

Building Vocabulary Knowledge by Teaching Paraphrasing with the Use of Synonyms Improves Comprehension for Year Six ESL Students

Abstract

Many students in the upper primary years of schooling demonstrate high levels of word accuracy and are able to accurately decode texts, however many experience difficulties in comprehending texts. Often the difficulties and lack of understanding can occur due to the limited vocabulary or content knowledge when students are also learning to speak English as a second language (ESL).

Some research has found that explicitly teaching the skill of paraphrasing and the use of synonyms can increase comprehension of texts. The hypothesis of this study is building vocabulary knowledge by teaching paraphrasing with the use of synonyms improves comprehension for Year Six ESL students.

The participants in this study were four students aged between eleven and twelve years currently completing Year Six. All the participants are from non-English speaking backgrounds. Ten lessons were taught over a period of four weeks. All lessons were conducted during the literacy block in a small group setting within the classroom.

This study compares the pre and post testing results of the four students to determine if teaching paraphrasing using synonyms can increase comprehension. All students demonstrated an increase in paraphrasing ability, synonym knowledge and use and in overall comprehension. The results support the hypothesis that teaching paraphrasing with the use of synonyms increases comprehension.

Introduction

Many students in the upper primary years of schooling demonstrate high levels of word accuracy and are able to accurately decode texts, however many experience difficulties in comprehending texts. These students are often unable to answer questions about the text, particularly inferred messages, and cannot accurately reflect what the text was about through a retell. The difficulties experienced by these students' shows a lack of understanding of the text read. Often the difficulties and lack of understanding can occur due to the limited vocabulary or content knowledge when students are also learning to speak English as a second language. When students experience difficulty understanding text their capacity to learn is diminished as reading forms a large part of learning in the upper primary years.

In order for students to learn from what they read, they need to be more than just accurate decoders of text they need to comprehend and use the information gathered. Fountas and Pinnell (2006) discuss reading as being an expansion of our thinking; therefore the reader is the most important element in the comprehension of text. They suggest that the prior experiences a reader has, their knowledge of the language they are using and the world around them, will greatly affect the readers ability to comprehend the text. Fountas et al. (2006) refer to the work of Clay (2001) to suggest that reading requires the reader to use both visible and invisible information to construct the meaning of the text they are reading. Fountas et al. (2006) refer to the text and pictures on the page as the visible information and the knowledge we hold in our heads (the language and structures, experiences we have and knowledge of texts) as the invisible information. They believe that the invisible information we use to read and comprehend texts is directly related to our experiences, which come from being an active member of one or more cultures.

Students can come to school with many and varied experiences according to the culture they have been raised in. While they have these experiences to draw upon, they are also experiencing the difficulty of not having the English language to be able to express their thoughts and understanding. Research shows that children who

have control of a language when entering school have already been through the process of acquiring a language and can use this knowledge to become literate in English (Fountas and Pinnell, 2006). Fountas and Pinnell (2006) believe that students need many opportunities to be immersed in the purposeful use of the new language, to develop a rich language system that they can use to help them read and comprehend texts. They discuss the importance of creating safe environments where students can take risks with their learning and talk, read and write in a meaningful way with the language they are learning. They believe students need to be taught strategies to read before, during and after reading to comprehend and use text effectively. Fountas et al. (2006) refer to the need to be explicit in teaching students the strategic actions they require to read and comprehend text.

Paraphrasing is a strategic action many readers use to process information and make meaning of what they are reading. Fisk and Hurst (2003) explored paraphrasing as a technique that students can use to better comprehend fiction and non-fiction text by bringing the use of what they already know to what they are reading. They suggest that paraphrasing is an effective strategy to develop good reading comprehension as it reinforces other key reading skills. Fisk et al. (2003) found that through the teaching of paraphrasing students were reinforcing their skills and knowledge of identifying main ideas in texts, finding supporting details to increase comprehension and identifying the author's voice in text. They discuss the need for students to use their own vocabulary and phrasing when paraphrasing which was a key component of helping students to better understand text. They found paraphrasing to be a useful strategy to teach students as it encompasses reading, writing, speaking and listening, rather than just one aspect, which better supports students to understand and remember what they have read.

Kleitzen (2009) investigated the use of paraphrasing as a strategy to improve the comprehension of texts. She suggests that paraphrasing requires students to engage with the content of what they are reading and be able to translate this content into words they know to demonstrate their understanding. In order to demonstrate their understanding, readers are required to use their previous knowledge to make

connections and retell what was read in their words. Kleitzen (2009) found paraphrasing to be a good way to encourage students to use what they already know about a topic, while still making it clear that the goal of reading was to understand and make meaning from text.

Katims and Harris (1997) suggest that reading comprehension is greatly impacted by how a reader makes meaning of the information they have read and how they represent this information. They believe that all students, with and without disabilities, can be taught how to apply skills and use their existing knowledge to improve their comprehension of texts. In this study they investigated the effectiveness of teaching paraphrasing to multilevel groups of students using the RAP strategy, developed by Schumaker, Denton and Deshler (1984). Students were taught how to paraphrase by remembering the acronym RAP; **R**ead the text, **A**sk yourself questions about the main ideas and details, **P**ut the ideas into your own words and try to change as many words as you can. Through the repeated use of the acronym by the teacher and students Katims and Harris (1997) found paraphrasing, through the use of the RAP acronym, to be a powerful procedure in improving the reading comprehension of all. They argue that the explicit teaching of the paraphrasing strategy regardless of learning disabilities, leads to improved comprehension however, reading material needs to be taken into consideration to improve the instruction when teaching. Paraphrasing requires students to retell information while maintaining the meaning of the context it was written in and would be beneficial to improve reading comprehension.

For paraphrasing to be an effective strategy to assist in comprehension, students need to be able to use synonyms to retell what has been read. Gibbons (2002) noted that readers bring personal knowledge and understanding of topics to texts in order to read and comprehend them. She discusses using what we know about topics, language and words to enhance our understanding of texts and how this impacts on second language learners. She notes that familiarity with language and an understanding of the context it is used in is important in helping ESL students to comprehend texts.

Acquisition of language and vocabulary is constructed from birth and added to on a daily basis (Gibbons, 2002; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). Students who speak English as a second language will have developed word banks since birth. They need to be able to know and use these words in English to be able to comprehend texts using their prior knowledge and experiences. Gibbons (2002) and Fountas et al. (2006) discuss the need for teachers to use language in authentic settings to develop and expand the learners' vocabulary to use it effectively. They also believe that it is necessary to hypothesise, read and interpret words many times in order to acquire them as part of their personal word bank. Fountas and Pinnell (2006) refer to the work of Beimiller (2004) in discussing the positive impact of vocabulary instruction on helping to bridge the gap between students of different socioeconomic groups.

The present study will investigate the effect increased vocabulary knowledge has on comprehension of text through the teaching of paraphrasing and the use of synonyms when using this strategy. Students will be encouraged to extend their vocabulary knowledge and expand their word banks by learning to use synonyms for familiar concepts and exploring unfamiliar vocabulary. It is intended that students will retell information using their words to demonstrate an understanding of the texts they read. The hypothesis of this study is building vocabulary knowledge by teaching paraphrasing with the use of synonyms improves comprehension for Year Six ESL students.

Method

Design

The study uses a case study OXO design. Gains in student vocabulary knowledge and use will increase literal and inferential comprehension, following work that explicitly teaches the use of paraphrasing and synonyms to upper primary students. The study will compare the pre and post testing results of an intervention group of students and discuss the results found.

Participants

All students chosen to participate in the study are between eleven and twelve years of age, in Year Six and have only been speaking English since beginning school. All the students predominantly speak a language other than English in the home setting and are receiving Education Maintenance Allowance (Refer to Table 1).

Students	Control = 0 Teaching=1	Age in MONTHS	Gender Male = 0 Female = 1	Years of Schooling	ESL No = 1 Yes = 2	LNSLN funding 0=SLD 1=ID 2=Asp	Earlier Intervention No = 1 RR = 2	EMA No=0 Yes=1
A	1	146	1	6	1	N/A	2	1
B	1	143	0	6	1	N/A	1	1
C	1	147	1	6	1	N/A	2	1
D	1	137	0	6	1	N/A	2	1
EMA = Education Maintenance Allowance								

Table 1. Student Information

Students were chosen based upon scores on the TORCH (Tests of Reading Comprehension) reading comprehension test administered at the beginning of the school year. Students A, C and D scored between Stanine 2 and 3 on the TORCH test

placing them as below average for their year level. These students were observed to experience difficulties expressing themselves orally and needed to develop their word banks to help them understand unfamiliar vocabulary. Students A and C are often reluctant to participate in class discussions and use a limited vocabulary in their writing. Student D is an eager student who is willing to answer questions and discuss his ideas. However, he often provides answers that have no relevance to the topic being discussed or read. Student B scored in Stanine 4 and is considered an average student. He demonstrates an eagerness to participate orally and often translates for the New Arrival student in the classroom. He would benefit from expanding his known vocabulary and being able to retell information in his own words to demonstrate an understanding of text and improve his comprehension.

Procedure and Data Analysis

In pre-testing for this case study several assessments were used. To determine data on reading comprehension students were assessed using the Progressive Achievement Test – Reading (PAT-R). PAT-R (Stephanou, Anderson & Urbach, 2008) assesses reading comprehension using short fiction and non-fiction passages written in a variety of genres and answered through questions with four multiple choice answers to choose from. Test booklets range from Prep to Year Ten and each is designed to assess literal and inferential comprehension of texts. The text types included in PAT-R were designed to be culturally inclusive which is relevant to the cohort of students being used in this study. The students were tested in a small group withdrawal setting and given forty minutes to individually complete the test. Each student completed Test Booklet 6, which assesses reading from year level five through to seven (Refer to Appendix 1). All tests were scored according to the procedure in the PAT-R manual.

To establish data on student knowledge of paraphrasing and synonyms additional tests were administered. John Munro's (2005) Paraphrasing Task requires students to read sentences and recreate them in their own words. This task demonstrates student capacity to retell information in their words while maintaining the meaning of the original text read. Students are scored according to the amount of words

substituted in a sentence or the order of words in a sentence where meaning is maintained. A raw score is given to students based on their written responses.

Synonym knowledge and use was assessed using two different tests. John Munro's (2005) Synonyms Task asks the students to list other words that mean the same thing as the list of words orally presented to them. Students are given as much time as needed to write down synonyms of the target word. Additionally students completed the PAT-R Vocabulary Test (Stephanou et al. 2008) to gather further data on vocabulary use and understanding for each student. When completing this test students are required to read a sentence with an underlined word. The underlined word is to be replaced by a word from a multiple-choice list of five possible responses. This test requires students to think about the context of the sentence when choosing the appropriate synonym. Both tests were used to attain information about vocabulary use and knowledge with words in isolation and within the context of sentences.

The teaching procedure used in this study was based on John Munro's (2006) Paraphrasing Teaching Strategy. This strategy was used with an emphasis on identifying key vocabulary and brainstorming synonyms to replace key words when paraphrasing. RAP was introduced to students in the first session as a simple way to remind them of the process used when paraphrasing:

R – Read the text

A – Ask yourself questions about the main ideas and details

P – Put the ideas into your own words and try to change as many words as you can.

Each session began with students having an orientation to the text they were using. Students participated in a discussion of what was in the text and some of the vocabulary that might occur, so that they could activate their prior knowledge and use this throughout the subsequent reading. Students were given the opportunity to have paraphrasing modelled for them and then to practise paraphrasing in small groups and individually. At the end of each session students were asked to reflect

on what strategic actions they had used during the lesson or to paraphrase sentences individually for the teacher to review.

Ten lessons of 30 to 40 minutes were taught to the students over a period of four weeks. Each session was conducted as a small group focus lesson within the allocated reading block for the class. After teaching the series of lessons, students were post tested using the same testing materials and procedures as in pre testing.

Materials

Four texts were used throughout the series of lessons. The same texts were used for more than one session so that students were familiar with the concepts and could recycle the language used in reading to better comprehend texts. The texts were selected from a variety of resources targeted towards the middle to senior primary years. The following texts were used;

- Locusts Defeated by Air Attack (Rigby Collections 6, 2005)
- Whale Sharks by Greg Pyers (Rigby Collections 5, 2004)
- Watching the Judging at the Fair by Kerri Lane (Rigby Collections 5, 2004)
- Risky Rescues by Kathy White (Challenge Magazine, Issue 3, 2011)

Results

When comparing pre and post testing data, results indicate that through the teaching of paraphrasing with the use of synonyms student comprehension improved, which supports the hypothesis being studied. Post testing of the students showed that each had made gains in their comprehension when measured by the PAT-R Test (Refer to Table 2).

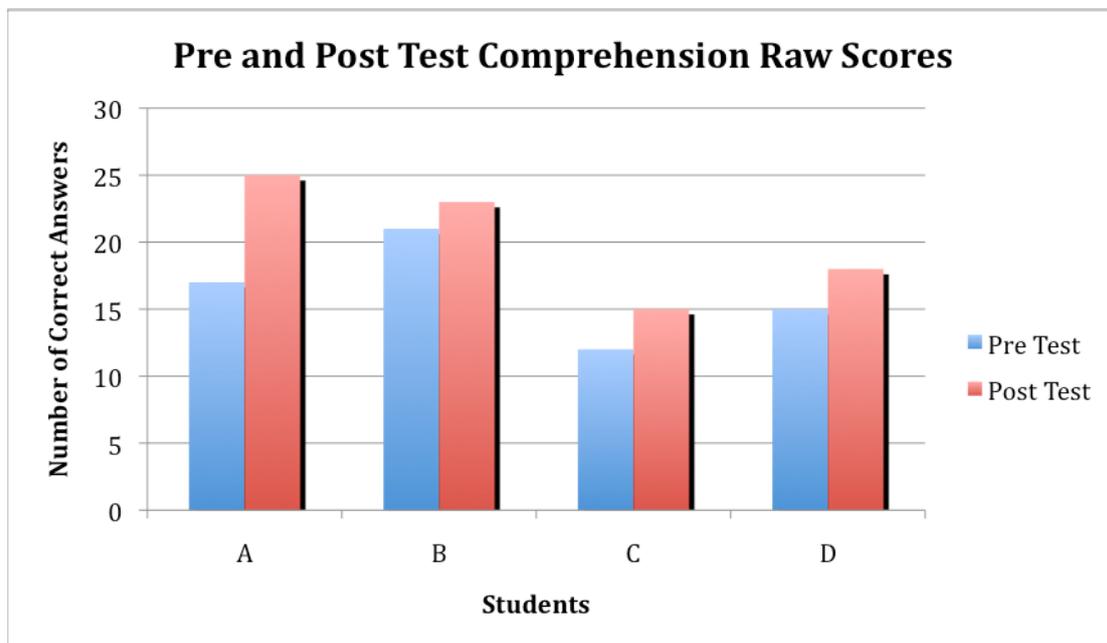


Table 2. PAT-R Comprehension Test Results

Student A in pre testing was considered a below average student who correctly answered 17 of the 35 comprehension questions in pre testing. When post tested, Student A answered an additional eight questions correctly, increasing her comprehension by 23%. This student made the most gains throughout the study. This student began the series of lessons as a quiet student who was reluctant to participate in group discussions. She quickly grasped the concepts taught and as a result had more to offer in discussions and became an active participant in the following lessons.

Students C and D made similar improvements in comprehension results answering 3 more questions correctly during post testing. While Student C made good gains in increasing vocabulary knowledge (Refer to Table 5) and in using synonyms (Refer to Table 4) she struggled in a testing situation. She stopped twice during testing and asked for clarification of synonyms she was thinking about to help her understand her reading. As assistance could not be given during testing she appeared reluctant to use her knowledge unless reassurance could be given. Student C would benefit from more independent practice using the skill of paraphrasing.

Student B, when beginning this case study, was considered an average student and it was expected that he would show good improvements in comprehension. After reviewing his post testing results Student B made a small improvement answering an additional 2 questions in post testing. He was observed to rush through the test, completing it in half the time the other students did. When prompted to read over his work and check his answers Student B replied that he did not need to and had finished. Further work around identifying key words in comprehension questions may be needed. This would help Student B to understand what he is being asked to do and to help him use the comprehension skills he has been taught to correctly answer questions about text.

All students made gains in their ability to paraphrase when comparing pre and post testing results (Refer to Table 3).

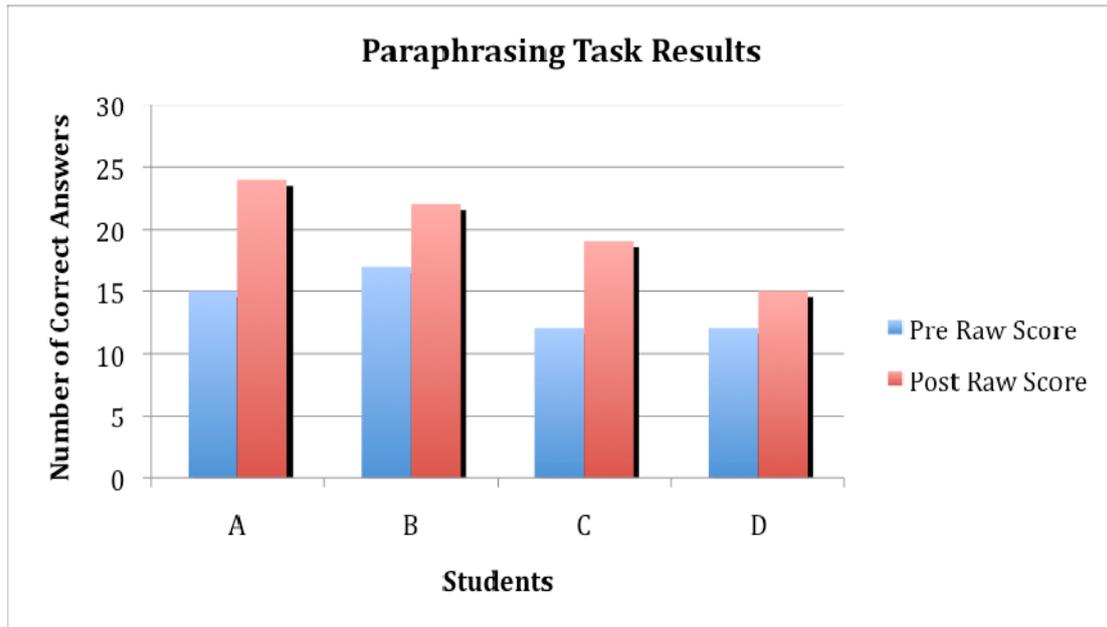


Table 3. Paraphrasing Task Results

During the initial lessons Students A and C were rearranging the order of the words in sentences rather than paraphrasing using synonyms to retell in their words. These students were observed to use the RAP card and would recite the acronym to assist them in paraphrasing text. Student A improved her paraphrasing by 28% and Student C was able to paraphrase 22% more of the sentences used in testing. As their vocabulary knowledge expanded they were able to use synonyms when paraphrasing and increase their understanding of what they were reading.

Student B was an eager participant who was able to use his vocabulary knowledge to assist the group in understanding text and building vocabulary knowledge. He referred to the RAP acronym and after group discussions could confidently paraphrase sentences and paragraphs. When asked to paraphrase independently after reading text, Student B would often rearrange words. He needed to be reminded about replacing words with synonyms and thinking about what words could be replaced with synonyms. Once he discussed what he was reading he was then able to go back and paraphrase the text again. However in post testing, where no discussion occurred around the text, Student B was able to paraphrase an additional 16% of the sentences presented.

Student D was observed to struggle with learning to paraphrase. He was reliant on the oral discussion with the group in order to make attempts at paraphrasing and changing the words within the sentences and paragraphs. When Student D was asked to read text independently, he appeared to struggle with the reading and was often working at the word level, which resulted in loss of meaning in order to paraphrase. It seems he would benefit from easier texts to read when learning how to paraphrase and consolidating this skill.

Two different tests were used to assess synonym knowledge and use. The Synonym task required students to list synonyms for words they were read. The vocabulary task asked students to read a word in the context of a sentence and choose a synonym to replace the word in the sentence. Both tests demonstrated an upward trend in student achievement in synonym use and knowledge (Refer to Tables 4 and 5).

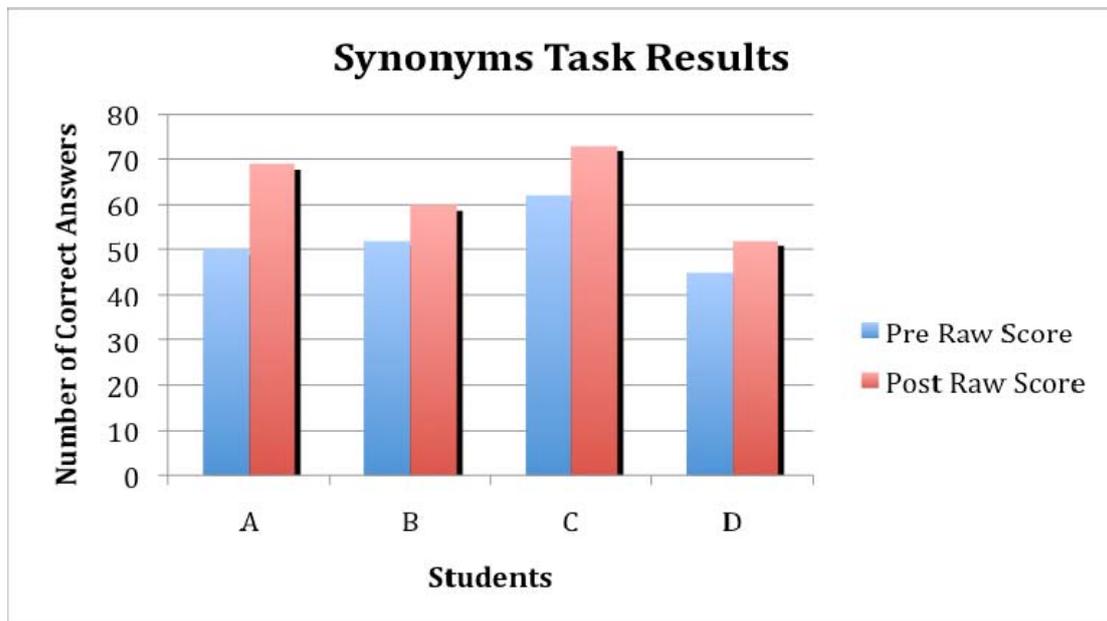


Table 4. Synonyms Task Results

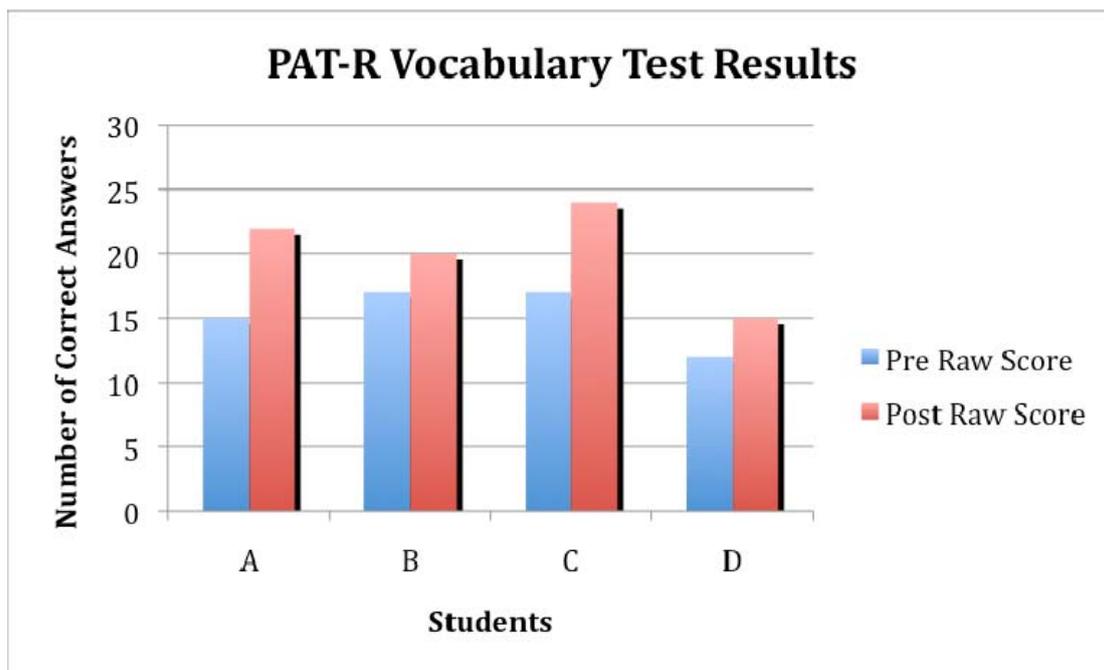


Table 5. PAT-R Vocabulary Test Results

Again Student A made good progression with her learning. She could identify 19 more synonyms when given words in isolation and improved her vocabulary knowledge by 19% when choosing synonyms given the context of a sentence. Student A found it difficult to use synonyms at the beginning of the lesson series and would often rearrange words in sentences. When the synonym chart (Appendix 3) was first introduced to the students, she struggled to add to the list to help her paraphrase. When provided with plenty of oral discussion and the opportunity to use tools such as a thesaurus Student A began to contribute more ideas and transfer this knowledge to her work.

Student B increased his vocabulary knowledge when identifying words in sentences and when creating list of synonyms. During the first half of the lesson series, Student B was the most vocal participant. He used a lot of his prior knowledge to make connections with text and substitute words with synonyms. Student B was a good language model for the other students in the group as he would offer ideas to generate discussion and could use description to help the other students understand the text.

Student C had the highest scores for vocabulary and synonym knowledge in pre testing. However, it appears that she was not transferring this knowledge into her paraphrasing and comprehension of texts as these results were lower than the other students. Student C was eager to use the synonym chart introduced to the students. She would come to lessons with additional words from reading between sessions and wanted to clarify and share the words she had added to her chart. After learning the RAP acronym, Student C began to use synonyms when paraphrasing. She demonstrated an improvement in all areas, increasing her synonym knowledge by listing an additional eleven synonyms to the words given in pre testing and identifying 20% more words correctly when using the context of the sentences provided. While she made gains between her comprehension pre and post testing, answering 3 more questions correctly, Student C is still not able to answer half of the comprehension questions correctly. This would suggest that there are other key reading skills that needed to be identified and taught to help this student comprehend text.

Student D made small improvements over the series of lessons. He could list 7 more synonyms for the words given in isolation and correctly identified the synonym for 3 more of the sentences given on the vocabulary test. Student D was seen to struggle with participating in group discussion as he could not identify synonyms for words. While the other students could use prior knowledge and experiences to draw upon to help them, this student seemed unable to do so. When questioned about what he knew of topics and other words that could describe similar words he struggled to come up with answers. Student D relied heavily on the group discussion before, during and after reading to help him to paraphrase with the use of synonyms. It appears this student would benefit from being able to visualise what is occurring as he may not have the prior experiences to help make these connections to comprehend what the text is about.

Discussion

After conducting this study, the results show that there is support for the hypothesis that building vocabulary knowledge by teaching paraphrasing with the use of synonyms improves comprehension for Year Six ESL students. There appears to be a link between the strengthening of the student's vocabulary knowledge and an increase in reading comprehension. However, consideration needs to be given to the amount of lessons taught to develop the use of paraphrasing and expand student's vocabulary knowledge. Positive results were gained; this trend indicates that over a longer period of time spent using this strategy students' comprehension should further improve.

The results of this study support the work of Fountas and Pinnell (2006) who suggest that the prior experiences a reader has and their knowledge of the language they are using, will greatly affect the reader's ability to comprehend the text. As the participant's word bank grew and they were able to retell information in their words, the student's comprehension of the text increased. An essential element in future lessons is the book orientation and discussion to activate prior knowledge. Doing this provided students with the opportunity to become familiar with vocabulary and use it in a meaningful context and add to their word bank.

Katims and Harris (1997) found the teaching of paraphrasing using the RAP acronym to be a powerful procedure in improving the reading comprehension of all. The results of this study support their findings that explicitly teaching paraphrasing can increase student comprehension. Students in this study referred to the RAP acronym poster and learnt to use RAP effectively so they were less reliant on the cards and poster but could refer to them when required. However, more practice over a longer period of time, with a variety of texts with varying concepts and complexity would improve the use of this skill.

A factor that needs to be considered in future teaching is the complexity of text and the concepts within them when teaching ESL students. ESL students may have a

limited English vocabulary about the topic they are reading and can not make connections with their prior knowledge to increase their understanding. Not being able to connect with prior experiences makes reading text more difficult, as a result it may take longer than planned or more time for discussion is needed in each lesson. Student D would have benefited from easier texts to practise the skills he was taught. He sometimes worked at the word level and was decoding words and reading making substitutions without meaning. Student D also needs to be taught to self correct and monitor for meaning when reading so his reading makes sense. Monitoring reading for meaning appeared to be a common reading skill that was not consistently used by students A, C and D. Students A and C only needed a reminder before reading that what we read needs to make sense, for self-correction and monitoring of what they were reading to occur. Student D would continually read on, even when words substitutions made no sense. He would require the teacher to recast what was read for him to hear the sentence and understand the meaning was lost. This student would benefit from repeated readings of text before and after they are used in teaching sessions. The more familiar the concepts and vocabulary are the more likely he is to start to independently monitor meaning as he will recognise that what he has said lacks meaning and self-correct accordingly. In future lessons, students would benefit from discussion about what good readers do and the creation of a list of strategies to use when reading independently.

Fisk and Hurst (2003) noted that paraphrasing is an effective strategy to develop good reading comprehension as it reinforces other key reading skills. They found that teaching paraphrasing reinforced skills like identifying main ideas in texts and finding supporting details. Throughout this study it was observed that some of the students struggled to identify the main idea in a paragraph. Students were efficient at retelling sentences in their words but often included unnecessary details when paraphrasing paragraphs. Further investigation around identifying main ideas in text and supporting details should be a future consideration.

The results of this study suggest that explicitly teaching students to paraphrase and use synonyms while doing so can lead to an increase in comprehension of texts. The

use of the RAP acronym proved successful in helping students to remember the process of paraphrasing and follow it. Student's word banks increased and they learnt how to connect new learning with prior knowledge by having more than one label for various concepts. This was useful as students were often seen to be rearranging words rather than using synonyms in the earlier lessons. These strategies will form a good basis to deepen other reading skills to improve student comprehension.

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RESOURCES

Locusts Defeated by Air Attack (Rigby Collections 6, 2005)

Paraphrasing Task (John Munro, 2005)

PAT-R, Progressive Achievement Tests Reading, 4th Edition (ACER, 2008)

Risky Rescues by Kathy White (Challenge Magazine, Issue 3, 2011)

Synonyms Task (John Munro, 2005)

TORCH, Tests of Reading Comprehension, 2nd Edition (ACER, 2003)

Watching the Judging at the Fair by Kerri Lane (Rigby Collections 5, 2004)

Whale Sharks by Greg Pyers (Rigby Collections 5, 2004)

STUDENT INFORMATION AND TESTING RESULTS

Students	Control = 0 Teaching=1	Age in MONTHS	Gender Male = 0 Female = 1	Years of Schooling	ESL No = 1 Yes = 2	LNSLN funding 0=SLD 1=ID 2=Asp	Earlier Intervention No = 1 RR = 2	EMA No=0 Yes=1	Attendance No. of sessions	PAT-R Pre Test Raw Scores	PAT-R Pre Test Scale Scores	PAT-R Post Test Raw Scores	PAT-R Post Test Scale Scores	Paraphrasing Task Pre Raw Score	Paraphrasing Task Post Raw Score	Synonyms Task Pre Raw Score	Synonyms Task Post Raw Score	PAT-R Vocabulary Test Pre Raw Score	PAT-R Vocabulary Test Post Raw Score
A	1	146	1	6	1	N/A	2	1	10	17	118.9	25	130.4	15	24	50	69	15	22
B	1	143	0	6	1	N/A	1	1	7	21	124.4	23	127.3	17	22	52	60	17	20
C	1	147	1	6	1	N/A	2	1	10	12	111.7	15	116.1	12	19	62	73	17	24
D	1	137	0	6	1	N/A	2	1	10	15	116.1	18	120.2	12	15	45	52	12	15

EMA = Education Maintenance Allowance

APPENDIX 2

Building Vocabulary Knowledge by Teaching Paraphrasing with the Use of Synonyms Improves Comprehension for Year Six ESL Students

Session 1	Adapted from John Munro's Teaching a Paraphrasing Strategy (2006)
Text:	Locusts Defeated by Air Attack
Orientation to the text:	Give each child a copy of the text. Discuss the title and accompanying pictures. Define what locusts are and how they are pests.
Introduce the strategy:	<p><i>When reading today, we are going to learn something you can do that will help you to remember and understand what you read. It is called paraphrasing. After you read each sentence from the text, you have a go at saying it in your own words. To help you remember how to paraphrase we are going to use the word RAP. (Give each student a RAP card which displays the strategy, Appendix 3)</i></p> <p>R – Read the text. A – Ask yourself questions about the main ideas and details. P – Put the ideas into your own words. Try to change as many words as you can. I will read the first sentence and then put it into my own words.</p> <p>Teacher reads the first sentence aloud. Model the use of RAP by highlighting key words and details. Retell the sentence in your own words.</p> <p><i>Let's read the next sentence together. Read sentence. What is the main idea? Discuss and identify key words. What are some other words we could use in this sentence? Brainstorm words for swarmed, fields and young. Let's try putting this sentence into our own words. Teacher models and students each paraphrase the sentence using their words.</i></p>
Review the actions:	<p><i>Let us look at what we did here. Remember we used RAP. First we read and asked ourselves what the main idea was. Then we came up with other words we could use in this sentence. Then we put this sentence into our own words. See how it helped you to understand what the text said. Do you have any questions?</i></p>
Practise the actions:	<p>Repeat the process of reading sentence-by-sentence and brainstorming words for the main ideas. The teacher will model the paraphrase first and then ask the students to have a turn.</p> <p>Continually refer to the RAP card each student has to remind them of what they should be doing.</p>
Reflect on the actions:	<p>After the text has been paraphrased: <i>What do you tell yourself to do when you paraphrase?</i> Get children to articulate the RAP process.</p> <p><i>How will paraphrasing help us when reading?</i> Discuss. Students are to record individual responses in their reading journals.</p>

Text:	Locusts Defeated by Air Attack	Session 2
Orientation to the text:	Review what was read of Locusts Defeated by Air Attack. Discuss what the students learnt. Paraphrase the reading from the previous session.	
Introduce the strategy:	<p><i>Last time we learnt something you can do that will help you to remember and understand what you read. It was called paraphrasing. To help you remember how to paraphrase we used the word RAP. Let's review what we do when we RAP.</i></p> <p>R – Read the text. A – Ask yourself questions about the main ideas and details. P – Put the ideas into your own words. Try to change as many words as you can.</p> <p><i>Today when we use RAP, we are going to focus on the P. We need to use synonyms to change as many words as possible. Synonyms are different words that mean the same thing like small and little. What could be some synonyms for big? (Brainstorm and discuss)</i></p> <p><i>When we read today we are going to find words that we are unsure of. We will write them on our synonyms chart and find other words that mean the same thing. This will help us to paraphrase our sentences. (Introduce synonyms chart, Appendix 4)</i></p> <p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group. Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read. Repeat for another paragraph.</p>	
Review the actions:	<i>Let us look at what we did here. Remember we used RAP. (Have students articulate RAP) Then we tried to think of synonyms to replace words that mean the same thing. Let's review our synonym chart. (Read over and add to the chart if able to) Do you have any questions?</i>	
Practise the actions:	Read the remaining paragraphs sentence-by-sentence. Students to identify synonyms to add to the group chart. In pairs paraphrase the sentences using the synonyms listed. Share as a group. Continually refer to the RAP card each student has and the synonym chart to remind them of what they should be doing.	
Reflect on the actions:	<p>After the text has been paraphrased: <i>What do you tell yourself to do when you paraphrase?</i> Get children to articulate the RAP process.</p> <p><i>What will help us to use our own words when paraphrasing?</i></p> <p><i>How will using synonyms when we paraphrase help us when reading?</i> Discuss. Students are to record individual responses in their reading journals.</p>	

Text:	Whale Sharks by Greg Pyers Session 3
Orientation to the text:	Give each child a copy of the text. Discuss the title and accompanying pictures. What do we know about Whales? What do we know about Sharks? What can we infer about Whale Sharks?
Review the strategy:	<p><i>When reading this text, what can we do to help us understand what it is about?</i> (Get students to articulate RAP and discuss the use of synonyms. Refer to posters and synonyms chart)</p> <p><i>Today when we are going to paraphrase each paragraph. Remember to add new words to the synonym chart and use them when we RAP.</i></p> <p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group. Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read.</p>
Practise the actions:	<p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group. Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read.</p> <p>Repeat for the next paragraph, working in pairs. Share as a group. Discuss the synonyms and how the students came up with them.</p>
Review and reflect on the actions:	<p><i>What did you do today that helped you to understand your reading?</i></p> <p>Review synonyms chart and words added. Identify any more synonyms that can be added to the words listed.</p>

Text:	Whale Sharks by Greg Pyers Session 4
Orientation to the text:	Review what was read of Whale Sharks. Discuss what the students learnt. Paraphrase the reading from the previous session and discuss the synonyms identified from the synonym chart.
Review the strategy:	<p><i>When reading this text, what can we do to help us understand what it is about?</i> (Get students to articulate RAP and discuss the use of synonyms. Refer to posters and synonyms chart)</p> <p><i>Today when we are going to paraphrase each paragraph. Remember to add new words to the synonym chart and use them when we RAP.</i></p> <p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group. Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read.</p>
Practise the actions:	<p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group. Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read.</p> <p>Repeat for the next paragraph, working in pairs. Share as a group. Discuss the synonyms and how the students came up with them.</p>
Review and reflect on the actions:	<p><i>What is paraphrasing? What are synonyms?</i> Discuss questions and share answers with the group.</p> <p><i>How do they help us to become better readers?</i> Reflect in reader's journal.</p>

Text:	Risky Rescues by Kathy White	Session 5
Orientation to the text:	Give each child a copy of the text. Discuss the title and accompanying pictures. What do we do when we take a risk? How could rescuing someone be risky?	
Review the strategy:	<p>Have students articulate RAP. Give each student an individual synonym chart. Review the group synonym chart and brainstorm ways to find other words that mean the same thing.</p> <p>Introduce the Thesaurus. <i>This is a thesaurus. It looks like a dictionary, but instead of telling us the meaning of a word, it lists other words that mean the same thing. The thesaurus can help us when we are trying to find synonyms for words we read. Practice looking up a word in the thesaurus and reading the synonyms.</i></p>	
Practise the actions:	<p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group (Use the thesaurus if necessary). Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read. Share the paraphrased work.</p> <p>Repeat for the next paragraph, working in pairs. Share as a group.</p>	
Review and reflect on the actions:	<p><i>What did you do today that helped you to understand your reading?</i></p> <p>Review individual and group synonyms chart and words added. Identify any more synonyms that can be added to the words listed.</p>	

Text:	Risky Rescues by Kathy White	Session 6
Orientation to the text:	Review what was read of Risky Rescues. Discuss what the students learnt. Paraphrase the reading from the previous session and discuss the synonyms.	
Review the strategy:	<p>Have students articulate RAP and how they would use the synonyms chart to help them read.</p> <p>Review how to use a thesaurus and why it is useful.</p>	
Practise the actions:	<p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group (Use the thesaurus if necessary). Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read. Share the paraphrased work.</p> <p>Repeat for the next paragraph, working in pairs. Share as a group. Teacher to provide feedback on the accuracy of meaning and grammar when paraphrasing.</p>	
Review and reflect on the actions:	<p><i>What did you do today that helped you to understand your reading?</i></p> <p>Review individual and group synonyms chart and words added. Identify any more synonyms that can be added to the words listed.</p>	

Text:	Risky Rescues by Kathy White	Session 7
Orientation to the text:	Review what was read of Risky Rescues. Discuss what the students learnt. Paraphrase the reading from the previous session and discuss the synonyms.	
Review the strategy:	Have students articulate RAP and how they would use the synonyms chart to help them read. Review how to use a thesaurus and why it is useful.	
Practise the actions:	Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group (Use the thesaurus if necessary). Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read. Repeat for the remainder of the text, working in pairs. Share as a group. Students to share individual words identified to place on synonym chart. Discuss their meaning and expand upon vocab knowledge using other students' prior experience and knowledge. Teacher to provide feedback on the accuracy of meaning and grammar when paraphrasing.	
Review and reflect on the actions:	<i>What did you do today that helped you to understand your reading?</i> Review how to paraphrase using RAP. Record a journal entry on how using RAP has helped students understand the text they read.	

Text:	Watching the Judging at the Fair by Kerri Lane	Session 8
Orientation to the text:	Give each child a copy of the text. Discuss the title and accompanying pictures. What is a fair? What might we see at a fair? What is a judge? What could be judged at a fair?	
Review the strategy:	<i>When reading this text, what can we do to help us understand what it is about?</i> (Get students to articulate RAP and discuss the use of synonyms. Refer to posters and synonyms chart) Review how to use the thesaurus and the benefits of using it.	
Practise the actions:	Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group (Use the thesaurus if necessary). Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read. Paraphrase each paragraph. Share paraphrased paragraphs with the group. Repeat for the next paragraph, working in pairs. Share as a group. Discuss what words have been identified for the synonyms chart. Discuss how the synonyms were brainstormed and what resources were used to create the list. Repeat for the next paragraph, working independently. Share paraphrased paragraphs, discuss synonym usage.	
Review and reflect on the actions:	<i>What did you do today that helped you to understand your reading?</i> Review individual sentences and paragraphs paraphrased. Reflect on the use of RAP and the synonym chart to facilitate independent reading and learning.	

Text:	Watching the Judging at the Fair by Kerri Lane	Session 9
Orientation to the text:	Review what was read of Watching the Judging at the Fair. Discuss what the students learnt. Paraphrase the reading from the previous session and discuss the synonyms.	
Review the strategy:	<p><i>When reading this text, what can we do to help us understand what it is about?</i> (Get students to articulate RAP and discuss the use of synonyms. Refer to posters and synonyms chart)</p> <p><i>What can we use to help us find synonyms for words?</i> Discuss the students various strategies for creating synonyms.</p>	
Practise the actions:	<p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group (Use the thesaurus if necessary). Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read. Paraphrase each paragraph. Share paraphrased paragraphs with the group.</p> <p>Repeat for the next paragraph, working in pairs. Share as a group.</p> <p>Repeat for the next paragraph, working independently. Share paraphrased paragraphs, discuss synonym usage.</p>	
Review and reflect on the actions:	<p><i>What did you do today that helped you to understand your reading?</i> Review individual sentences and paragraphs paraphrased. Reflect on the use of RAP and the synonym chart to facilitate independent reading and learning.</p>	

Text:	Watching the Judging at the Fair by Kerri Lane	Session 9
Orientation to the text:	Review what was read of Watching the Judging at the Fair. Discuss what the students learnt. Paraphrase the reading from the previous session and discuss the synonyms. Make some predictions about the story ending.	
Review the strategy:	<p><i>When reading this text, what can we do to help us understand what it is about?</i> (Get students to articulate RAP and discuss the use of synonyms. Refer to posters and synonyms chart)</p> <p><i>What can we use to help us find synonyms for words?</i> Discuss the students various strategies for creating synonyms.</p>	
Practise the actions:	<p>Read a paragraph from the text together. Identify a word to place on the synonym chart. Fill in the synonym chart as a group (Use the thesaurus if necessary). Use the synonyms chart to help paraphrase the text read. Paraphrase each paragraph. Share paraphrased paragraphs with the group.</p> <p>Repeat for the next paragraph, working in pairs. Share as a group. Discuss what words have been identified for the synonyms chart. Discuss how the synonyms were brainstormed and what resources were used to create the list.</p> <p>Repeat for the next paragraph, working independently. Share paraphrased paragraphs, discuss synonym usage.</p>	
Review and reflect on the actions:	<p><i>How does paraphrasing help us to be better readers? How does using synonyms help us to paraphrase?</i> Discuss and share ideas.</p> <p><i>What can I do to help me understand text I read in the future?</i> Reflect in readers journal</p>	

HOW TO PARAPHRASE

Read the text.

Ask yourself questions about the main idea and details.

Put the ideas into your own words and try to change as many words as you can.

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APPENDIX 4

WORD	MEANING	SYNONYMS	SENTENCE
Example Happy	To feel positive about what you are doing.	Joyful Cheerful Glad Jolly Pleased	I am happy that I have finished my homework.

