

Explicitly teaching a cognitive paraphrasing strategy to year 8 boys, in a whole class context, will increase their reading comprehension.

Abstract

Many students in secondary schools struggle with the increasing demands of reading comprehension. Many students coming to secondary school are accurate text decoders. However, there are increasing literacy demands from the key learning areas in secondary classes that require an understanding of increasingly difficult expository texts and require students to learn more and more often from reading. This has become problematic for many students.

The hypothesis of this study is that explicitly teaching a cognitive paraphrasing strategy to year 8 boys, in a whole class context, will increase their reading comprehension.

Research has indicated that a strategic approach to teaching paraphrasing has increased reading comprehension. This study used the SRSD model or self-regulated strategy development model in combination with acronyms **R.A.P** and **B.S.R** to help students to remember the strategy. It also used a reciprocal learning approach. This study took these approaches in teaching ten, fifty minute lessons to one class of year 8 students (23 students) over a period of two weeks and compared the results to a control group of similar students in another year 8 class (23 students).

The comparison of the results from the two groups suggested that the explicit teaching of a paraphrasing strategy was successful in significantly increasing the reading comprehension of these students and increasing their ability to paraphrase and use

synonyms. Surprisingly, the students in this study who achieved more success were the students who were more able readers, however all students demonstrated success.

Introduction

Reading comprehension for many students in secondary schools is problematic. The assumptions that can be made about the reading skill levels of secondary school students and the demands that the various key learning areas make in the type of learning expected of secondary students disadvantage many students. Therefore, many students who have problems with reading comprehension are often ill-prepared for learning in secondary schools today. It is essential for secondary teachers to work through the problems associated with the literacy difficulties that secondary students face and address this disadvantage.

The possible causes of this lack of comprehending are varied. Hagaman and Reid (2008,p.222) believe that there is an assumption that ‘...when students become proficient in decoding skills, comprehension of text will follow automatically.’ Being able to decode single words is a long way from comprehending the ideas in a text. This assumption about the literacy skills that students present with at secondary school, could quite easily be made. Teachers in secondary schools might expect that reading is a fundamental skill acquired already in primary school. As Williams (Williams, 2005; cited in Hagaman and Reid, 2008, p.222) suggest: ‘there is evidence that there are sources of comprehension problems that are independent of decoding.’ Therefore, to

assume that good decoders are good at comprehending is unwise. Gorlewski (2009, p.127) adds that this assumption is common in many school systems and that ‘...secondary students are presumed to have acquired the literacy skills necessary for academic success prior to entering high school’.

The need to manage expository text in the secondary school is another contributing factor. The demands of many secondary school subjects to learn by reading is increasing and as Munro (2003, p.327) suggests the problem ‘has been exacerbated in recent years with the increased focus on self-managed and directed student learning and the need to access a range of information sources’. As the students are increasingly expected to read in order to learn, the need for competent comprehension skills is crucial. Also, the demands of expository texts are different to fiction texts which are often more accessible and more common in primary school classrooms. Munro (2003, p.327) sums this up when he writes: ‘Students who have difficulty converting written information to knowledge are at a severe disadvantage in the world of the twenty first century’. By avoiding or being ignorant of the literacy needs of secondary students, secondary teachers are doing their students a great disservice.

One way of addressing the literacy needs of secondary students is to explicitly teach a paraphrasing strategy. Paraphrasing, according to many researchers in this area, is a strategy that can help address the literacy needs of secondary students. Paraphrasing is when students can re-tell a sentence in their own words, maintaining the original meaning. By doing this, the students can link what they know already to the ideas in

the text. By paraphrasing the students are taught to link 'the concepts in each sentence in a literal way ... saying in their own words each sentence in the text read', (Munro, 2003, p.329). It is in this linking that the students are able to more fully comprehend the text as it is more likely to be stored in short term memory.

This idea of paraphrasing as engaging with the text is also explored by Kletzien (2009, p.73). She writes how paraphrasing helps the students to 'translate the material' and then actively 'engage the content'. She also explores the idea that paraphrasing provides a link between what is known and the new ideas of the text. She writes that paraphrasing 'encourages the reader to make connections with prior knowledge to access what is already known about the topic and to use words that are part of the reader's knowledge'. If students can successfully manage this engagement, it also leads to the idea that they are then able to monitor their own comprehension of the text. Paraphrasing by definition allows this. Three of Munro's (2003, p.328) high reliability literacy strategies include explicit teaching of paraphrasing, summarising the text paragraph by paragraph and also to 'review and consolidate...comprehension of what has been learnt'. His research has demonstrated the success of these strategies in Australian secondary schools and that 'they have been shown to enhance both students' ability to learn by reading and their literacy knowledge of the topic being learnt' which directly addresses the literacy problems face by secondary students.

This then requires both a change in the thinking and a change in the behaviour of the students and as Katims (1997, p.117) explains 'reading comprehension is influenced by understanding how readers construct a representation of incoming information'.

Further to this Katims (1997, p.118) continues that ‘the paraphrasing strategy has been demonstrated to significantly increase the reading comprehension of students with and without learning disabilities’. Thus, the students who can paraphrase a sentence in a text are more likely to be able to understand the content and therefore they are more able to access the ideas in the text. Munro’s (2003, p.327) research seems to confirm this when he writes that ‘the less able readers at all year levels made greater gains in their reading comprehension than the more able readers’. As Gorlewski (2009, p.127) writes ‘identifying and explicitly applying comprehension strategies helps all readers because even skilled readers benefit from understanding the metacognitive processes that they are spontaneously using to comprehend texts’. Whether or not they have learning difficulties seems not to matter, as the positive effects according to the research are universal.

This poses the question about how paraphrasing needs to be taught to maximise its effect. Mateos (Mateos et al., 2007, p.676) write that paraphrasing involves ‘metacognitive control over their understanding’ and that a strategy such as paraphrasing would involve this. Paraphrasing is an important metacognitive and literacy strategy. They acknowledge that research has demonstrated that ‘to a large extent secondary school students lack the cognitive and metacognitive processes that would enable them to make strategic use of reading and writing’. Therefore, it seems the introduction of paraphrasing as a metacognitive strategy will result in increased comprehension of texts. Gorlewski (2009, p.129) writes that good readers do this already as they ‘engage actively with text, employing metacognitive comprehension strategies seamlessly’. This metacognitive approach is again emphasised by Kletzien

(2009, p.73-74) when she writes ' In teaching students to use paraphrasing to monitor comprehension, we make certain that they understand the purpose of the strategy, as well as how to do it'. The research suggests that explicitly teaching paraphrasing as a metacognitive comprehension strategy will increase comprehension and can be used as a self-diagnostic tool (Munro, 2003, p.23) by the students in the process of comprehending text. Therefore, this study proposes that explicitly teaching paraphrasing to a whole class of year 8 boys will increase their reading comprehension.

In order to achieve this in this present study, decisions had to be made about how to best implement this intervention. The explicit teaching of a paraphrasing strategy needs a structure that is effective. Katims (1997, p.124) writes that explicit teaching using a strategy-orientated approach will have both cognitive and behavioural elements that will help students map out what to do and how it helps them in the task. It is the learning of this mapping out that seems part of the key to the success of the strategy. Hagaman and Reid(2008, p.223) in their research used the SRSD (self-regulated strategy development) model to provide a step by step 'process of strategy instruction that incorporates ... modelling, structured practice, scaffolded instruction... goal setting and self-monitoring'. This seems appropriate for this study as it leads to the independent implementation of the strategy by the students as 'instruction is systematically scaffolded so that responsibility for the use of the strategy is gradually shifted from the instructor to the student'. (Hagaman, et al., 2008, p.227) This shifting of responsibility was also important in Kletzien's (2009, p.74) work when she writes that it was important to 'scaffold their (students) progress from novice to competent

users of the strategy'. Harvey and Goudvis (Harvey et al., 2007; cited in Gorlewski 2009) call this approach the 'Gradual Release of Responsibility framework' that operates along the following guidelines:

- Teacher modelling
- Guided practice
- Collaborative practice
- Independent practice
- Application of the strategy in authentic reading situation

Both SRSD and Gradual Release of Responsibility seem effective instructional guides to teaching strategic learning effectively.

Another instructional procedure developed by Palincsar and Brown (1984; cited in Sporer et al., 2008, p.272) complementary to this is reciprocal teaching with four core aspects of scaffolded instruction. These are: '(a) generating one's own questions, (b) summarising parts of the text, (c) clarifying word meanings and confusing passages and (d) predicting what might come next in the text'. As Sporer (Sporer et al., 2008, p.274) suggests reciprocal teaching involves a cyclical process that produces a dialogue between the teacher and the students that eventually becomes an internal dialogue for the students and has a bonus in that 'less able students can learn from their more knowledgeable peers'.

Another effective teaching element that has been used in the strategic teaching of paraphrasing has been the metacognitive technique of using acronyms. Katims (1997, p.118) used the acronym RAP (Read a paragraph, Ask yourself questions about the

main idea and details, and Put the main ideas and details into your own words using complete sentences) developed by Schumaker (Schumaker et al., 1984; cited in Hagaman et al., 2008, p.223) to teach paraphrasing. Having a simple acronym to remember when paraphrasing helped the students to 'trigger or activate their inner, cognitive dialogues and to have them think about and actively apply the steps in a particular strategy'. Hagaman and Reid (Hagaman et al., 2008, p.227) also used the RAP strategy to teach paraphrasing in conjunction with SRSD. It was emphasised in this research that the RAP strategy was a "trick" to help them (the students) remember all the things that good readers do when they read. This trick to remember seems an important element in the success of the strategic learning of paraphrasing.

Therefore this present investigation aims to examine the effects, on a whole class of year 8 boys, of explicitly teaching paraphrasing using a metacognitive strategic approach. This strategic approach will involve elements of the SRSD strategy used by Hagaman and Reid (Hagaman et al., 2008, p.227) and incorporate the Harvey and Goudvis (Harvey et al., 2007; cited in Gorlewski 2009) 'Gradual Release of Responsibility framework' to support the learning of the strategy. This study will also involve elements of reciprocal teaching and the use of acronyms, for example, RAP, to help the students to remember the strategy and so be able to work effectively with the strategy and thus enhance and develop their reading comprehension.

Method

Design

This study is structured around a pre-test, intervention and then post-test design in a naturalistic classroom setting. It uses two classes of year 8 boys, one class as a control group and one as the intervention group. The intervention comprised explicit teaching of a paraphrasing strategy to this class. The study then measures and compares the change in reading comprehension ability of both the control and intervention groups.

Participants

The participants in this study are all boys currently in year 8 of secondary schooling from two classes. Their ages range from thirteen years and one month to fourteen years and five months with an average age of thirteen years the seven months. They all attend a secondary boys college in a largely middle class area. Both the classes, the control group and the intervention group, are mixed ability groups and were chosen because of their similarity to each other. There are twenty-three students in each group, and while both classes have twenty-eight students, this study has omitted five students from both classes due to these students not being present at school during the testing, the intervention lessons or both. These classes were specifically chosen as this study intends to investigate whether the intervention can have an effect on a whole class within the naturalistic setting of the classroom. The intervention lessons were taught during the timetabled English classes over a period of two weeks. Figure

1 lists the average scores for the NAPLAN reading test in year 7, one year prior to the present study. This suggests that both groups fall within the state average range for reading.

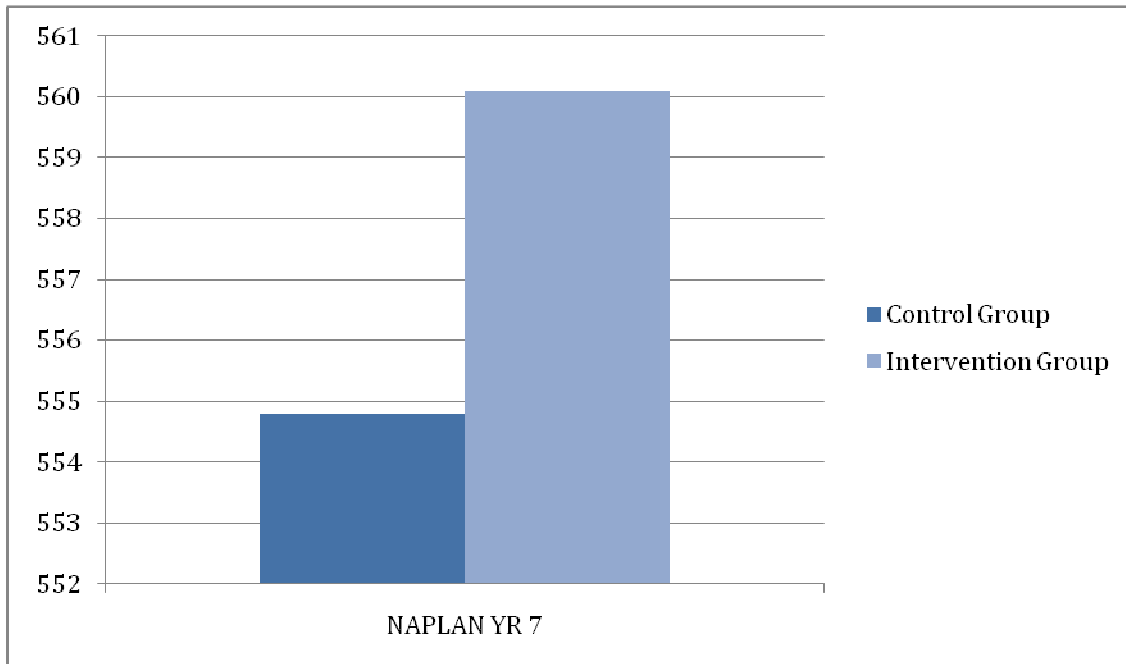


Fig 1 NAPLAN Scores from Year 7 for both groups.

Materials

Three tests were used to pre-test and post-test the students. These were the TORCH Tests of Reading Comprehension, the specific test: “The Red Ace of Spades”, The Group Synonym Test and The Group Paraphrasing Test developed by Munro. In post-testing the same tests were administered.

The expository texts used in the intervention lessons were:

“How Coasts are Made”

“Concentration Camps”

“Why are Rainforests Important”

“Nuclear Cloud Over Europe”

All these texts were selected according to their readability, the first two at year 7 readability and the last at age appropriate for year 8. Expository texts were chosen as this is the type of text that is used often in the secondary setting.

Procedure

All students were pre-tested using the TORCH Tests of Reading Comprehension, specifically the text “The Red Ace of Spades”. They were also pre-tested with the Group Synonym Test and the Group Paraphrasing Test by Munro. This was done to establish a starting point for the study and to determine whether synonyms needed to be taught prior to the intervention lessons. This was not seen as necessary as most students had a reasonable knowledge of synonyms. The pre-testing was also necessary to establish whether the intervention of explicitly teaching paraphrasing would increase the boys reading comprehension. Tables 1 and 2 indicate the results from both groups. The testing took two 50 minute periods, one for the TORCH and one for both the Synonym and Paraphrasing Tests.

The 10 lessons (appendix 1) were structured into specific sections:

1. Aim
2. Introduction
3. Action
4. Review of the Action.

This allowed for clear goals and a process of re-establishing what was learned in the previous lesson and also a reviewing of the action and consolidation of the learning at the end of each lesson. It also allowed for a gradual withdrawal of instruction as the learning became more independent. The instructions are italicised so that the instructor's dialogue demonstrates a highly repetitive and structured process.

Four different expository texts were used to allow a gradual increase in the difficulty of the paraphrasing tasks. The easiest text was the introductory text. During the teaching sequence the acronym **R.A.P (READ, ASK QUESTIONS, PARAPHRASE)** (poster appendix 2) was used to help the students remember the process of paraphrasing, however, this study introduced another acronym **B.S.R. (BLOCK the sentence into parts, find SYNONYMS for the keywords, RE-WRITE the sentence in your own words)** (poster appendix 2) as it seemed to be a huge expectation that students could automatically paraphrase without some instruction in how to exactly do this. **B.S.R** was introduced first so that the students could gain competence and confidence in paraphrasing a single sentence before they began to paraphrase a whole paragraph. It was thought that the introduction of two acronyms was not problematic and that the students could manage and remember both without issue.

The lessons were also insistent on collaboration between students to assist and support their learning with the insistence that they often work in pairs to share and work together on paraphrasing before attempting it for themselves. Therefore a pattern was established:

1. teacher modelling

2. class working together as a whole
3. pairs working together
4. then individual work was established.

During the 'Review of the Action' the students were asked to write down their responses and also to say aloud their responses either to the class or to their partner, again reinforcing metacognition of their learning. At the introduction of each lesson, students were also asked to write down and say the learning that they remember from the last lesson, reinforcing their learning. They were encouraged to say:

1. what they had learned
2. what they did
3. how it helped them
4. how they would use it in future.

Table 1 Pre-testing Results for Control Group

student ID	TORCH 1 (raw)	Para.Test 1 %	Syn.Test 1 %
A	2	56	16
B	2	50	15
C	5	53	12
D	6	56	23
E	7	75	13
F	8	41	25
G	8	44	13
H	9	59	37
I	9	56	25
J	11	38	15
K	11	19	21
L	12	81	23
M	12	68	21
N	12	41	13
O	13	75	16
P	13	72	30
Q	16	75	37
R	16	63	19
S	16	75	23
T	17	41	23
U	17	22	22
V	19	63	24
W	21	75	37

Table 2 Pre-testing Results for Intervention Group

student ID	TORCH 1 (raw)	Para.Test 1 %	Syn.Test 1 %
AA	3	16	24
BB	4	45	18
CC	4	50	18
DD	8	50	29
EE	11	44	28
FF	11	53	30
GG	12	81	39
HH	12	66	24
II	12	63	36
JJ	12	25	30
KK	13	59	27
LL	13	66	31
MM	14	34	28
NN	14	41	21
OO	15	44	33
PP	15	28	51
QQ	16	56	23
RR	16	78	36
SS	16	82	27
TT	17	68	29
UU	17	84	37
VV	20	59	45
WW	20	91	49

The average scores for both groups are in Fig. 2.

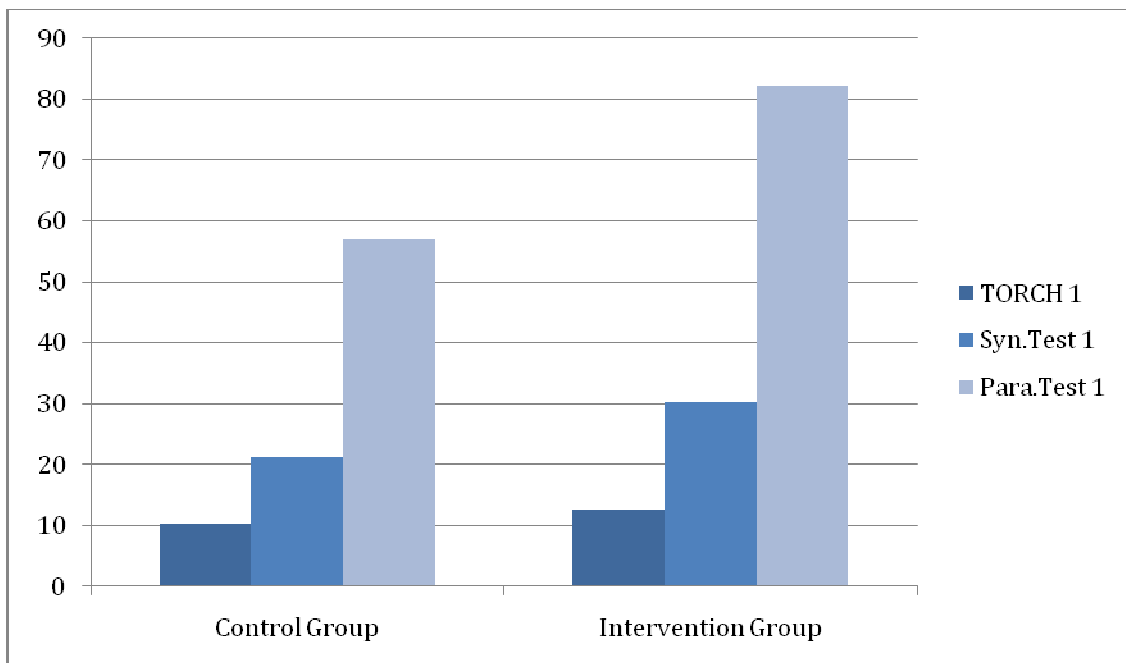


Fig. 2 Average Pre-testing Scores for both groups

The intervention was taught as a series of ten lessons, within the regular English periods, over a span of two weeks. Each lesson was of 50 minutes duration.

Results

The group trends after the intervention seem to support the hypothesis that explicitly teaching paraphrasing to year 8 boys in a whole class context will increase their reading comprehension. Testing results for the Control Group are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 Control Group Results for Pre and Post Testing

student ID	TORCH 1 raw	TORCH 2 raw	Para.Test 1 %	Para.Test 2 %	Syn.Test 1 %	Syn.Test 1 %
A	2	7	56	25	16	16
B	2	5	50	47	15	15
C	5	8	53	31	12	12
D	6	8	56	66	23	23
E	7	3	75	66	13	13
F	8	13	41	59	25	25
G	8	13	44	28	13	13
H	9	11	59	34	37	37
I	9	7	56	56	25	25
J	11	11	38	41	15	15
K	11	16	19	69	21	21
L	12	10	81	72	23	23
M	12	10	68	78	21	21
N	12	9	41	47	13	13
O	13	10	75	38	16	16
P	13	10	72	53	30	30
Q	16	15	75	38	37	37
R	16	13	63	34	19	19
S	16	16	75	56	23	23
T	17	16	41	75	23	23
U	17	14	22	36	22	22
V	19	12	63	78	24	24
W	21	18	75	78	37	37

In the paraphrasing test for the Control Group, the average percentage score went from 56.9 in test 1 (standard deviation = 16.7) to 52 in test 2 (standard deviation= 15.9) for an effect size of -0.24. (appendix 3). In the same group, test 1 in the synonym test had an average of 21.2 (standard deviation= 7.5) and test 2 was and average of 21.4 (standard deviation=4.05) for an effect size of 0.02. Results of the TORCH showed that in test 1 the average was 10.25 (standard deviation=4.45) and in test 2 the average was 10.74 (standard deviation=3.7). This gave an effect size of 0.11, that is, very small.

Testing results for the Intervention Group are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Intervention Group Results for Pre and Post Testing

student ID	TORCH 1 raw	TORCH 2 raw	Para.Test 1 %	Para.Test 2 %	Syn.Test 1 %	Syn.Test 2%
AA	3	5	16	50	24	34
BB	4	8	45	78	18	30
CC	4	12	50	78	18	28
DD	8	10	50	86	29	29
EE	11	11	44	72	28	38
FF	11	17	53	91	30	39
GG	12	15	81	91	39	45
HH	12	11	66	75	24	30
II	12	13	63	97	36	68
JJ	12	17	25	91	30	37
KK	13	15	59	28	27	28
LL	13	19	66	91	31	56
MM	14	16	34	88	28	43
NN	14	15	41	63	21	30
OO	15	15	44	81	33	58
PP	15	18	28	91	51	54
QQ	16	18	56	81	23	35
RR	16	19	78	100	36	55
SS	16	19	82	100	27	32
TT	17	17	68	88	29	32
UU	17	20	84	100	37	47
VV	20	21	59	91	45	53
WW	20	21	91	97	49	63

Large gains were noticed in the average scores on all tests for the Intervention Group.

The group averages for the TORCH went from 12.5 (test 1) to 15.04 (test 2). The

average scores for the Paraphrasing Test went from 54.2 up to 82.3, while the

Synonym Test went from 30.2 up to 40.9. A graph of the TORCH averages post-test

comparing the two groups is in Fig.3.

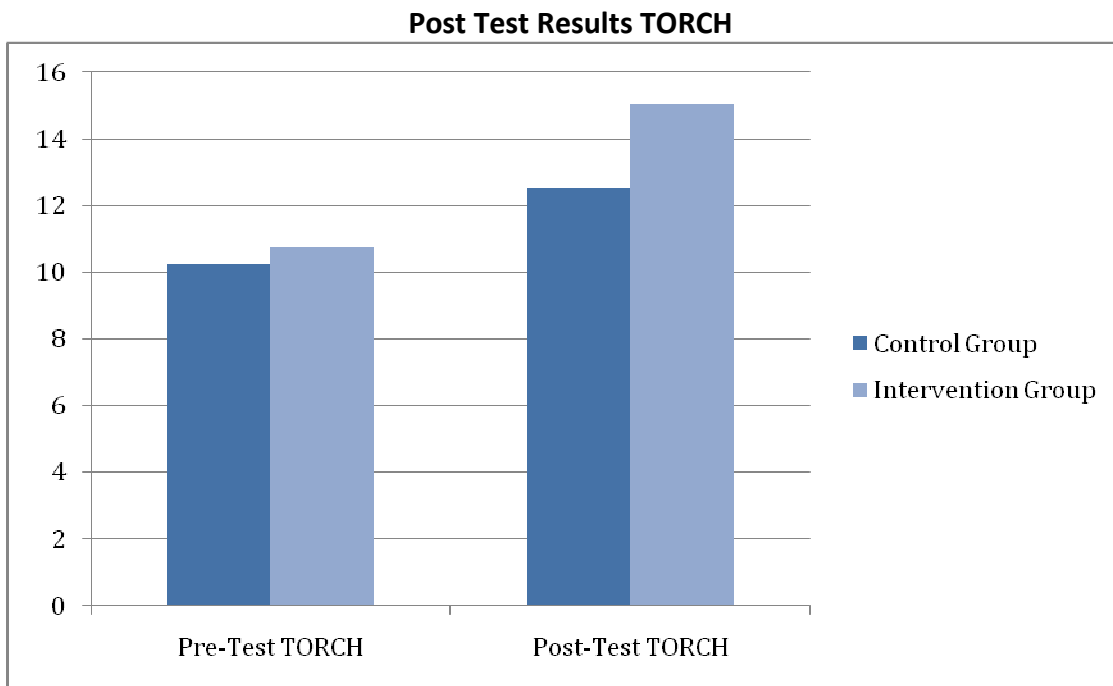


Fig 3. Post Test Results (averages) TORCH

The effect size for all tests was worked out (Fig.4) and the gains in the Intervention Group are even more obvious. All these results are recorded in appendix 1, however a graph of the effect size for all testing is in Fig. 4, comparing both groups. It must be noted that the Control Group recorded a negative effect size (red colour in appendix 3) in some instances that appears as zero on the graph. The Paraphrasing Test for the Intervention Group had an effect size of 1.56 and for the Synonym Test it was 1.07. The TORCH tests for this group recorded an effect size of 0.6, a large effect. Therefore it appears that there was significant improvement for the Intervention Group in their ability to use synonyms and to paraphrase and subsequently there were significant gains in their reading comprehension.

Effect Size On All Testing

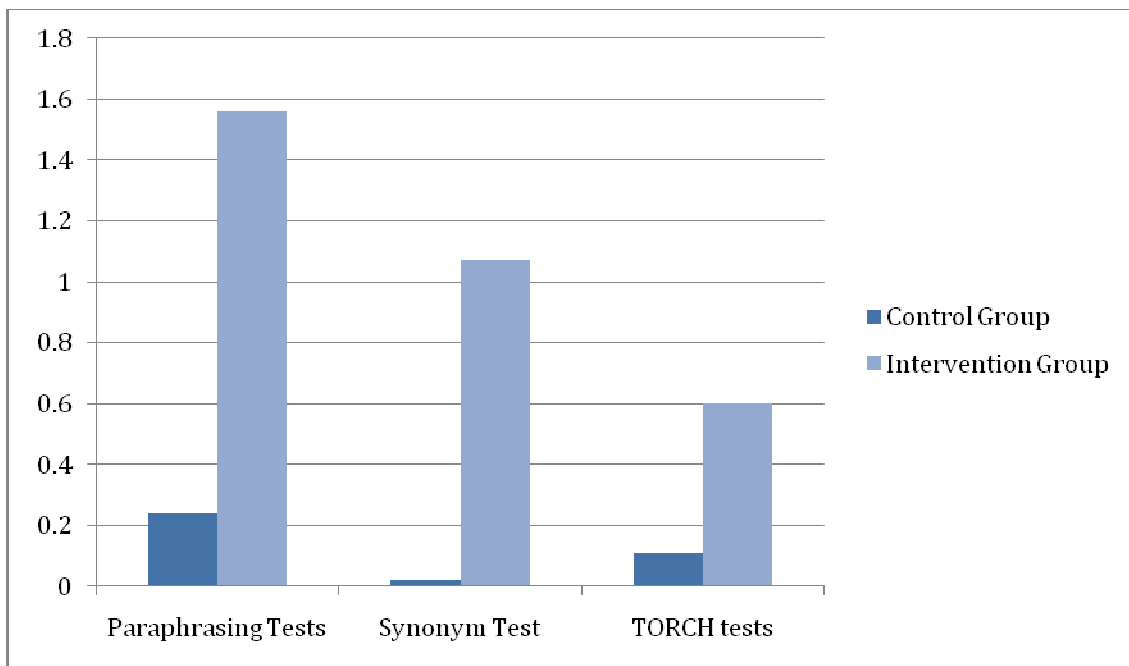


Fig. 4 Effect Size for Testing, Control Group and Intervention Group

This study also looked at the results of sub-groups within the two main groups. The two groups were divided into two, a high achieving group and a low achieving group. This was done using the initial TORCH tests and the students were listed lowest result to highest (appendix 3). Both groups were then divided. The results are graphed in Fig. 5)

In the Control Group, the two sub-groups performed differently. The high group showed an effect size of negative value or little value (appendix 1) in all tests. While little gain was made by the low group in the Paraphrasing Tests and Synonym Test, there was a significant gain in the TORCH test, an effect size of 0.6. (Fig. 5).

In the Intervention Group, substantial gains were made by the two sub-groups in both the Paraphrasing and Synonym Tests. The effect size of the low group for Paraphrasing and Synonym testing was 1.33 and 0.89 respectively, however the effect size for the TORCH was smaller at 0.3. The high group made substantial gains in all testing: Paraphrasing with a 1.8 effect size, Synonyms at 1.14 and the TORCH had an effect size of 0.95 which is very large (appendix 3).

Effect Size from Tests With Low/High Sub-Groups

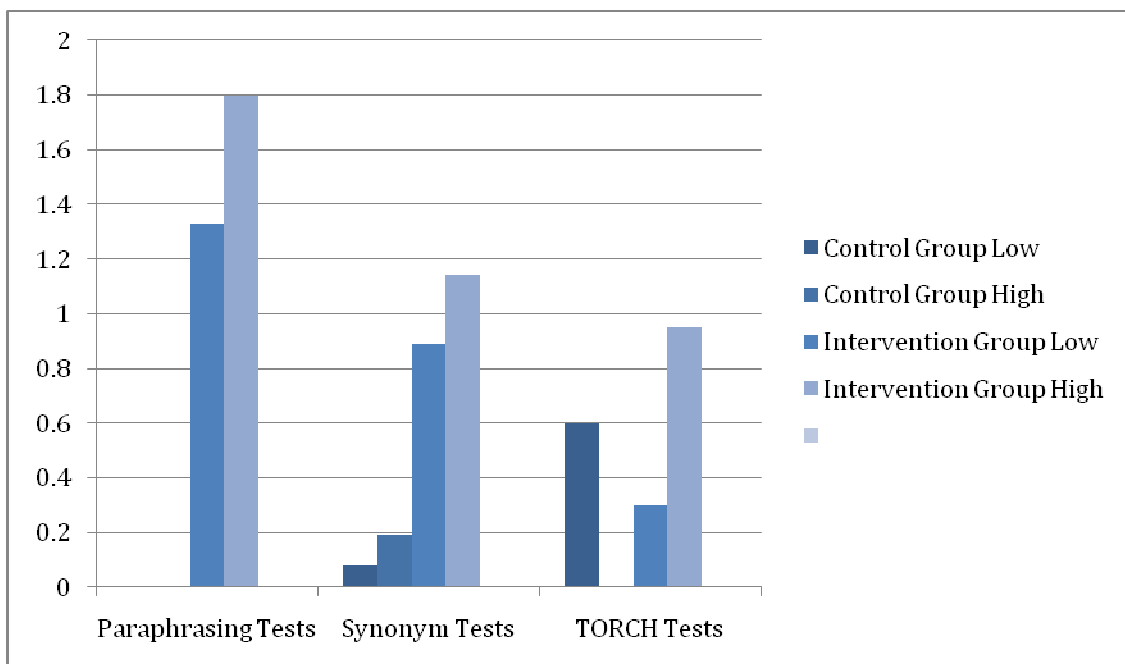


Fig. 5 Effect Sizes for Low and High Sub-Groups

To break down the data even further, this study looked at the top 5 students in each group and the bottom 5 students in each group, again decided by the results on the first TORCH test (appendix 3).

Effect Sizes for the Top 5 and Bottom 5 Students in Both Control and Intervention

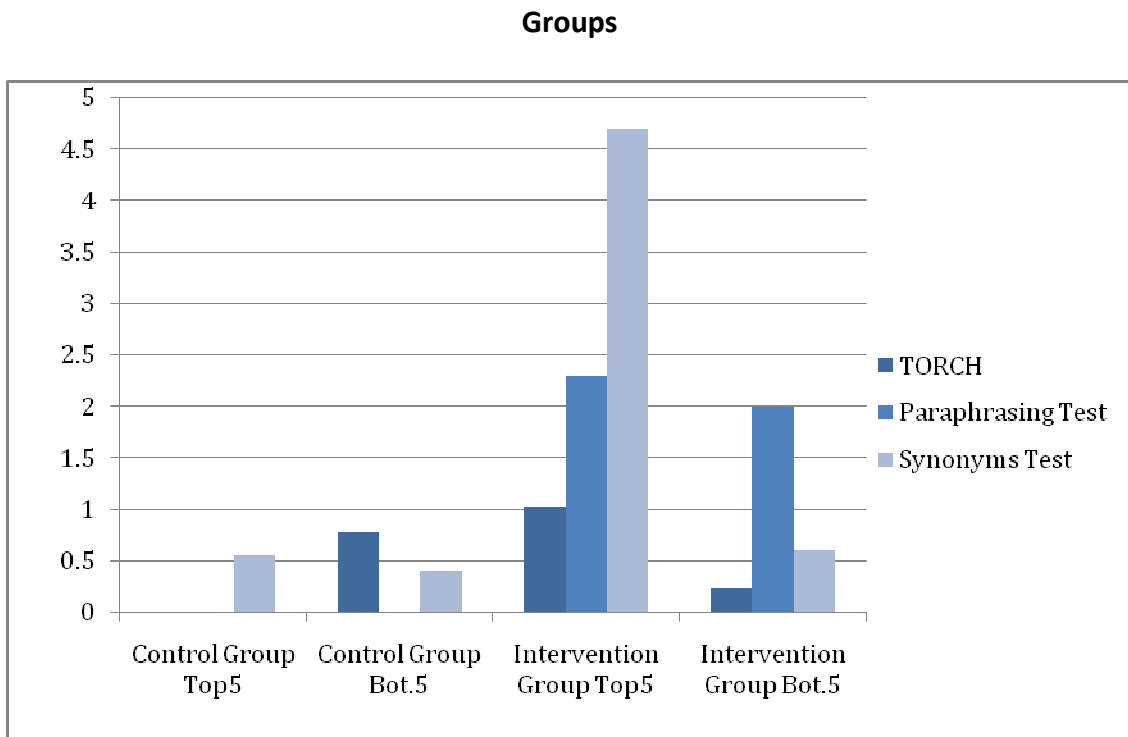


Fig. 6 Effect Sizes of Top/Bottom 5 in both Groups

In the Control Group, the top 5 students showed an effect size of -1.3 in the TORCH, -0.76 in the Paraphrasing Test, and 0.55 in the Synonym Test. Gains were made in the Synonym Test and a larger gain in the TORCH, however no gains were made in the Paraphrasing Test. The bottom 5 data for this group are different. Good gains were made in the Paraphrasing Test and no effect in the Synonym Test, whereas a large effect was noticed in the TORCH (Fig.6)

In the Intervention Group, the top 5 students all made remarkable gains in all the tests. The TORCH had an effect size of 1.03, the Paraphrasing had an effect size of 2.3 and the Synonym Test had an effect size of 4.7. The bottom 5 students showed mixed

results with the TORCH having a 0.23 effect size, the Paraphrasing Test a 2.0 effect size and the Synonym Test a 0.6 effect size (Fig 6).

Discussion

This study tends to support the hypothesis that explicit teaching of paraphrasing to year 8 boys in a whole class context improves the reading comprehension of the students involved. The data collected about the Control Group in this study have indicated little measurable improvement, as a whole group, in the students' reading comprehension, their ability to paraphrase in the Paraphrasing Test or their ability to use synonyms in the Synonym Test. Some improvement was noted in the Paraphrasing and Synonym Test with the two sub-groupings of the lower half of the main group and the bottom 5 students. This could perhaps be explained by the repetitive nature of the two tests in that these students had more familiarity with the tests the second time around and thus could attack the task with more confidence. This improvement in the Paraphrasing and Synonym tests was not translated, however, into higher reading comprehension scores.

The data for the Intervention Group were very different to the Control Group. As a whole group, there were significant gains on all of the tests. Significant improvements in the Paraphrasing and Synonym Tests translated into increased ability of the group to comprehend what they were reading. This supports other studies by Munro (Munro, 2003) and Hagaman and Reid (Hagaman, et al., 2008) who have demonstrated that

explicit teaching of a paraphrasing strategy will build reading comprehension in students. This equally applied to two of the sub-groups, the upper half grouping and the top 5 grouping. Both of these groups demonstrated significant improvement in the Paraphrasing and Synonym Tests and again this appears to translate into much increased reading comprehension abilities of these groups.

Where this study differs to Munro (Munro, 2003, p.327) is that the lower two groupings of students, the lower half group and the bottom 5 group, only recorded a small increase in their reading comprehension. Munro's study found that the 'greatest gains (were) made by the initially less able readers'. This study, however, shows that the greater gains were from the two higher groupings, the higher half and the top 5 groups. What is unusual in this is that these two lower groups still demonstrated significant improvement in the Paraphrasing and Synonym Tests. This leads to a possible conclusion that more needs to be done for this group in linking their knowledge of paraphrasing a sentence and their knowledge of synonyms to building their understanding of whole passages of text. It seems that the transference of their knowledge of paraphrasing and synonyms has not quite made it to them applying this knowledge to other textual contexts.

Having acknowledged this though, this study has been able to demonstrate that a group of year 8 boys, in a whole class context, can significantly improve their reading comprehension through explicit teaching of a paraphrasing strategy. It seems that it is the explicit teaching of a cognitive paraphrasing strategy, as developed by Munro

(2003) in his 'high reliability literacy teaching procedures', that has brought this about. The teaching of a strategic approach to paraphrasing seems essential to this success.

The use of the **R.A.P** acronym used by Hagaman and Reid (Hagaman, et al., 2008, p.227) and Katims (1997, p.124) was also effective it seems in this study. It was simple to teach and easy for the students to remember. The limitation of this however, is that it needed more explicit teaching for the students to be able to access the '**P**' of the **R.A.P** and therefore this study introduced an added acronym **B.S.R (BLOCK** the sentence, find **SYNONYMS** for keywords, **RE-WRITE** in your own words) to bridge this gap in knowledge. This appears to have been successful.

Another apparently successful approach used in this study was the SRSD model or self-regulated strategy development model used by Hagaman and Reid (Hagaman, et al., 2008, p.227). This provided a clear model of instruction for teaching the paraphrasing strategy that gradually released responsibility from the teacher to the students and allowed the students to take themselves to more independent learning.

There are many implications for teaching practice from this study. This study demonstrates that significant gains can be made in building reading comprehension in a whole class context. In the secondary school where working with small groups of students is often impractical and where many teachers will balk at the notion, this is a way that the reading comprehension of large group of students can be significantly

increased. The teaching of a paraphrasing strategy can enhance the reading comprehension of most students. It is not reliant on huge funds to implement or specialist staff but can be introduced at the classroom level by the classroom teacher.

It has implications for secondary schools as a whole. There is ever-increasing pressure to succeed and with the increasing use of standardised testing to rank schools, schools have to build into their teaching and learning ways of improving the learning and success of their students. This use of a strategic approach of paraphrasing to build reading comprehension can help here and provides an easily implemented and effective way to address the reading needs of many secondary students in a world that is increasing in its literacy demands on young people. When ten intensive lessons can have such a significant result, the results from a systematic teaching approach through all classes across all year levels cannot help but have a dramatic effect.

There are many possible directions for further research from this study. Firstly it would be beneficial to work with adjusting the explicit teaching in this study to help low achieving readers link their ability to paraphrase a sentence with their understanding of more extensive text. It would also be worthwhile to conduct and investigate the results of a whole school approach to the introduction of a paraphrasing strategy. Because of the success at the class level, it would be worthwhile to take this explicit instruction to many classes within the same year level and at different levels to gauge its success on a larger scale. Also it would be

interesting to further investigate Munro's (2003, p.327) research that 'literacy skills more closely associated with comprehension, such as paraphrasing and summarising for the younger students, and vocabulary knowledge for the older students, were the best predictors of gains in comprehension'. This suggests a further way of maybe attacking the problems of reading comprehension in secondary schools.

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Munro, J.K. Paraphrasing Test (Group) and Synonym Test (Group)

Lesson 1: Paraphrasing

Aim: To review the strategies of GKR and Vocabulary and introduce Paraphrasing.

Introduction:

Today we are going to work with another reading strategy that will help you understand what you are reading with more detail. We have already looked at Getting Knowledge Ready and Vocabulary Strategies and this is another strategy that will further help.

Action:

Hand out text.

Revision of the two strategies: Getting Knowledge Ready and Vocabulary Strategies.

When you are asked to read a new text, what are the GKR strategies that we have been using?

Write up on whiteboard. (write down 10 keywords that might be in the text, write down 3 questions that the text might answer, write down a sentence about what you think the text might be about)

Good. Let's apply this to the text I have just handed out to you ('Nuclear Cloud Over Europe' Humanities Alive). What are we looking at first? (title and pictures and sub-titles) Remember that you can start your questions with who, what, why, where, how... . Turn your sheet over so that you are not tempted to look at the text. Remember this is about predicting.

I'm going to give you 5 minutes to get your knowledge ready.

What I want you to do now is to share your predicting with the person beside you. Add to your work any keyword or question that you think is valuable.

Okay, let's share what you have come up with. Can I have 2 keywords from each pair and let's put it up on the whiteboard? Again, can I have the best 2 questions from each pair to write up?

Hands up what you believe the text is going to be about.

Good, let's picture in our heads what you believe the text is about. What are you seeing? Share it with your partner.

Let's read the text out loud together.

Now I'll read the first paragraph again. While I'm ready have your pen or highlighter ready to underline any word that you do not know the meaning of.

Read the first paragraph.

Are there any words that you underlined? Okay, what do we do when we come across a word that we do not know the meaning of? What are our vocabulary strategies?

List the strategies on the whiteboard.

1. Read on further into the text.
2. Go back and re-read the sentence or sentences before.
3. Put a synonym in its place and check that it keeps its meaning.
4. Break the word up and look for base words.
5. Use our knowledge of the title, pictures, context.

How will we work out this word? What strategy will work for us? Have a discussion with your partner about how to work out the meaning of this word and what strategy you would use.

Let's see what you came up with. What does the word mean and how did you work it out? Please write both of these down. Let's share. Hands up with what you came up with.

So when we come across a word that we do not know the meaning of we can... please say together the strategies that we can use. Good.

Introducing Paraphrasing at Sentence Level.

Another strategy to add to your list is Paraphrasing. Paraphrasing means putting what you read into your own words. Let's look at the sentence: 'Easterly winds have carried the lethal radioactive cloud across much of Europe', that is from the second paragraph.

Have the sentence on the computer so that it is projected onto the whiteboard, well spaced out.

When we paraphrase, we need to break the sentence into blocks of words. I'm looking at this sentence and looking for logical blocks. I see one there and there...

What did I just do?

Now I will look at the blocks and decide how I can change each block into my own words. I'm looking for keywords that I can find synonyms for. Yes, here is a keyword, what might be a synonym for this word? Remember we must keep the meaning accurate. Good, let's write up these alternatives underneath the word in the sentence. Now, let's me look at the next block, what do I need to do? Good, can you suggest a keyword here? Great, what are some synonyms to replace this word?

Write the synonyms on the whiteboard underneath the original sentence.

Again, looking at the next block, the keywords are...? Good, and synonyms are...?

Now we have all the blocks covered, I need to re-write my new sentence. Let me see, I like that synonym, that group of synonyms etc. My new sentence looks like...

Write up the new sentence on the whiteboard.

Review of the action:

Let's look at what I did here. When I wanted to paraphrase this sentence, to write it in my own words, what steps did I have to take?

Write up the steps on the white board:

BLOCK the sentence into logical bits.

SYNONYMS for keywords.

RE-WRITE the new sentence.

*Good, now say the 3 steps for me... Good, so that we can easily remember these steps, I'm going to give you an easy way of remembering. It is: **B.S.R. BLOCK, SYNONYMS, RE-WRITE**. Say for me what **B.S.R** means? Good. I have a slide here that I will put up on*

the wall to remind us. Can you please write down for me in your books the three steps?

Before we finish, what did you learn in today's lesson that you didn't know before? Say it out loud for me in a sentence.

Lesson 2:

Aim: To review what we went over last lesson on paraphrasing and have the boys have a go at the **B.S.R** strategy for themselves, guided by the teacher.

Introduction:

In the last lesson, we looked at paraphrasing a sentence. Why do we paraphrase? Write down your answer in a sentence. Could someone read out his sentence?

*What were the 3 steps that we used to paraphrase a sentence? What does **B.S.R** stand for? Could someone please write the 3 steps for us on the whiteboard?*

Using the same text as we used last time, let us look at another sentence that we can paraphrase. 'Early reports from the scene of the disaster suggest the accident was caused when a routine maintenance procedure was mishandled'.

Action:

The sentence is on the computer to be projected onto the whiteboard, again with space provided underneath.

In the first step we have to block the sentence into logical parts. Let me see, I'll do the first block. Could someone suggest where we might

put the second block? And the third? Good, what is the next step?
Synonyms...yes. For this keyword, what synonyms would work?

Write the suggestions underneath the keyword.

For the next block, I want you to tell me the keyword/s. Okay, what synonyms could we use?

All right, for the third block, work with your partner and decide on the keyword/s and find the synonyms that would work here. Could I please have the suggestions that the pairs came up with?

Suggestions written on the board underneath the keyword/s.

Good, now with your partner, re-write the sentence into your books as you would paraphrase it.

Can you please read out loud your paraphrased sentences?

Review of the action:

Yes, we seem to have the hang of it really well. Write down for me in your books what steps you took to paraphrase this sentence. Could you please read this out for me? What is B.S.R?

A number of boys read out their responses.

What is it that we have learned here? How has this helped you to understand the text? Write down your responses and then share it with your partner.

Lesson 3:

Aim: To work towards independence in paraphrasing by gradually withdrawing support.

Introduction:

*Last lesson we learned how to paraphrase a sentence using **B.S.R.** Write down in your books what **B.S.R.** stands for.*

Action:

We are going to use the same text as last time. I have another sentence up on the board. (on the projector) I would like you all to copy the sentence into your books, leaving plenty of space beneath the line.

When you have copied down the sentence, have a go at blocking the sentence into logical parts. Show your sentence to your partner and discuss where you have placed the blocks. If you would like to change your blocks, change them now.

Now, on your own, find synonyms for the keywords in your blocks. Then compare your synonyms with your partner. Can you add to your list?

Good. Now write out the new paraphrased sentence for yourself. Hands up and let's share your paraphrased sentences.

*Here is another sentence from the text. (projected onto the whiteboard) Please write this down and begin your strategy again. Remember: **B.S.R.** When you have completed this, share with your partner. Is your partner's sentence different to yours? Do they both have the same meaning as the original? Let's share as a class some of your sentences.*

Review of the action:

Together we have paraphrased a number of sentences. What steps have we taken to do this? Please write this down in sentences. When you have done this, read out your steps to your partner.

What have you learned today that you didn't know yesterday? Write this down in a sentence. Let's share your responses.

Lesson 4:

Aim: To work to greater independence in paraphrasing a sentence by introducing a more difficult text with less support from the teacher.

Introduction:

Today we are again looking at paraphrasing. What were the steps that we need to remember in this strategy? Please write them down. Hands up, please read out the steps that you have taken last lesson.

Action:

I have here for you a more difficult text for you to work with so this will really challenge you when you paraphrase.

Hand out the text 'Concentration Camps', The Story of the Holocaust.

Now before we start I want you to get your knowledge ready. Remember what you have to do in this strategy. I'll give you 5 minutes to do this quietly for yourself.

What did you do to get you knowledge ready? Good. Share with your partner your keywords, questions and statements.

Also remember that if you come across a word that you do not understand, you are to use your vocabulary strategies. Hands up, what strategies will we use if we come across a difficult word? Good.

Now we have to move on with our paraphrasing. Let's read the text out loud together.

Let's read the first paragraph again. Could you please choose one sentence from that paragraph that we can paraphrase?

Write up the sentence on the board.

*What are the steps that we are going to use? **B.S.R.** Good. Decide with your partner where you would put the blocks. Could someone come out and do this? Okay. Now we need to tackle the blocks. Discuss with your partner the keywords in the first block and then some possible synonyms. Could someone come and write them on the board? Good.*

Now let's tackle the next block. Jot down for yourself some possible synonyms for the keywords. Could someone please share their words and write them up on the board? Great. In the final block, I want you to work out the keywords and synonyms for yourself. When you have done this, write out your paraphrased sentence in your books.

Would someone please read out his new sentence? Does it keep the meaning? Okay, can I have another? Good.

Review of the action:

Let's see what we have learned here. What did we do to paraphrase this sentence? What steps did we have to take? Please write down your response in a sentence. Now, hands up and read out loud what you have written. I'll write up the steps on the whiteboard. Let's read this together as a Class.

Why did we paraphrase the sentence? What does paraphrasing help us with?

Please write down your answers in sentences.

Lesson 5:

Aim: To extend the paraphrasing of a sentence to looking at a whole paragraph.

Introduction:

In this lesson we are going to extend our skill of paraphrasing by looking at a whole paragraph in the text we used last time.

Why would it be helpful to be able to paraphrase a paragraph? How will it help with our comprehending of the paragraph? At the end of this lesson we will have a strategy to paraphrase a paragraph.

Action:

*Let's review what we did last lesson. Write down the steps in paraphrasing a sentence that we have been looking at. Now, check with your partner to make sure that you have all the steps in **B.S.R.** Would someone please come up to the whiteboard and write down the 3 steps that we have been using? Now, let's read out loud the 3 steps. Good.*

I want you to look at the 3^d paragraph in the text that we have been reading. I am going to show you how to firstly get the main idea from this paragraph and then paraphrase this main idea and some details. Imagine that any paragraph is very much like a hamburger. I have a hamburger on the slide on the whiteboard. What is the main part of the hamburger? Good, the meat. The meat in a hamburger is like the main idea in the paragraph. The rest of the hamburger, the lettuce, the cheese etc are the details, they are what we add to the hamburger.

Most paragraphs have a meat section (main idea) and then add-ons (details and explanations). This is good. However this should be very familiar to you. What does this remind you of? T.E.E.L! Yes, when we are structuring the body paragraphs of many texts types in writing we use T(TOPIC), E(EXPAND AND EXPLAIN), E(give EVIDENCE) and L(LINK to the main topic). This is something that you have been using since year 7. So, in T.E.E.L, what is the main idea sentence? Great! The Topic Sentence! This is going to make our job so much easier.

Now, I have the paragraph on the whiteboard that you have been working with. I'm going to read it again and as I'm reading I'm trying to pick the topic or main idea.

Read the paragraph out loud.

Yes it is pretty obvious what the main idea is. It is this first sentence so I'm going to highlight it in red. Now, what else do I have here? This next sentence is giving more information and detail. I'm going to highlight in yellow that little bit of detail. The next sentence is explaining and next has a bit more detail and I will underline those bits.

*What I have done here are the first 2 steps in our strategy. That is, I have **read** the paragraph carefully and I have **asked** myself what is the main idea and what are the details?*

*Let me write this up on the whiteboard: **READ** the paragraph, **ASKED** myself what is the main idea and what are the details. Please say with me the 2 steps so far. Good.*

On this slide I have written up the main idea sentence and I have dot-pointed the details. Can anyone suggest what I need to do now? Paraphrase the sentence and the details. Good. Can we put this into one sentence I wonder?

*What is the first step to paraphrase a sentence... yes I need to **BLOCK** the sentence, find **SYNONYMS** and then **RE-WRITE** the sentence. I can do that easily...*

Demonstrate the 3 steps.

*Now, all I have to do is put this all together. Okay I'll re-write it here. What do you think? What I have just done is the 3^d step in the strategy, that is: **PARAPHRASE** the sentence with the details.*

I have made a slide of these 3 steps just like B.S.R this is:

READ	=	R
ASK QUESTIONS	=	A
PARAPHRASE	=	P

*This is very simple to remember: **R.A.P**
Would you please copy this down into your books?*

Re-view of the action:

*We have taken our ability to paraphrase to another level here. What are we now able to do? Good, to paraphrase a sentence. What were the 3 steps that we follow to paraphrase a sentence: **R.A.P**. Good and now write down for me what **R.A.P** stands for. Check with your partner that you are correct. Okay, all together, what does **R.A.P** mean? Great.*

Write down for me what you know now that you didn't know yesterday in a sentence. Please read it out loud to your partner.

Lesson 6:

Aim: To move from teacher demonstration/modelling of the **R.A.P** strategy to more student independence in using the strategy.

Introduction:

*In the last lesson, I introduced a new strategy that helped to paraphrase a whole paragraph. Write down in your books what the **R.A.P** represents. Share with your partner to check your answer. Would someone volunteer to write up what **R.A.P** stands for and explain how we use it?*

*Great. In today's lesson we are going to have a try at paraphrasing another paragraph in the text that we have been working with. Let's look at the next paragraph. What is it that I need to do first if I wish to paraphrase this paragraph? Good, I need to **READ** the paragraph carefully. As I'm reading, what am I looking for in particular? (what is the main idea, what are the details?) And how is this close to our writing when we use **T.E.E.L**? Good.*

*So, when I'm **READING** I'm **ASKING** myself questions. What am I asking myself? Good. Just as a hint: where do we find most main idea sentences? Yes, usually the first sentence in the paragraph. Let's read it out loud and make sure that you have a coloured pen or a highlighter to mark the main idea sentence.*

Read the paragraph out loud.

Compare your highlighted sentence with what your partner highlighted. Can I have some suggestions please? Good. Could someone please write his sentence on the whiteboard? Could someone else dot-point some details? Good.

*Now, what is the next step in paraphrasing a paragraph? In our **R.A.P** strategy? Good, paraphrase the sentence and include some details.*

*How do we remember how to paraphrase a sentence? What do we use? Good, **B.S.R**.*

Now, write down the sentence and the details, leaving a gap so that you can paraphrase. First step, block. Work out for yourself where to block the sentence. Okay, next step: synonyms. Work with your partner and try to create some synonyms together. Write them down. Next step? Good, re-write the sentence. Do this for yourself in your books.

Can I have some of your paraphrased paragraphs? Read them out for me. Great.

Re-view of the action:

What did we do here today?

What were the 2 strategies that helped you to remember?

*Write down for me what **B.S.R** and **R.A.P** means.*

Now tell me what they stand for.

What have you learned today that you could not do yesterday? How has this helped you? Write this down in a sentence. Read this out loud to your partner.

Lesson 7:

Aim:

To decrease teacher support in using the strategies **B.S.R** and **R.A.P** and increase the independence of the students in paraphrasing paragraphs.

Introduction:

In our last lesson, we used 2 strategies to paraphrase a paragraph.

When we have a paragraph in front of us that we need to paraphrase, what is the first strategy that we need to use? Good. And what do each of the letters stand for? Good. When we have worked out the main idea sentence and some details, and we have written them out, what is the next step? Good. Quickly, tell the boy beside you, what each of the letters stands for. Good.

Again, we are looking at the same text that we have used before. Let's look at the next paragraph.

*On your own, take yourself through the **R.A.P** strategy for this paragraph. Remember it is **READ, ASK, PARAPHRASE**. Check with your partner if you are unsure.*

*Has everyone written down his sentence and some details to be paraphrased? Good. Now, what is the strategy to paraphrase this sentence and the details? **B.S.R**. Good. Take yourself through this strategy to paraphrase this sentence and the details. Take your time.*

Read your paraphrased paragraph to your partner. Who has heard a particularly effective paraphrase to share with the class? And another? Great.

Re-view of the action:

What did we do here? Yes, we were able to paraphrase a paragraph.

What strategies did we use to do this?

Take turns in explaining to your partner the way you went about completing this task.

What did we learn here?

How does paraphrasing help us when we read?

What did you learn today that you didn't know yesterday? How is this helpful?

Lesson: 8

Aim: To build further independence and confidence in using the paraphrasing strategies **B.S.R** and **R.A.P**.

Introduction:

In our last lesson, we used 2 strategies to paraphrase a paragraph. When we have a paragraph in front of us that we need to paraphrase, what is the first strategy that we need to use? Good. And what do each of the letters stand for? Good. When we have worked out the main idea sentence and some details, and we have written them out, what is the next step? Good. Quickly, tell the boy beside you, what each of the letters stands for. Good. Now tell the boy beside you, in a sentence, why paraphrasing is so important for us when we read.

Action:

In today's lesson, we are going to look at a different text. ('How coasts are formed', Humanities Alive) It is slightly harder than the last one. Before we start, what do we always have to do? Good. GKR. I'm going to give you 5 minutes to look at the title and the pictures and then GKR.

With your partner, share your keywords, questions and statement.

Let's read the text out loud together.

Now, we are going to look at the first paragraph and paraphrase it. Remember you have 2 strategies to help you to do this. Revise them in your books where you have written them down before you begin. Okay, now work carefully through your strategies to complete your paraphrasing.

Hands up. Let's share some of your sentences. Great.

Review of the action:

What were you able to do today?

How did you go about your paraphrasing?

What were the strategies that you used?

What have you learned today that you did not know yesterday? How has this helped you to understand what you are reading? Write this in a sentence and then read it to your partner.

Lesson 9:

Aim: To continue to build independence and confidence in using the paraphrasing strategies **B.S.R.** and **R.A.P.**

Introduction:

In our last lesson, we used 2 strategies to paraphrase a paragraph in a new text. When we have a paragraph in front of us that we need to paraphrase, what is the first strategy that we need to use? Good. And what do each of the letters stand for? Good. When we have worked out the main idea sentence and some details, and we have written them out, what is the next step? Good. QUICKLY, tell the boy beside you, what each of the letters stands for. Good. Now tell the boy beside you why paraphrasing is so important for us when we read.

We are going to continue to work with the same text as last time.

Action:

*Let's look at the next paragraph. Using the **B.S.R.** and **R.A.P.** strategies, work on paraphrasing this paragraph. If you forget something ask your partner.*

Would someone please write up his paraphrased paragraph on the whiteboard?

Great. Is it close to your sentence? What differences are there? Did it keep the meaning of the original?

Now look at the next paragraph. Work through the strategies to paraphrase this paragraph.

Share your sentence with your partner. Compare the two. Great.

Review of the action:

What did you do today?

What strategies did you use to do this?

How has this been helpful to understanding what you read?

Write down something important that you have learned from paraphrasing a paragraph.

Lesson 10:

Aim: To introduce a new text and to ask the students to demonstrate their knowledge of paraphrasing by using the strategies independently and confidently.

Introduction:

Today you are going to use your paraphrasing strategies on your own to paraphrase this new text ('Why are Rainforests Important?', Humanities Alive).

We know what we have to do when we have a new text. So before we read, please spend 5 minutes getting your knowledge ready.

When we paraphrase, we use 2 strategies. Would you please write down the 2 strategies and write down what they mean?

Action:

Let's read the text out loud. I'll read the first paragraph again, and I'd like you to complete it for yourself.

Now, using the paraphrasing strategies that we have been working with, I would like you to paraphrase the paragraphs in the text.

Good. Read out your sentences to your partner and compare them. Do they mean the same thing? Talk about this with your partner.

Let's write up some of these on the board.

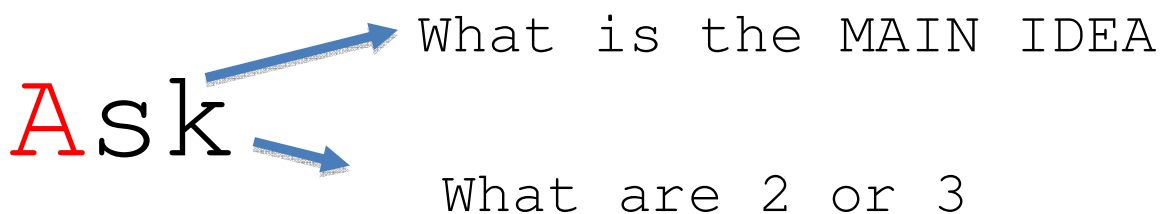
Review of the action:

We have been working on the paraphrasing strategies for a number of lessons. Why have we been doing this? How does this help with our understanding of what we read?

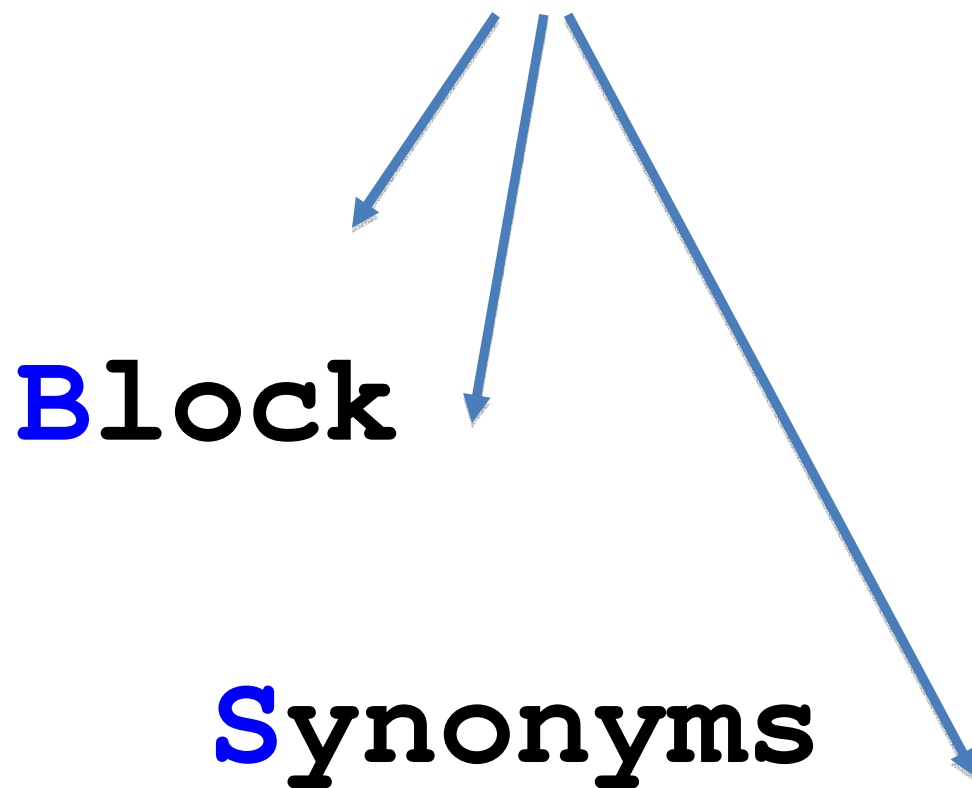
What are the 2 strategies that we have used to help us to complete this? What have you learned in this lesson? Write down how paraphrasing has helped you to understand what you have read in a sentence. Read this to your partner. Let's share some of your responses.

Appendix 2

Read



Paraphrase:



Block

Synonyms

Re-
write

