

The hypothesis of this intervention is that teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to a small group of year seven students with reading comprehension difficulties enhances their comprehension of fictional text.

Abstract

Many students embarking upon their secondary school education have poor reading comprehension skills. There are major implications for the progress of such students when across subject areas, they are expected to learn from reading, understanding and recalling the main ideas and detail of written texts. Students who cannot make meaning from text are at great disadvantage. They lack access to key course content.

Recent studies demonstrate that students, who have not acquired reading strategies which good readers seem to employ almost intuitively, benefit significantly from *explicit* instruction in cognitive strategies. One such strategy is paraphrasing. Research shows that teaching students with poor comprehension to paraphrase sentences- to say them in a different way by changing as many words as possible while retaining meaning –results in improved comprehension of both fiction and nonfiction texts.

The hypothesis of this intervention is that explicitly teaching a small group of year seven boys with literacy difficulties to use synonyms and to paraphrase will improve their comprehension of fiction texts.

Three year seven boys with literacy difficulties were given eight 50 minute lessons in synonyms and paraphrasing. They were taught how, when and why paraphrasing could be used. Paraphrasing was: modeled by the teacher, practiced by the group and individually in writing. Lessons began with a lot of cueing and feedback from the teacher which was reduced over the course of the lessons. Initially there was a large component of oral paraphrasing, over the course of lessons the written component was increased. Students were assisted in identifying and finding synonyms for key vocabulary in order to facilitate their rewording of text. They were taught the acronym RAP to remind them to **R**ead the text, **A**sk themselves questions about the main ideas and details and **P**ut the ideas in their own words changing as many words as they can.

A control group of three boys also with literacy difficulties continued their regular literacy support lessons with no explicit teaching in synonyms or paraphrasing.

Matched pretesting and post testing of the experimental and control groups enabled a comparison of data.

The average comprehension gains of the intervention group were greater than the gains of the control group, thus giving moderate support to the hypothesis. Some individual results were less conclusive and point to the importance of measuring the progress of larger numbers of students.

The implication of this study is that a secondary school English teachers (or indeed any subject area teacher) who identifies students with poor reading comprehension in their classes, should include explicit instruction in synonyms and paraphrasing in their teaching.

Introduction

Many year seven students commence their secondary schooling with limited reading comprehension skills. Although most students by this stage of their schooling can read most of the words on the page accurately enough, too often this decoding ability does not reflect adequate *understanding* of what is being read.

Secondary school students with poor comprehension skills are ill equipped to cope with a curriculum where increasingly, across a large range of subjects there is a substantial reading component. As well as struggling to engage in meaningful study of literature, struggling readers will be limited in their ability to glean key concept knowledge from subject related informational texts. Without effective teacher intervention, poor reading comprehension will limit learning and success at school and may limit future options in the world at large. Clearly literacy is important personally and socially. Also as Biancarosa and Snow (2006) discuss, it is the responsibility of schools to produce literate citizens who are equipped to “compete in the global economy and who have the skills to pursue their own learning well beyond high school.” They point to the fact that in employment areas that are growing, literacy requirements are also increasing. These realities are not limited to the American situation.

So how best to improve the reading comprehension skills of secondary students, in order not only to get them through school but prepare them to confidently and competently function in the world?

Often by the time students reach secondary school comprehension skills are assumed and not explicitly developed by teachers who use what Katims and Harris (1997) refer to as the “skill and drill approach, the lecture method, or by using worksheets to simply test students for comprehension”. Unfortunately the simple repetition of comprehension tasks will not help poor comprehenders improve. Instead, this type of teaching “may yield less than desirable results for students identified as at risk and for those with learning disabilities” (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1993 in Katims and Harris 1997)

In contrast to the teaching approach described above is the *explicit* teaching of comprehension *strategies* to “promote a student's active thoughtful engagement with text material” (Loxterman, Beck, & McKeown, 1994 in Katims and Harris 1997) The teaching of strategies has become a strong focus in literacy education over recent years; reflecting an understanding amongst educational researchers, cognitive theorists and teachers that to comprehend , readers must actively and strategically engage with text .

Recent studies, ranging from individual tutoring of students to a whole school intervention approach, have shown that *explicitly instructing* students in when and how to apply some key reading strategies can bring about such engagement with text and significantly improve students' reading comprehension.

Strategy teaching is seen as improving the way in which "students process essential information" It encourages readers to participate in active mental engagement with text thus promoting comprehension and empowering students to more successfully access, retain and convey the information they need.(Katims and Harris 1997) .

Research demonstrates that it is possible for underachieving individuals and children with learning disabilities to acquire the learning strategies that will improve their reading comprehension skill. Techniques that help students learn to ask questions and to paraphrase and summarize what they are reading have been shown to help them develop higher level reading comprehension skills.

The Paraphrasing Strategy developed by Schumaker, Denton and Deshler (1984) has been shown to improve reading comprehension for students of all abilities, but particularly for underachieving students such as those in the current intervention. Shugarman and Hurst describe it as "a powerful method that teachers can use to improve content understanding, learning, and interest."(1986 in Fisk and Hurst 2003).

While perhaps more familiar as a note taking or research technique, paraphrasing for comprehension is not about students reading a reference text and changing a few words around. It involves recognizing and reconstructing the main ideas and details of a text with the student expressing them in their own way. (Fisk and Hurst 2003).The reader is taught to read, then think about text in order to discover, then express with their own vocabulary and phrasing, a writer's main ideas. Schumaker, Denton and Deshler's (1984) acronym RAP (which the students in this intervention will use as a cue) summarises the strategy: Read, Ask questions about the main ideas and detail and Put it in your own words.

Harris and Sipay (1990 in Fisk and Hurst 2003) describe an individual's ability to paraphrase as a "crucial test of whether the thoughts were understood." In this intervention the students paraphrases during the teaching sessions will provide instant feedback on how well a phrase or sentence has been understood and create in turn, an opportunity for teacher feedback.

Fisk and Hurst attribute the success of paraphrasing as a comprehension strategy to the fact that it requires the student to engage four modes of communication. Paraphrasing requires them not only to read, but also to write, listen and speak and through that process a deeper understanding of text emerges.(Fisk and Hurst 2003)Students in this intervention will engage in each of these modes.

Schumaker, Denton, & Deshler instructed high school students with learning disabilities in the use of paraphrasing. The students who learned and used the strategy "increased their ability to answer comprehension questions about materials written at their grade level from 48% to 84%." (Schumaker et al., 1984 in Katims and Harris 1997) A study by Ellis and Graves

also showed “greatly enhanced’ reading comprehension in a group of 47 middle school students with learning disabilities. (Ellis and Graves in Katims and Harris 1997)

A study by Katims and Harris examined the effectiveness of paraphrase training for improving comprehension in mixed ability groups including both learning disabled and non disabled students. The overall result was a gain of 17% by the experimental group , compared to students in the control group who gained 3.5%.Gains for learning disability students in the experimental group when separated out were 22%; compared to the students with LD in the control group who gained 11%.

Much current research emphasizes the importance of a multi-pronged approach to teaching reading skills and a collaborative whole school approach. The current intervention is a limited one which looks at what gains can be made by an individual teacher teaching a single strategy to a small group in a limited amount of time. Whilst the current intervention looks at the one strategy of paraphrasing, the teaching of key vocabulary – synonyms- will be a necessary to assist them in using the strategy.

The teaching of paraphrasing has been chosen as an appropriate intervention for the subjects of this intervention as although they are able to read most words, their ability to extract meaning from and recall the ideas of texts they have just read is quite poor compared with their peers.

The hypothesis of this intervention is that teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to a small group of year seven students with reading comprehension difficulties enhances their comprehension of fictional text.

Method

Design

This naturalistic study uses an OXO design. An intervention group and a control group are matched for low levels of reading comprehension. Both groups are pretested; in their ability to use synonyms, to paraphrase and in reading comprehension. The intervention group is given explicit instruction in paraphrasing and using synonyms. The control group continues to receive the usual literacy support lessons. Matched post testing is conducted to compare the gains in paraphrasing ability, use of synonyms and reading comprehension of the two groups. Teacher observations are recorded in a journal during the teaching sessions.

Participants

All students in the experimental and control groups are 12 to 13 year old males in year seven who are experiencing literacy difficulties. In addition to their regular English lessons, these students receive literacy support in small groups instead of studying a language other than English. Inclusion in that program is based largely on underperformance for age in key literacy skills as measured by the Robert Alwell entrance exam conducted midway through year six (June 07). All subjects in this intervention were between stanine one and four on all

of the literacy components of the exam at the time of testing. For further details on the participants see Table 1.

	Age years months	ESL	Earlier Intervention	Alwell reading comprehension	Alwell writing
Teaching Group					
Student A	12.1	Yes	No	4	4
Student B	12.06	No	No	3	3
Student C	13.02	No	No	3	4
Control Group					
Student A2	13.04	No	Reading Recovery	2	2
Student B2	12.06	No	No	4	4
Student C2	13.05	No	No	2	2

Table 1.

Materials

Torch Tests of Reading Comprehension- Cats and The Swamp Creature

Synonyms task

Comprehension

Short story: Two Were Left

Extracts from the novel Market Blues

Lists of key words and jumbled synonyms for matching. See Appendix 3 for sample.

Booklet setting out text sentence by sentence with space for paraphrases. See Appendix 2 for sample.

Procedure

Students in both groups completed three pre-tests. Their reading comprehension was tested using TORCH Tests of Reading Comprehension. The text "Cats" was used. (Note the students TORCH results were measured using year six norms so their results appear better than they are for the students' age.) They also completed two tests designed by John Munro: The Synonym Test, which requires students to generate synonyms for a list of target words; and the Paraphrase Test, where students rephrase given sentences in their own

words, changing as many words as they can. A 50 minute lesson was allocated for the completion of each test.

Following the pre tests the students in the experimental group were given explicit instruction in paraphrasing. Eight lessons were taught following Munro's Comprehension-Paraphrasing Strategy (2005). In the first five lessons, students were assisted in identifying and matching key content words to appropriate synonyms. This was an important part of the process considering the limited vocabulary the students had to draw upon in creating their paraphrases. Paraphrasing was done orally and as a group, as well as individually in written form.

Lessons (See Appendix 1) were of fifty minutes duration and were delivered over six school weeks. (A total of ten weeks for the intervention including pre testing and post testing). The sequence of lessons took into account the Collins model.(1989) .The paraphrasing strategy was modeled; students were supported and given feedback as they applied the strategy and that scaffolding was gradually reduced as the students gained confidence. Students were taught the acronym RAP – Read, Ask questions about the main ideas and detail and Put it into your own words, to assist in remembering what to do and in articulating the new learning. They were cued to reflect upon their learning e.g. Student A: "It helps me to be sure I've really understood what the sentence means". They were also cued to articulate how they would transfer the new knowledge. Student C: "I could use it if there is a sentence I don't understand when I'm reading a book at home."

After the paraphrasing sessions were completed both the intervention and control groups were post tested, again in three 50 minute periods using the same versions of the synonym test and the paraphrase test and this time using the Torch Test "The Swamp Creature".

Results

Both the intervention *and* the control groups increased their average reading comprehension scores during the period of the intervention. However, the intervention group showed greater improvement; making an average gain of 7 compared with the control group's average gain of two on the Torch Scale Score. See Fig 1.

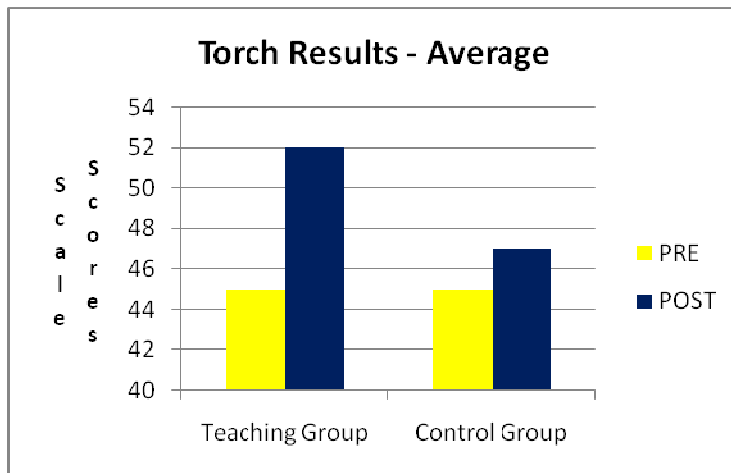


Fig 1.

Two of the three students in the intervention group showed much improvement in their reading comprehension. Students B and C; both of whom commenced the intervention with very low reading comprehension scores, made substantial gains. Student B; made the largest improvement, increasing his Torch scale score by 15. Student C increased his score by 9. Interestingly, student A; whose pretest result of 58.7 indicated the strongest reading comprehension ability upon commencement, performed slightly worse after the intervention lessons. He scored two less on the post test.

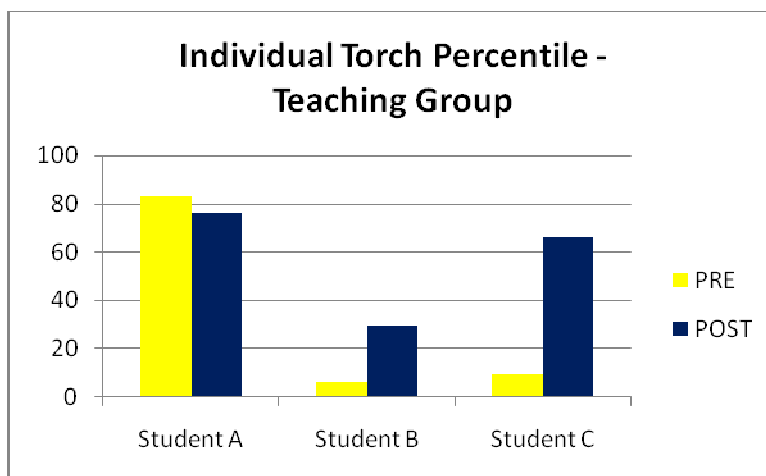


Fig 2.

Students B2 and C2 in the control group also made gains in their reading comprehension in the period between pre and post testing. Student B2 increased his score by 8. Student C2 made a larger gain of 11.5. Student A2; who like student A had the strongest pretest comprehension result for his group, fared worse on the post test than on the pretest. In this case though, the decrease was much more dramatic. Student A2's score decreased by 15.

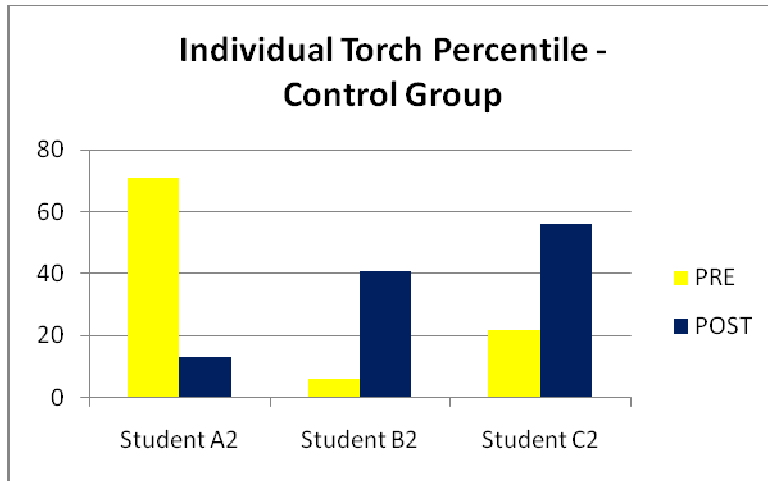


Fig 3.

Students in the intervention group were able to generate far more synonyms after the intervention than were the control group. They increased their average score by 44 points compared with the control group's average *decrease* of 1 point. See Fig 4

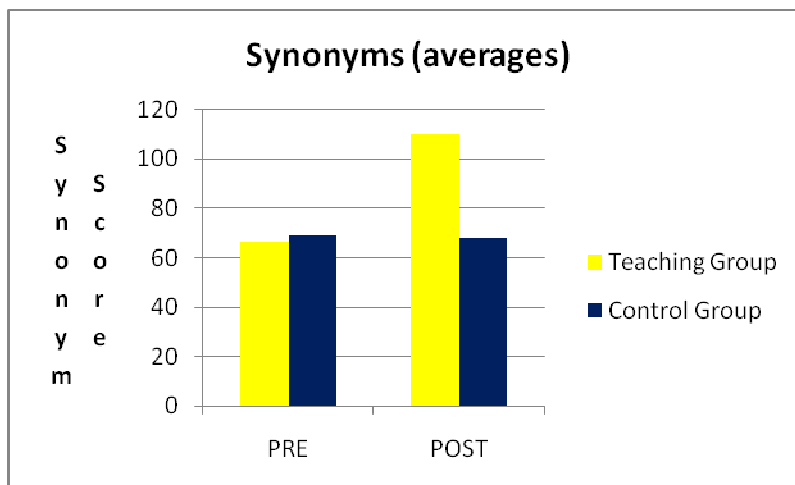


Fig 4.

Each student in the intervention group was able to generate *more* synonyms in the post test than in the pretest. Student A gaining 15 points, B gaining a huge 70 points and C gaining a substantial 46 points. Two of these students, increased their ability to paraphrase; A by 2 points and C by 8 points. Somewhat surprisingly, considering his large gains in generating synonyms, Student B recorded the same pre and post test score for paraphrasing. See Fig 5.

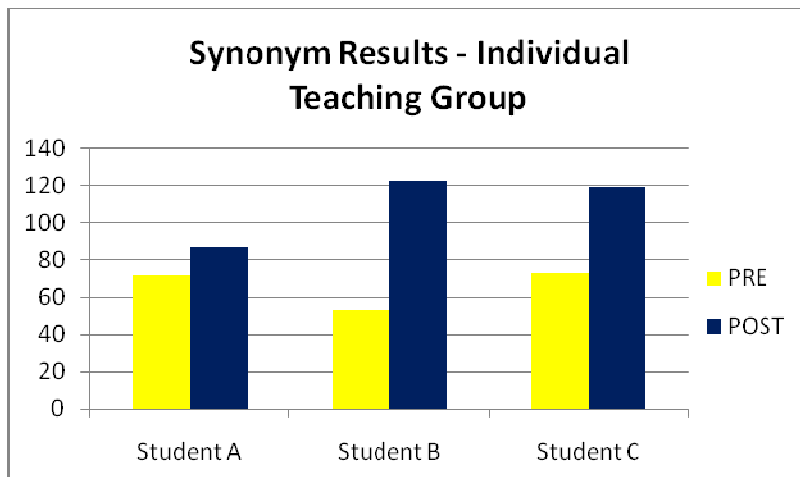


Fig 5.

Student A2 was the only student in the control group to improve his generation of synonyms, increasing his score by 19 points. B2 and C2 both fared worse on their post test than their pre test, scoring less by 16 points and 6 points respectively. See Fig 6.

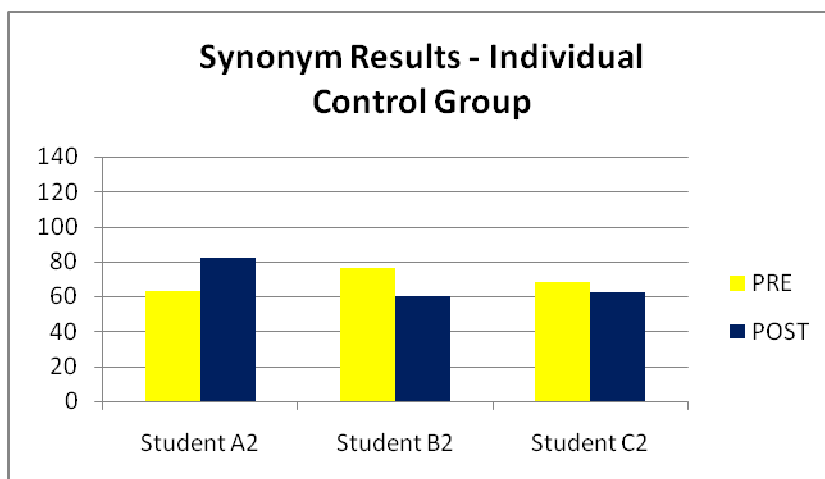


Fig 6.

Surprisingly, the intervention and control groups made the same average gain of 3.33 on the paraphrase test. The teaching group started with a higher average score of 22 than the control group which started on 15. See Fig 7.

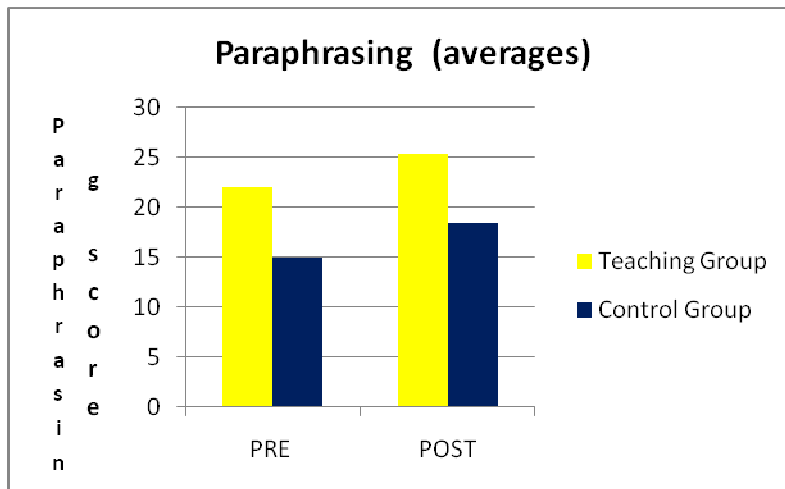


Fig 7.

On the Paraphrasing Test Student A made a modest improvement of 2 points and Student B's score was unchanged. Student C improved his paraphrasing ability the most of any student (intervention or control) scoring 8 points. See Fig 8.

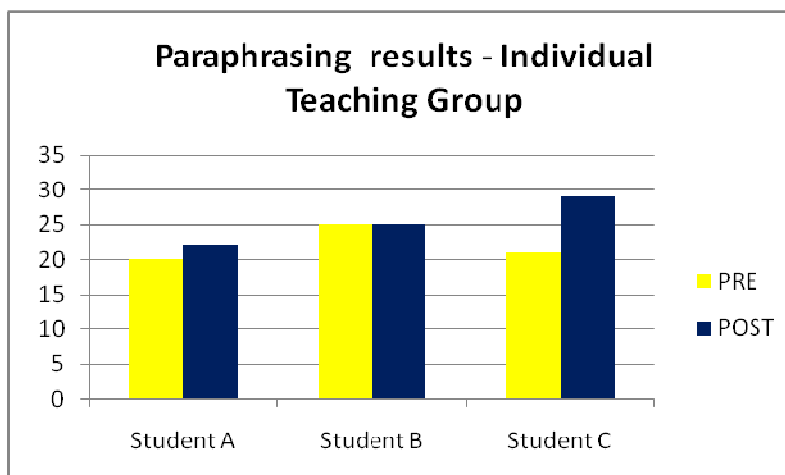


Fig 8

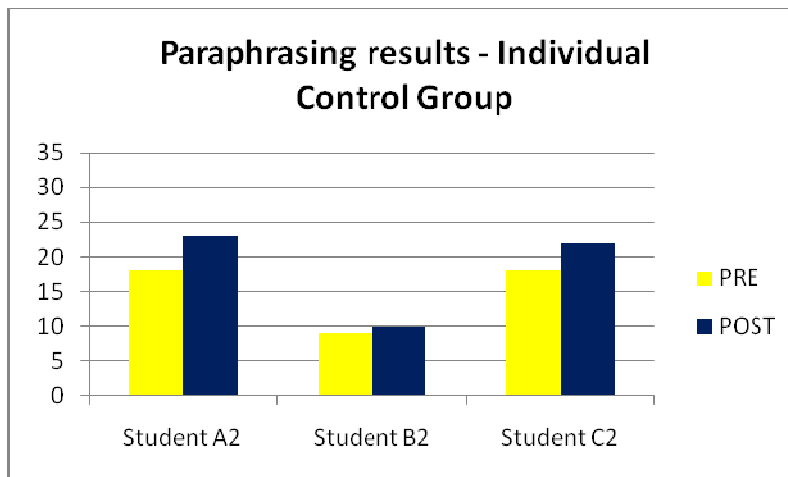


Fig 9

Student A2 who was the only control group student to improve on the synonyms test improved his paraphrasing by 5 points (the second highest number of any student in the study). B2 made a small increase of 1 whilst C2's paraphrasing improved by 4 points. See Fig 9

Discussion

The results of this intervention give some support to the hypothesis: that explicitly instructing a small group of year seven students with reading difficulties to use synonyms and to paraphrase text increases their reading comprehension of fiction text.

The intervention group showed greater average improvement in generating synonyms and in reading comprehension than the control group over the same period. This trend was observed despite the fact that the students in the control group were *also* continuing to receive literacy support lessons in addition to their regular English lessons during that period.

Whilst paraphrasing *scores* did not improve much, the test results did not tell the whole story. Students were certainly engaging the strategy (this was very observable in the teaching sessions) but were limited by poor grammar and vocabulary skills in their independent construction of written paraphrases.

All of the students in the experimental group quickly became quite enthusiastic and motivated by the paraphrasing lessons. They quickly grasped the acronym RAP and by the third session each student could confidently recite it. They were keen and quite competitive with each other in proffering their ideas and critiquing each other's suggestions which were written up on the whiteboard.

It was quickly apparent that deficiencies in vocabulary and grammar would be obstacles to the students becoming proficient independent paraphrasers. They experienced difficulty in

providing appropriate synonyms for key words. Initially suggestions ranged from antonyms to adjectives, to words looked up in the thesaurus which did not fit the context. This was partly overcome in the teaching sessions by the students' completion of pre-prepared matching exercises using targeted key words and synonyms from the section of text to be studied. See Appendix 3.

All of the students struggled to some extent with formulating grammatically correct sentences. Perfect grammar was not essential to the task, but sometimes the students' rewordings were quite convoluted reproductions of the original. At one stage student A commented with pleasure and surprise that a paraphrase he had constructed "sounded like a normal sentence!"

Members of the experimental group made progress in finding synonyms for key words and creating paraphrases in the group situation, with the support of discussion and teacher cuing but these gains were not carried over for all students when they were required to work independently on written paraphrases.

Student C's individual results more than any other, support the hypothesis. He contributed with enthusiasm to group paraphrasing, quickly becoming proficient in identifying key words and breaking sentences into main idea and detail. He was more able than the other students to work at the sentence level, manipulating word order as well as providing synonyms. Student C made substantial gains in providing synonyms and in paraphrasing and these were reflected in improvement to his reading comprehension.

Student B has a more developed vocabulary and was also a very enthusiastic contributor to group paraphrasing sessions. He was keen to demonstrate that he had memorised the acronym RAP and its meaning by the third session. Although initially unsure what a synonym was; suggesting antonyms, adjectives and loosely related words for key words, he soon grasped what was required and made significant improvement. In later sessions Student B competed to provide the most or the best synonyms for key word- making judgements about the suitability and connotations of particular words. E.g. you could "kill" or "slaughter" an animal but not "murder" it. B paraphrased sentences quite well with teacher support, but that was not reflected in his independent written paraphrasing. B often substituted less than half of the words in a sentence and made little rearrangement of sentence structure. At times he reverted to his early habit of adding in adjectives rather than substituting key words. B made the largest improvement of any student in providing synonyms *and* in comprehension. Despite his deficiencies in written paraphrasing, learning and attempting to apply the paraphrase strategy still seemed to have benefited his understanding of text. He had learned to engage more closely and purposefully with written text.

Disappointingly, Student A, who started the lessons with the highest pretest result for reading comprehension, actually scored slightly lower on post testing. Student A is a very

conscientious student who was very motivated by the idea that understanding that learning to paraphrase would help his reading comprehension. When it was acknowledged that the paraphrasing lessons might be a bit more “boring” than the lessons they were used to, Student A commented that “it will be worth it if it helps us”. Student A seems to have some effective reading strategies in place, he mentioned that when he comes to a word he doesn’t know he tries to work it out from the rest of the sentence. Student A made the smallest gains in generating synonyms (of the intervention group) and also made a small gain of two points in paraphrasing. Student A’s limited vocabulary and poorer grammatical skills, due at least in part to his ESL background were a limitation to his progress. Though usually able to choose appropriate synonyms for unknown words from a thesaurus, A experienced much more difficulty when it came to providing them independently and unaided when composing individual written paraphrases.

The relative progress of A, B and C during the intervention are consistent with previous research findings, including Munro’s (2004) that the poorest readers benefit the most from being taught strategies. A, who started with the strongest Torch score made least progress.

Some of the individual results of the control group were difficult to interpret and appeared contrary to the hypothesis. Students A2 and C2 made a little more progress than students A and B in the experimental group on paraphrasing. Student A2’s gains in paraphrasing were not reflected by an increase in reading comprehension, student C2’s were. It needs to be noted that these students were continuing to receive quality literacy teaching by a special education qualified teacher during the time of the intervention. Though synonyms and paraphrasing were not being explicitly taught, other highly reliable strategies such as visualizing were.

A correlation between synonyms, paraphrasing and comprehension abilities was not always clearly reflected in the students test results. While C substantially improved in all three areas, A improved a little in his synonyms and paraphrasing but not at all in his comprehension. B improved greatly in synonyms. His improvement in paraphrasing which was observed in class was not reflected on the Paraphrase Test, but comprehension did improve.

The fact that comprehension improved whilst there was not great improvement in paraphrasing scores perhaps reflects the fact that the readers were benefiting from the deeper mental engagement with text which paraphrasing promoted, though not always executing it well enough in written form to score well.

Correlation between the groups’ abilities to generate synonyms and to comprehend text was more easily seen. The experimental group on average increased its synonym score by 44 points and its comprehension score by 7. The control group, which made minimal improvement to its synonym score, also made minimal improvement to its average comprehension score.

Clearly there are limits to the conclusions which can be drawn as there were a small number of subjects. Average results could be heavily affected by an individual's result. (Whilst the average comprehension gain of the intervention group was higher than the control group, this was certainly contributed to by a large decrease in score during post testing of an individual student, A2.)

The implication of this study is that secondary school English teachers (and preferably any subject area teacher) who identify students with poor reading comprehension in their classes should include explicit instruction in synonyms and paraphrasing in their teaching.

Students in this study were limited in their ability to paraphrase, particularly in writing, by limitations to their vocabulary and grammar. Vocabulary difficulties were to some extent extenuated by the teaching of synonyms. Further research could examine whether building on students' grammatical knowledge would strengthen their ability to paraphrase and thus their comprehension ability. This study focused on comprehension of fiction texts. It would also be useful to investigate the benefits of paraphrasing on the comprehension of non fiction texts.

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Materials

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Appendix 1

Sessions based on John Munro's: Comprehension –Paraphrasing in Literacy Intervention Strategies Appendices (from University of Melbourne Course Notes)

Paraphrasing: Lesson One

Introduce the Strategy:

Today we are going to learn a new strategy which will assist you with your reading comprehension. It should help you gain a clearer understanding of texts you read and help you remember the main ideas. It is a useful strategy for reading many different types of texts in different subject areas

The strategy is called Paraphrasing. When you paraphrase, you read a sentence or group of sentences then tell yourself what you have read, using different words. You change as many words from the original text as you can while keeping the meaning the same.

Teacher models paraphrasing:

A sentence is written on the board from the text to be paraphrased.

“He saved only Nimuk, his great devoted husky.”

Teacher cues students in identifying and underlining key words. Ask the students to suggest other words for these e.g. saved-rescued..., great-large-remarkable... devoted- loyal-dedicated... husky-dog- canine...

Explain that these are *synonyms* and model their incorporation into a paraphrase of the original sentence:

“The sole thing rescued was his wonderful loyal dog.”

Also model changing word order while retaining meaning:

“His wonderful loyal dog was the sole thing rescued”

Cue students to complete a paraphrase as a group:

Write another sentence on the board. Read it together. Cue students to **Read**, **Ask** questions about the main idea and details. Assist students to identify key words and suggest synonyms. Invite students to **Put** it in their own words. The teacher records response/s on the board. Compare the paraphrases with the original. Ask students if meaning has been retained. Suggest modifications to the paraphrase if necessary.

Repeat this process for another few sentences.

Teacher reviews the action: *So to paraphrase, you read the sentence, asked yourself what the main ideas and details are, then you said it in your own way, changing as many words as you could.*

Introduce the acronym RAP- Read, Ask questions, Put it in your own words

Explain that this acronym is a useful cue they can use to remind themselves what to do when they read a text.

Students now paraphrase some sentences individually in written form and share with the group. Teacher monitors and provides feedback

Students articulate what they have learned to do:

Possible student response: *We have learned to paraphrase. First you read a sentence, and you ask yourself what it says. Then you put it into your own words. You need to change as many words as you can.*

and when they can use the new strategy:

You can use paraphrasing to help you when you are trying to understand a sentence or paragraph.

Reflection: Students are invited to comment on the new strategy they have learned and explore when they might use it:

Possible response: *I have learned to paraphrase to help me understand what I read. The word RAP reminds me to Read, Ask questions and Put it in my own words. I could paraphrase when I am reading from the newspaper or when I'm having trouble understanding my history book.*

Lesson Two

The teacher explains what synonyms are and writes some examples on the board. Students are asked to provide synonyms for some common words e.g sad- unhappy, miserable depressed etc. 5 min

Students work in pairs on a worksheet, drawing a line to match key words which will appear in this session's text with a jumbled list of synonyms. Correct this as a group. 5 min

The acronym **RAP** is written on the board, students are **cued to articulate** what they will do when they read today's text. Students read this session's passage. Teacher cues one or two students to **paraphrase aloud** after reading each sentence in the text. Teacher monitors and provides feedback. 15 min

Students write paraphrases of selected sentences (using synonyms from beginning of session as well as dictionary or thesaurus where needed) 10 min

A selection of student paraphrases are written on the board and students compare these to each other and the original text. Teacher feedback is provided on accuracy of meaning and grammar of the students paraphrases. 10- 12 min

Students are cued to reflect on what they have learned this lesson and when they will use this strategy again. 3 min

Lessons 3 -8 follow this strategy

Text Retelling:

Students recall synonyms to match key words from last session. They are written on the board. 3 min

They then retell what they recall of passage from previous session. 3 min

Text Rereading: Students and teacher reread passage from previous session with students cued to RAP. They then read then say each sentence in their own words, changing as many words as they can while retaining meaning 5- 8 min

Synonyms: Key content words from this lesson's text are targeted for synonyms. Students complete synonym activities: matching, brainstorming, searching thesaurus. 6 min

Shared reading of the new passage.

Students articulate the paraphrasing strategy before beginning to read : *After I read each sentence I will ask myself questions about the main ideas and details .Next I will say put those ideas into my own words by changing as many words in the sentence as I am able to.* Individual students are called on to paraphrase after each sentence is read. 8-10 min

Written paraphrase

Students write a paraphrase of selected sentences from this lesson's text. They are read out. Some are recorded on the board for group discussion/ comparison. 15 min

Reflection/Transfer of strategy

Students say what they have learned this lesson and how it might help them in other reading situations. 4 min

Appendix 2

Two Were Left

A) On the third night of hunger, Noni thought of the dog.

B) Nothing of flesh and blood lived upon the floating ice except those two.

c) In the break up, Noni had lost his sled, his food, his furs, even his knife.

D) He saved only Nimuk, his great devoted husky.

E) And now the two, marooned on the ice, eyed each other warily, each keeping his distance.

F) Noni's love for Nimuk was real, very real – as real as hunger and cold nights and the gnawing pain of his injured leg.

G) But the men of his village killed their dogs when food was scarce, didn't they?

Appendix 3

Synonyms- Key Vocabulary from *Two Were Left*

completed

finished

task

job

thumbed

felt

glare

shine

momentarily

briefly

stabbed

pierced

steeled

strengthened

suspiciously

suspecting

gaze

stare