what to do when paraphrasing. The students used the steps during the lesson and at the end were asked to reflect on the lesson and share their learning. They all knew that, “putting it in your own words” was important when retelling what they had read. The reflections at the end of each session were an important part of the lesson. The students were proud to share their learning and they enjoyed talking about RAP. They encouraged and praised each other in all aspects of the lessons.

During the sessions, students' performances varied depending on the text used. Non fiction texts featuring specialized vocabulary made paraphrasing more difficult in some texts (Appendix 1, lesson 3 "Milky Way"). For two lessons the same text was used (Appendix 1, lesson 2& lesson 5 "Ducks" and lesson 7&8 "Bricks") enabling students to practice comprehension with a familiar text. Students experienced greater success in listing synonyms and in paraphrasing the text.

During the initial lessons students only used one or two synonyms to paraphrase the sentence. Short, simple texts were chosen specifically to allow students to understand and complete the task with success. It became apparent after the first few lessons that every lesson needed to focus on explicit synonym teaching. This allowed students to increase their word knowledge and give them more words to use when paraphrasing. A synonym activity became part of all lessons (Appendix 1). It was important to note that writing was a difficult task for these students and thus the students were reassured that spelling would not be the focus.

The Torch reading comprehension test had less favourable results. The study found that the intervention group made little or no gains in the Torch post test results. Only student C (figure 5.3) improved in the post testing. Student A (Figure 5.1), made little gain and Student D (Figure 5.4), had the same result in the pre and post test.

To complete the Torch test successfully, students are required to read the text in silence (no discussion before, during or after) and retell it in a paraphrased cloze passage by writing words or phrases to complete the sentences. Students A,B,C and D who have learning difficulties and who have difficulties in reading comprehension may not have the capacity to complete the Torch test with great success. The support that is given in the course of the teaching session (Appendix 1) could not be applied to the testing situation during the administration of Torch. This lack of teaching guidance may have contributed to the results shown.

A comparison of Student B's Torch pre and post testing shows extreme results (Figure 5.2). The Torch pre test score was 77% (raw score 18), whilst the Torch post test score was 7% (raw score 5). The poor results achieved on the post testing day reflect the typical inconsistency in this students' learning capacity. Student B's fluctuating behaviour can affect concentration and what is achieved on a day to day basis. The student's behaviour on post testing day did interfere with his concentration and ability to focus. The task was not completed even with the assistance from the teacher aid. The five questions that were completed however were correct. The results (Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2) have been represented to show "the intervention group gains and comparisons", with and without student B for this reason.

The control group was more capable in the pre testing and made significant gains in the post testing results. What cannot be determined in this study is whether the control group would have made even greater gains if they had participated in the teaching unit.

The intervention group will benefit from continued lessons using the Paraphrasing Strategy in order to further improve comprehension. Careful selection of reading material will continue to be important for this group. Short non fiction texts were chosen (Appendix 1) in the first six lessons of the teaching unit and as confidence and ability to use synonyms and paraphrasing increased, longer texts (three or four paragraphs) were used. Future teaching experiences should also include fictional texts to further increase vocabulary and experience. These students will require ongoing monitoring to determine the foci and teaching strategies necessary to support learning.

At the completion of the teaching unit, the intervention group participated in a whole class lesson. The four students in the intervention group were presented to the class as the "experts" in the Paraphrasing Strategy. Each of them was asked to contribute answers during the class lesson demonstrating their understanding to their peers. The text used for this whole class lesson was familiar to the intervention group (Appendix 1 lesson 3, *Ducks*). The lesson reinforced the learning that had been experienced during the teaching

unit. The intervention group was successful in sharing their learning. The classroom teacher continued teaching the Paraphrasing Strategy using the acronym RAP with the whole class in subsequent lessons. Whilst more experiences in using paraphrasing needs to be provided for the intervention group, other reading strategies will also be needed, such as explicit teaching of visualization to increase comprehension may also be important.

The results support the hypothesis that improvement in comprehension can be achieved with explicit teaching in the use of synonyms and the Paraphrasing Strategy. The control group did not receive explicit teaching and made little or no gains in the use of synonyms and paraphrasing (Figure 1.2, Figure 2.2). The intervention group however who have learning difficulties and who have difficulties in reading comprehension made significant gains in understanding text, using synonyms and paraphrasing, all of which can be attributed to the explicit teaching. These students were given the time to learn and practice a skill in order to improve comprehension and thus demonstrated remarkable outcomes.

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Lesson 1	
Duration:	45 minutes
Text:	Item 17 Set S6 <i>The Lion and the Boy</i>
Synonyms:	young-youthful; true-real; scared-frightened; amazed-thrilled; watched-saw; escaped-ran away;
Other:	Copy of the text for each student; enlarged copy of the text for shared reading; synonym flashcards
Lesson Outline	
Introducing the Strategy:	
Explain that the purpose of the lesson is to learn a new skill to improve reading comprehension. It is called, <i>paraphrasing</i> .	
Explain that all the texts we will be using are non-fiction (factual) and that paraphrasing will help to understand the information and retell it in our own words.	
Explain that <i>when we paraphrase we will follow three steps</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read – read the text 2. Ask - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective) 3. Put – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms) 	
We will remember it as RAP	
Synonym Activity	
Read vocabulary together placing each card on the board.	
Each student is given a synonym to match these words.	
<i>Who has a word that has the same meaning as <u>watched</u>?</i>	
<i>We have found another word that has the same meaning as __. We can use this new word when we paraphrase the sentence.</i>	
Repeat these steps for each word.	
Teacher explains the purpose of this activity with each word that is matched	
<i>We have found another word that has the same meaning as __. We can use this new word when we paraphrase the sentence</i>	
<u>Reading the Text</u>	
Teacher and students <u>read aloud</u>	
Students <u>read silently</u>	
<u>Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words</u>	
Teacher underlines the key words familiar to the students from synonym activity	
<i>These key words give us the meaning in the sentence</i>	
<u>Put the main ideas in your own words</u>	
Teacher reads one sentence at a time and shows students how to start changing words and phrases in order to <i>paraphrase</i> .	
Students are encouraged to use words from the synonym matching at the beginning of the lesson	
Teacher writes the paraphrased sentence.	
<i>What did we do to paraphrase the sentence? We read the sentence, asked ourselves what were the main ideas. We tried to change as many words as we could to paraphrase. This shows us that we understand what we read.</i>	
Repeat this with all the sentences.	
Student Reflection	
Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary)	
<i>What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?</i>	
<i>What were the steps used to paraphrase?</i>	

Lesson 2	
Duration:	45 minutes
Text:	Item 10 Set S4 <i>Ducks</i>
Synonyms	keep-hold; provide-give; important-necessary; finding-looking for; patrol-guard; useful-necessary
Other:	Copy of the text for each student; ; Enlarged copy of the text for shared reading; synonym flashcards
Lesson Outline	
<p>Introducing the Poster: Display the poster showing the acronym RAP Explain that <i>when we paraphrase we will follow three steps</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read – read the text • Ask - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective) • Put – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms) <p><i>We will remember it as RAP</i></p>	
<p>Synonym Activity Read vocabulary together placing each card on the board Each student is given a synonym to match these words <i>Who has a word that has the same meaning as <u>important</u>?</i> <i>We have found another word that has the same meaning as __. We can use this new word when we paraphrase the sentence</i> Repeat these steps for each word. Teacher explains the purpose of this activity with each word that is matched</p>	
<p><u>Reading the Text</u> Teacher and students <u>read aloud</u> Students <u>read silently</u></p>	
<p><u>Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words</u> Teacher underlines the key words familiar to the students from synonym activity <i>These key words give us the meaning</i></p>	
<p><u>Put the main ideas in your own words</u> Teacher reads one sentence at a time and shows students how to start changing words and phrases in order to say it in your own words. Students are encouraged to use words from the synonym matching at the beginning of the lesson Teacher writes the paraphrased sentence. <i>What did we do to paraphrase the sentence? We read the sentence, asked ourselves what were the main ideas. We tried to change as many words as we could to paraphrase. This shows us that we understand what we read.</i> Repeat this with all the sentences.</p>	
<p>Student Reflection Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary) <i>What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?</i> <i>What were the steps used to paraphrase?</i></p>	

Lesson 3	
Duration:	45 minutes
Text:	Item 13 Set S5 <i>Microwave</i>
Synonyms:	invented-created; households-homes; items- tools; vibrate-shake; considered- thought
Other:	Copy of the text for each student; Enlarged copy of the text for shared reading; synonym flashcards; sentence strips; textas
Lesson Outline	
<p>Synonym Activity Read vocabulary together placing each card on the board Each student is given a synonym to match these words <i>Who has a word that has the same meaning as <u>invented</u>?</i> <i>We have found another word that has the same meaning as __. We can use this new word when we paraphrase the sentence</i> Repeat these steps for each word. Teacher explains the purpose of this activity with each word that is matched</p>	
<p>Refer to the Poster Explain that <i>when we paraphrase we will follow three steps</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read – read the text</i> • <i>Ask - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective)</i> • <i>Put – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms)</i> <p><i>We will remember it as RAP</i></p>	
<p><u>Reading the Text</u> Teacher and students <u>read aloud</u> Students <u>read silently</u></p>	
<p><u>Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words</u> Teacher underlines the key words familiar to the students from synonym activity <i>These key words give us the meaning</i></p>	
<p><u>Put the main ideas in your own words</u> Teacher reads one sentence at a time and shows students how to start changing words and phrases in order to <i>say it in your own words</i>. Students are encouraged to use words from the synonym matching at the beginning of the lesson Teacher writes the paraphrased sentence. <i>What did we do to paraphrase the sentence? We read the sentence, asked ourselves what were the main ideas. We tried to change as many words as we could to paraphrase. This shows us that we understand what we read.</i></p> <p>Paraphrasing in pairs-same sentence In pairs students practice paraphrasing the next sentence and write it on the sentence strip. Students take turns to share, explaining how they paraphrased.</p>	
<p>Student Reflection Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary) <i>What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?</i> <i>What were the steps used to paraphrase?</i></p>	

Lesson 4	
Duration:	45 minutes
Text:	Item 19 <i>Milky Way</i>
Synonyms:	clear-light; faint-dull; stretching-spreading; across-over; look-see; maybe-perhaps; known-named;
Other:	Copy of the text for each student; synonym flashcards; write vocabulary on whiteboard
Lesson Outline	
Synonym Activity	
Read vocabulary together placing each card on the board	
Each student is given a synonym to match these words	
<i>Who has a word that has the same meaning as <u>look</u>?</i>	
<i>We have found another word that has the same meaning as __. We can use this new word when we paraphrase the sentence</i>	
Repeat these steps for each word.	
Teacher explains the purpose of this activity with each word that is matched	
Refer to the Poster	
Explain that <i>when we paraphrase we will follow three steps</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read – read the text • Ask - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective) • Put – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms) 	
<i>We will remember it as RAP</i>	
<u>Reading the Text</u>	
Teacher and students <u>read aloud</u>	
Students <u>read silently</u>	
<u>Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words</u>	
Teacher underlines the key words familiar to the students from synonym activity	
<i>These key words give us the meaning</i>	
<u>Put the main ideas in your own words</u>	
Teacher reads the first sentence and shows students how to start changing words and phrases in order to say it in your own words .	
Students are encouraged to use words from the synonym matching at the beginning of the lesson	
Teacher writes the paraphrased sentence.	
<i>What did we do to paraphrase the sentence? We read the sentence, thought about the meaning. We tried to change as many words as we could. This shows us that we understand what we read.</i>	
Paraphrasing in pairs-different sentences	
In pairs students practice paraphrasing a different sentence and write it on the sentence strip. Students take turns to share their sentence, explaining how they paraphrased.	
Student Reflection	
Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary)	
<i>What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?</i>	
<i>What were the steps used to paraphrase?</i>	

Lesson 5	
Duration	45 minutes
Text	Item 10 S4 <i>Ducks (Same Text as Lesson 2)</i>
Synonyms	keep-hold; provide-give; important-necessary; finding-looking for; patrol-guard; useful-necessary
Other	copy of the text for each student; synonym flashcards; sentence strips; textas
Lesson Outline	
<p>Synonym Activity- Memory Place all cards face down on table Each student is given a turn to find a synonym match <i>Who can find the word that has the same meaning as <u>useful</u>?</i> Repeat these steps for each word. Teacher explains the purpose of this activity with each word that is matched <i>The word _____ has the same meaning as _____.</i></p>	
<p>Refer to the Poster Explain that <i>when we paraphrase we will follow three steps</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read – read the text • Ask - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective) • Put – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms) <p><i>We will remember it as RAP</i></p>	
<p><u>Reading the Text</u> Students <u>read silently</u> <u>Choral read</u></p>	
<p><u>Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words</u> Students underlines the key words familiar to the students from synonym activity <i>These key words give us the meaning</i></p>	
<p><u>Put the main ideas in your own words</u> Students read the first sentence and teacher models paraphrasing Teacher writes the paraphrased sentence. <i>What did we do to paraphrase the sentence? We read the sentence, thought about the meaning. We tried to change as many words as we could. This shows us that we understand what we read.</i></p>	
<p>Paraphrasing individually-same sentence Students individually practice paraphrasing the next sentence and write it on the sentence strip. Students take turns to share, explaining how they paraphrased.</p>	
<p>Student Reflection Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary) <i>What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?</i> <i>What were the steps used to paraphrase?</i></p>	

Lesson 6

Duration	45 minutes
Text	Item 20 Set S7 <i>Newspaper</i>
Synonyms	each-every; provide-give; few-some; biggest-largest; mostly-usually; over-more than; around-all over
Other	copy of the text for each student; synonym flashcards; sentence strips

Lesson Outline

Synonym Activity- Memory

Place all cards face down on table

Each student is given a turn to find a synonym match

Who can find the word that has the same meaning as few?

Repeat these steps for each word.

Teacher explains the purpose of this activity with each word that is matched

Refer to the Poster

Explain that *when we **paraphrase** we will follow three steps*

- **Read** – read the text
- **Ask** - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective)
- **Put** – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms)

*We will remember it as **RAP***

Reading the Text

Students silently

Choral read

Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words

Students underlines the key words familiar to the students from synonym activity

These key words give us the meaning

Put the main ideas in your own words

Students read the first sentence and teacher models paraphrasing

Teacher writes the paraphrased sentence.

What did we do to paraphrase the sentence? We read the sentence, thought about the meaning. We tried to change as many words as we could. This shows us that we understand what we read.

Paraphrasing individually-same sentence

Students individually practice paraphrasing the next sentence and write it on the sentence strip.

Students take turns to share, explaining how they paraphrased.

Student Reflection

Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary)

What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?

What were the steps used to paraphrase?

Lesson 7

Duration	45 minutes
Text	Item 21 Set S7 <i>Bricks</i>
Synonyms	used; earliest; poured; joined; method; however; usually
Other	Copy of the text for each student; synonym flashcards; write vocabulary on whiteboard

Lesson Outline

Synonym Activity-

Teacher calls out a keyword from the flashcard and students write as many synonyms for that word (two minutes per word)

Write a word that has the same meaning as used?

Repeat these steps for each word.

Share the responses

Refer to the Poster

Explain that *when we **paraphrase** we will follow three steps*

- **Read** – read the text
- **Ask** - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective)
- **Put** – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms)

*We will remember it as **RAP***

Reading the Text

Students read silently

Are there any words you don't understand? Clarify.

Choral reading

Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words

Students underlines the key words

These key words give us meaning

Put the main ideas in your own words

Students paraphrase the paragraph.

Students take turns to share, explaining how they paraphrased.

Student Reflection

Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary)

What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?

What were the steps used to paraphrase?

Lesson 8

Duration	45 minutes
Text	Item 21 Set S7 <i>Bricks</i>
Other	Copy of the text for each student; sentence strips

Lesson Outline

Memory Activity- matching sentences (sentence pairs)

Each student is given a turn to find a matching paraphrase for the sentence

Who can find a sentence that is a paraphrase for this one?

Repeat these steps for each sentence.

Teacher explains the purpose of this activity.

The paraphrase sentence has the same meaning with as many words as possible changed

Refer to the Poster

Explain that when we **paraphrase** we will follow three steps

- **Read** – read the text
- **Ask** - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective)
- **Put** – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms)

*We will remember it as **RAP***

Reading the Text

Students read silently

Choral reading

Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words

Students underlines the key words

These key words give us meaning

Put the main ideas in your own words

Students write a paraphrase of the paragraph.

Students take turns to share, explaining how they paraphrased.

Student Reflection

Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary)

What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?

What were the steps used to paraphrase?

Lesson 9

Duration	45 minutes
Text	Item 8 Set T8 <i>Rats</i>
Synonyms	students provide words
Other	copy of the text for each student; synonym flashcards; write vocabulary on whiteboard

Lesson Outline

Synonym Activity-

Students identify keywords and student write as many synonyms for that word

Write a word that has the same meaning as used?

Repeat these steps for each word.

Write the responses

Refer to the Poster

Explain that *when we **paraphrase** we will follow three steps*

- **Read** – read the text
- **Ask** - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective)
- **Put** – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms)

*We will remember it as **RAP***

Reading the Text

Students read silently

Are there any words you don't understand? Clarify.

Choral reading

Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words

Students underlines the key words

These key words give us meaning

Put the main ideas in your own words

Students write a paraphrase of the text

Students take turns to share, explaining how they paraphrased.

Student Reflection

Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary)

What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?

What were the steps used to paraphrase?

Lesson 10

Duration	45 minutes
Text	Item 7 Set T7 <i>Dragsters</i>
Synonyms	Students provide words
Other	copy of the text for each student;

Lesson Outline

Synonym Activity-

Students identify keywords and student write as many synonyms for that word

Write a word that has the same meaning as special?

Repeat these steps for each word.

Write the responses

Refer to the Poster

Explain that *when we **paraphrase** we will follow three steps*

- **Read** – read the text
- **Ask** - ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words that give us meaning (noun, verb, adjective)
- **Put** – the main ideas in your own words (say it a different way; using synonyms)

*We will remember it as **RAP***

Reading the Text

Students read silently

Are there any words you don't understand? Clarify.

Choral reading

Ask yourself, what are the main ideas and key words

Students underlines the key words

These key words give us meaning

Put the main ideas in your own words

Students write a paraphrase of the paragraph.

Students take turns to share, explaining how they paraphrased.

Student Reflection

Every student is asked to share what they have learnt.(use prompts if necessary)

What is paraphrasing? How will it help our reading comprehension?

What were the steps used to paraphrase?

Paraphrasing

Read the Text

Ask yourself what are the main ideas and details (find keywords)

Put the ideas in your own words (use synonyms)

Appendix 1**Texts**

Lesson	Text	Genre	level	Series
1	<i>The Lion and the Boy</i>	fiction	Item 17 Set S6	KEY into reorganization
2	<i>Ducks</i>	fiction	Item 10 Set S4	KEY into reorganization
3	<i>Microwave</i>	fiction	Item 13 Set S5	KEY into reorganization
4	<i>Milky Way</i>	fiction	Item 19	KEY into reorganization
5	<i>Ducks</i> (repeated text)	fiction	Item 10 Set S4	KEY into reorganization
6	<i>Newspaper</i>	fiction	Item 20 Set S7	KEY into reorganization
7	<i>Bricks</i>	fiction	Item 21 Set S7	KEY into reorganization
8	<i>Bricks</i>	fiction	Item 21 Set S7	KEY into reorganization
9	<i>Rats</i>	fiction	Item 8 Set T8	KEY into reorganization
10	<i>Dragsters</i>	fiction	Item 7 Set T7	KEY into reorganization

Appendix 1

Synonym Flash cards

Lesson Number	Text	Words
1	Item 17 Set S6 <i>The Lion and the Boy</i>	young-youthful true-real scared-frightened amazed-thrilled watched-saw escaped-ran away
2	Item 10 Set S4 <i>Ducks</i>	keep-hold provide-give important-necessary finding-looking for patrol-guard useful-necessary
3	Item 13 Set S5 <i>Microwave</i>	invented-created households-homes items- tools vibrate-shake considered- thought
4	Item 19 <i>Milky Way</i>	clear-light faint-dull stretching-spreading across-over look-see maybe-perhaps known-named
5	Item 10 S4 <i>Ducks (Same Text as Lesson 2)</i>	keep-hold provide-give important-necessary finding-looking for patrol-guard useful-necessary
6	Item 20 Set S7 <i>Newspaper</i>	Each-every provide-give few-some biggest-largest mostly-usually over-more than around-all over
7	Item 21 Set S7 <i>Bricks</i>	used earliest poured joined method however usually

Appendix 2

Table 1

Pre & Post testing data: Intervention and control group

Student Group: Intervention	Torch Pre Test 11/2/08 <i>Feeding Puff</i>			Torch Post Test 17/6 <i>At The Zoo</i>			Synonym Pre Test 14/5/08	Synonym Post Test 16/6	Paraphrasing Pre Test 14/5/08	Paraphrasing Post Test 16/6
	Raw	Scale	%	Raw	Scale	%				
A	0	9.3	1	3	21.2	3	5	18	4	38
B	18	49.7	77	5	26.1	7	0	14	7	26
C	11	38.3	38	14	43.8	58	4	16	17	38
D	0	9.3	1	1	12.7	1	0	9	13	31
Student Group: Control										
E	11	38.3	38	14	43.8	58	14	14	18	17
F	13	41.2	49	13	41.5	50	18	20	15	23
G	3	24.5	5	5	26.1	7	14	17	17	8
H	3	24.5	5	12	39.4	42	15	13	17	17

Appendix 2

Table 2

Student A, B, C and D, examples of Pre and Post test responses in paraphrasing task

Student A responses	Pre test	Post test
They were enjoying themselves.	The boy was enjoying himself.	They were happy.
The two riders weren't smiling and chatting any longer.	The two riders on the bike were smiling and not chatting any longer.	The two bike riders didn't feel happy and didn't talk any longer.
Student B	Pre test	Post test
They were enjoying themselves.	They were enjoying.	They were having fun.
Ahead they see in the middle of the path, a huge stone.	Ahead they saw in the middle of the path, a huge stone.	They saw a big huge rock in the middle of the pathway.
Student C	Pre test	Post test
The two friends chatted. They were not paying attention to anything.	The two friends talked they were not paying attention to nothing.	The friends were talking They were not concentrating.
Now they were gripping the bike as tightly as they could, showing fear on their faces.	Now they were holding the bike as they showed fear on their faces.	Now they were holding the bike as tightly as they could, showing terror on their faces.
Student D	Pre test	Post test
Suddenly it began to slope down and the bike sped up.	Suddenly it began to go down the hill and it got faster and faster.	Suddenly it began to slope down and the bike went faster.
They were supposed to watch where they were going.	They were supposed to watch where people are.	They were supposed to see where they were riding.