

# ***Explicitly teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to grade 2 students improves reading comprehension.***

## **Abstract**

Research has found that often students have focused heavily on decoding texts and fluency in their early years at school, with less work on understanding text, affecting outcomes in comprehension. These students are commonly successful decoders of text although their strategies for comprehension of the texts are often underdeveloped, not giving a true indication of their abilities in comprehension.

Our schools' year 3 to 5 NAPLAN trend data over the past 3 years (Appendix 7) has indicated an average growth of one and a half bands. This result suggests our student knowledge in reading comprehension is achieving greater band growth than expected for the average student over the two-year period, posing the question: Are we developing junior students' comprehension levels enough in the years prior to grade three? This data is the impetus for this action research and the hypothesis: 'Explicit teaching of synonyms and paraphrasing to grade 2 students improves comprehension.'

Various researches indicate that explicitly teaching student's comprehension strategies will increase their ability to understand what they are reading. In this study, the students learnt the RAP acronym throughout 10 lessons. The lessons developed used the Collins model of teaching, moving from the responsibility of the teacher to the responsibility of the student.

<b>R</b>	Read the text
<b>A</b>	Ask questions (before, during and after)
<b>P</b>	Put into your own words

This study compares the pre and post-test results of two groups of year two students; a control group and a teaching group who were taught to use synonyms and paraphrase texts. The results indicated support for the hypothesis as the post-test scores indicated 85% of students improved in all three tests with the other 15% showing improvement in two tests.

## **Introduction**

Contemporary learning calls for students to understand a wide range of information to be successful learners. With the current and future technological developments students are required to do more than decode text, they need to demonstrate various levels of reading comprehension to achieve learning outcomes, develop and succeed in society.

Reading is a process in which the reader is constantly building meaning by drawing on a number of sources, which is not just a result of simply reading (Fontas & Pinnell, 2006, Sorrell 1996). Significant works from John Munro on the multiple levels of text processing (Munro J. , 1995) indicate there are many layers of processing and knowledge needed to create meaning from text. John Munro (Munro, Literacy Intervention Strategies, 2011) explains that you need to hold a certain amount of information in your head

to make meaning when you read. He says you need to connect your prior knowledge, with what you are reading as well as make predictions about what the future text may include.

A significant and common indicator of learning problems in students is their ability to read effectively (Millar 1993, cited in Hagaman, 2008). Students ability to learn the essential skills of reading has been studied extensively and there is no doubt in the importance of students developing these foundation skills of phonological awareness, decoding and fluency (National Reading Panel, 2000, cited in Hagaman, 2008). However, it is an assumption that students will naturally develop comprehension skills, but for those students who experience difficulties interpreting text the gap grows between them and their more successful peers as Hagaman (2008) has pointed out in her work.

Current researchers, suggest that we need to help student's see that comprehending is an active process that occurs before, during, and after reading text (Fountas & Pinnell 2006). Fountas & Pinnell (2006) state that comprehension strategies (e.g., activating prior knowledge, determining important information, making connections, questioning, visualizing, paraphrasing, summarizing, predicting, inferring, synthesizing, evaluating and monitoring, and repairing understanding) work in an interactive and integrated fashion.

A data driven focus in the area of reading for Victorian junior students in their prep, grade one and two years has been on decoding text in relation to levelled texts, evidence of this is through the data collection required by all Victorian schools. Because of this focus, teaching accountability is not as directed towards comprehension affecting student's ability to understand text. Gajria, Jitendra, Sood, & Sacks (2007) research shows that explicit teaching of comprehension strategies can significantly improve students' comprehension skills. Unfortunately, Gajria, Jitendra, Sood, & Sacks (2007) also indicate that this sort of instruction is rarely used to increase comprehension.

There is evidence from Fisk (2003) that shows explicitly teaching students a paraphrasing skill can develop their understanding of prose. Katims (1997) states that regardless of a students' learning ability the paraphrasing strategy will considerably increase their reading comprehension. Katims (1997) points out that every year of education requires students to be successful at deciphering meaning from detailed or descriptive texts. Kletzien (2009) said paraphrasing encourages the reader to make connections with prior knowledge to access current knowledge about the topic and to use words that are part of the reader's knowledge. This is highlighting the importance for students to understand and use synonyms when paraphrasing text. Indicating the need for students to learn the skills of synonyms and paraphrasing to improve comprehension. When a student is able to paraphrase, they are able to rephrase the text into their own words showing a level of comprehension. When a student understands synonyms, they can use a similar or like word that can also help their understanding and ability to connect and reword what they are reading.

For students to use the skill of paraphrasing and synonyms to support comprehension they need to be able to articulate (metacognitive skills) how and why this strategy supports their understanding when reading. Katims (1997) writes about the need for students to receive instruction in strategies and that for this to be successful the instruction should ask the students to explain what it is they are learning as well as what they are actually doing behaviourally. Researchers have developed metacognitive procedures that assist students in their ability to articulate their thinking and actions as indicated in Katims (1997).

Teachers need to help students go from dependence to interdependence to independence, where they are consciously using a skill until it becomes subconscious and a part of their natural behaviour. This requires explicit teaching of strategies. Teachers will need to differentiate their teaching of strategies to meet the needs of students in relation to the time and support given.

To develop an understanding about paraphrasing to increase comprehension, Schumaker, Denton & Deshler (1984) developed the RAP acronym to help students remember steps to paraphrase (Schumaker, 1984). This mnemonic device helps students to identify the main ideas and put them into their own words.

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Hagaman (2008) said that the RAP strategy is easy for students to learn and supports all curriculum areas as it improves reading comprehension of any subject. Hagaman (2008) goes on to say that RAP is a clear three-step strategy in which an initial pilot increased student's recall of text from 48% to 84% (Katims 1997 cited in Schumaker et al., 1984) indicating substantial growth in student's comprehension. Katims (1997) noted that comprehension scores continued to grow as students increased their use of paraphrasing. Although the RAP is a simple, three-step procedure it is more involved than having students repeat the acronym. Students need substantial teacher support to begin the steps of reading, self-talk, questioning, connecting, rewording etc., required before, during and after reading to increase their comprehension. Students need to be able to understand the why and how and see and hear the increase in their understanding of text.

Paraphrasing is effective when teachers implement a slow release of responsibility from the teacher to the student, where modelling is clear and explicit and student's needs are differentiated and scaffolded. Instruction is successful when the student is able to show they can apply the understandings independently and confidently. It is important for students to be able to explain what they have learnt. Hagaman (2010) noted that most students became highly skilled at the RAP quickly and effectively having a positive effect on their comprehension of text.

Over the last thirty years, research as stated by Schumaker (2009) indicates that learners who are struggling to learn can be successful if teachers instruct using particular learning strategies. It is important that "each strategy has a set of cognitive and overt behavioural steps associated with it as well as a mnemonic device for remembering the steps. For example the Paraphrasing strategy,... RAP" (Schumaker et al., 1984). As mentioned previously it is imperative for the students to be actively involved in a procedure that has both cognitive and behavioural elements.

Research stated in Wilhelm (2001) highlights the importance of scaffolding instructional strategies where the teacher models the strategy and through repetition of a task students take on more responsibility, with the teacher helping less or as needed until the student is able to do the task on their own. This is very much like Vygotsky (1956) outlined in his work on students zone of proximal development (ZPD). This where the teacher models and then guides the student providing feedback with ongoing support. Following this stage, the student does most of the activity with little help articulating what they have learnt and are doing. Until finally they are ready to independently apply their learning, which Vygotsky (1956) would now say the student is in the zone of actual development (ZAD) and using what they have learnt. This learning process is also similar to the Collins Model of Teaching (Collins, 1989) which has six principals of learning, moving from the teachers responsibility of modelling, coaching and scaffolding to the students

responsibility of articulating, reflection and exploration. What seems like a simple process of Rapping to increase comprehension is really complex when you consider the need to apply careful scaffolding from the initial role of the teacher to the responsibility of the student. Vygotsky wrote, 'What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow' (Vygotsky 1934: cited in Wilhelm 2001).

Students will benefit from explicit teaching of comprehension strategies as the study of Beales (1983) indicated that those targeted with paraphrasing and self-questioning strategies made substantial gains in both the use of strategies taught and comprehension procedures. In this study Beales (1983) targeted larger groups with explicit teaching which was measured against a control group who were high achieving. The study showed that the targeted low achieving group made notable gains with little change occurring to the control group.

Teaching explicit comprehension strategies over a period including carefully planned lessons and a slow release of responsibility from the teacher to the student, allowing multiple opportunities to practice and reinforce the strategy (RAP) actively engages the student and helps them become independent learners with increased ability to comprehend text. Research findings indicate that the paraphrasing strategy will increase reading comprehension of all students, including those with learning disorders (Katims, 1997). Students are required to gain meaning from expository text throughout their education and the more successfully they can achieve this the better their educational results will be. Schumaker (2009) results show at risk students can master learning strategies and become successful learners and performers within our education system. Not only will paraphrasing enhance comprehension and help with school results, but also it will increase student's ability outside and beyond school to succeed.

The present investigation aims to examine the effect of teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to a grade two class on their comprehension level. Throughout a sequence of 10-scaffolded lessons, students will focus on learning about synonyms and the paraphrasing strategy. The students will learn the RAP strategy as a mnemonic device to stimulate their self-talk when reading to develop their paraphrasing skills. The hypothesis is that explicitly teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to grade 2 students improves reading comprehension.

## **Method**

### **Design**

This study used an XOX design. The study compares two groups of year two students, a control group (14 students) and an intervention-teaching group (14 students). All students achieved at or above the state benchmark for decoding text – reading levels (24 +). Their classroom teachers provided these reading levels. Students were pre and post tested using the following assessments;

- Synonyms Task Group by John Munro (Munro J. , Synonym Task, 2005)
- Paraphrasing Task Group by John Munro and (Munro J. , Paraphrasing Task, 2005)
- Torch Comprehension Test (year 3 – Grasshoppers) (Mossensonand, 2003)

These assessments measured gains in student's understandings of synonyms, paraphrasing ability and reading comprehension.

All students answered the following three questions pre lesson one and post lesson ten as an indication of their ability to articulate their learning and as a self-assessment.

- What is paraphrasing?

- What are synonyms?
- How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?

A series of 10 lessons ran concurrently in the test group’s classroom over a two-week period. Pre and post testing for both the teaching and test group took place on one day prior to the teaching and the day after the teaching was completed.

## Participants

All year two students participated in this study. The year two students are in two composite grade 1/2 classes. One class group was the control group O and the other one was the teaching group X. All teachers involved made an analysis of the pre test data. Surprisingly one grades result was clearly higher than the other. This data caused the teachers involved to choose the lower performing grade as the teaching group. As this study is testing comprehension abilities of year two students it was important for the students to have developed decoding skills and it was necessary to teach one grade and measure against the other control group. It is also important to note that all year two students in the teaching group were working at or above level 24 in their reading capacities. All reading materials used were under level 24 positioned in the easy range of decoding for these students.

Name	Control = 0 Teaching=1	Age in MONTHS	Gender 0=Male 1=Female	Years of Schooling	ESL No=0 Yes=1	LNSLN funding 0=SLD 1=ID 2=Asp	Earlier Intervention No=0 RR=1 EMU=2 ERIK=3...	EMA No=0 Yes=1
A	1	97	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
B	1	101	1	3	0	N/A	1 +2	0
C	1	90	1	3	0	N/A	2 + 3	1
D	1	102	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
E	1	94	1	3	0	N/A	1	1
F	1	95	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
G	1	100	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
H	1	93	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
I	1	99	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
J	1	92	1	3	0	N/A	1	1
K	1	100	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
L	1	100	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
M	1	94	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
N	1	99	1	3	0	N/A	1	1
O	0	94	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
P	0	100	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
Q	0	96	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
R	0	105	0	3	0	N/A	3	0
S	0	119	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
T	0	94	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
U	0	105	0	3	0	N/A	1 + 2	0
V	0	101	1	3	0	N/A	1 + 2	0
W	0	96	1	3	0	N/A	1	0
X	0	98	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
Y	0	98	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
Z	0	98	0	3	0	N/A	0	0
AA	0	99	1	3	0	N/A	0	0
BB	0	100	1	3	0	N/A	0	0

## Procedure

All year two students participated in this study, with one group as my teaching group and one as my control group. The control group was pre and post tested on the same day as the teaching group, although in different sessions. The assessments and tasks were administered to the test group in the following order;

1. Students underwent the pre assessments of synonyms, followed by, paraphrasing and the Torch test (Grasshoppers) pre teaching
2. Teaching sessions were conducted on consecutive days over a two week period
3. Each session lasted between 35 and 40 minutes
4. Each session was carried out by me
5. Lessons 1, 5 and 10 were videotaped as a resource for discussion in professional learning team meetings.

Each session began with the teacher modelling tasks, coaching students on the task and supporting students through tasks. Each session students talked about what they were learning, reflected and discussed how they were learning and talked about how this could help them with their learning. Four assessments were used and all were an indication of learning, although one in particular was designed specifically so students could see how their knowledge had grown over the ten lessons. This test was one work sheet containing the following three questions which students answered pre and post-test on the same sheet, giving them concrete evidence of their learning. (Appendix 2)

1. What is paraphrasing?
2. What are synonyms?
3. How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?

## Materials

The following materials were used:

1. Synonyms Task Group developed by John Munro (2005)
2. Paraphrasing Task Group developed by John Munro (2005)
3. Torch Comprehension Test
4. Self-assessment work sheet (one per student)
  - What is paraphrasing?
  - What are synonyms?
  - How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?
5. Paraphrasing Lessons – 1 – 10 (Appendix 1)

Text 1. 'Emus Ground Birds' (adapted from the Australian National Geographic Web site), 'Echidnas' (adapted from the Australian National Geographic Web site), 'The Australian Red Back Spider' pages 16 – 17 (Feature Article – series Winners – Life Science publisher Macmillan), 'Kangaroos' pages 8 – 17 (Title - You Don't Look Like Your Mama, Magazine Article – series Winners – Life Science publisher Macmillan). These reading materials were developed for a unit the students were doing on Australian animals in the following term. The group X would learn strategies and knowledge about Australian animals so that they could reflect and consolidate their learning through teaching their peers.

6. White board (big and small)

7. Butchers Paper
8. Highlighters
9. Plastic pocket folders for storing their work
10. Worksheets (Appendix 3,4, 5 & 6)

## Analysis of Data

For this case study three measurable assessments were used. Each student completed the Torch comprehension test, year 3, Grasshoppers and this was scored according to the procedure in the Torch manual, both raw and scaled scores were used to analyse the data and the affect of the hypothesis. The suggested scoring of the paraphrasing and synonyms task was used although, it is important to note that the paraphrasing task scoring system used was system one, the maximum score possible is 32. The Synonym task allowed for a greater amount of answers and therefore the possible score was much larger. Students were able to score a possible 300 points on the synonym task if they gave five correct answers for each of the 30 words on the task. This would indicate the student could think of five synonyms for a word that held the same meaning as the target word both semantically and grammatically.

The control group and the teaching group were graphed as a whole using the raw data as well as the scaled score for the Torch test. The average for each group was calculated so that the difference between the pre and post-tests could be used. These scores were then compared to look at the growth of the groups and the effect of the explicit teaching over the two weeks.

Each individual student's data was graphed to look at individual growth and learning trends. This data's percentages were calculated to highlight each student's growth.

It is note worthy that this research involved grade two students in their third school term using the Torch comprehension test designed for grade three students. John Munro (August 19<sup>th</sup> 2011, Melbourne University Lecture) felt this test was the most appropriate to gauge growth in comprehension and was acceptable to use with grade two students in the latter half of the year.

## Results

Analysis of the results in the table and graphs below indicate that explicit teaching of synonyms and paraphrasing improves reading comprehension of nonfiction texts therefore supporting the hypothesis tested in this action research project.

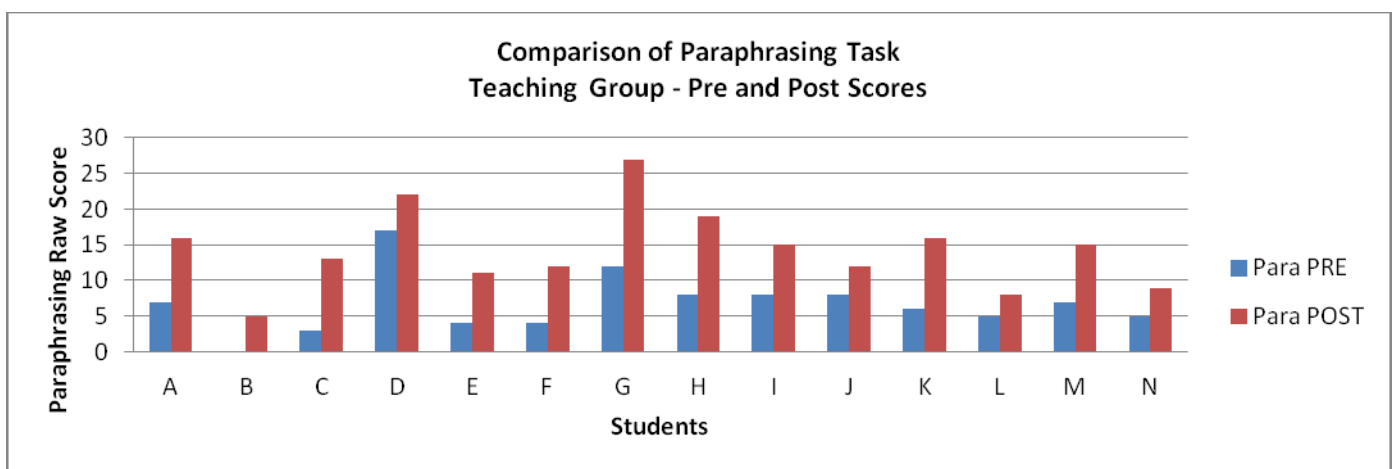
Name	Control = 0 Teaching=1	Attendance No. of sessions	Para PRE	Para POST	TORCH raw PRE	TORCH raw POST (out of a possible 19)	TORCH Score PRE	TORCH score POST	Synonyms PRE	Synonyms POST
A	1	10	7	16	7	9	24	27	0	25
B	1	10	0	5	2	14	11	37	20	28
C	1	10	3	13	12	16	33	42	11	35
D	1	9	17	22	3	14	15	37	26	31
E	1	7	4	11	2	6	14	22	14	14
F	1	10	4	12	9	14	27	37	26	34
G	1	9	12	27	6	18	22	52	64	70
H	1	9	8	19	9	10	27	29	29	36
I	1	9	8	15	18	18	51	51	30	31

J	1	10	8	12	5	15	20	40	23	38
K	1	10	6	16	5	11	20	31	35	46
L	1	8	5	8	7	13	24	35	22	42
M	1	10	7	15	8	9	26	27	25	34
N	1	9	5	9	10	13	29	35	24	32
O	0	0	7	6	7	7	24	24	41	41
P	0	0	12	13	10	11	29	31	34	35
Q	0	0	5	4	7	7	24	24	38	36
R	0	0	8	7	3	2	15	14	21	21
S	0	0	7	7	9	11	27	31	56	58
T	0	0	19	21	15	15	40	40	43	41
U	0	0	3	3	4	2	18	11	16	14
V	0	0	9	11	11	13	31	35	41	43
W	0	0	6	5	6	5	22	20	32	32
X	0	0	14	16	9	11	27	31	46	49
Y	0	0	11	11	16	16	42	42	45	44
Z	0	0	12	11	5	7	20	24	22	23
AA	0	0	9	9	7	8	24	26	46	42
BB	0	0	19	21	13	12	35	33	64	69

**Figure 1 and 2**

The pre and post scores of the teaching group on the paraphrasing task show in figure 1 an increase in all students scores from three points to that of fifteen points with the average growth in scores being 8.07. The control group in Figure 2 shows that student’s ability on the paraphrasing task showed much smaller growth with the range of scores being between -1 and 3 and an average growth of .57 over the two weeks. The pre test showed the control group scored higher with an average of 8.7, with the teach group scoring an average of 6.7 for the paraphrasing test. The post-test scores showed the teaching group achieved 14.7 with the control group only moving .1 with an average score of 8.8. This positive trend of the teaching group supports the hypothesis that explicit teaching improves student’s ability to paraphrase. The difference between the teaching groups average post-test score and the control groups was more than 5.9 points.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



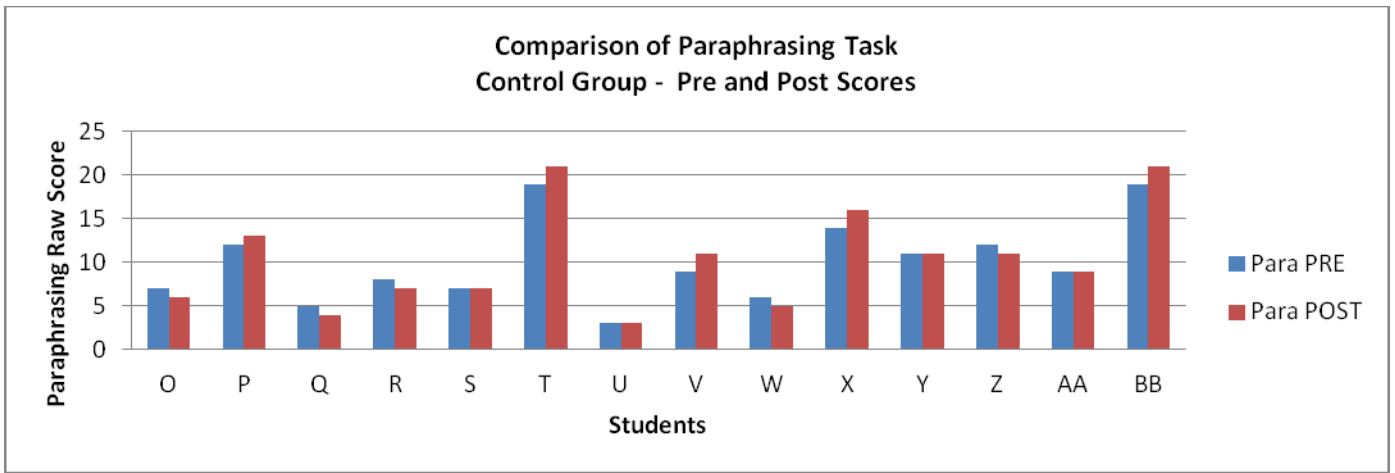


Figure 3 and 4 show a comparison of the torch test using the raw data. Figure 3 shows an increase with most students. It is important to note that this test was out of a score of 19. Only one student did not show improvement although this student was only one point off a perfect score on both tests and made the same error on both tests. The teaching group made an average growth of 5.5, student H and M improved their score by one minimising the group growth. The teaching group as a whole demonstrated a marked improvement in their comprehension ability. The control group-learning trend indicated little to no improvement on their comprehension ability with the average growth of the group being .71 over the two-week period.

Figure 3

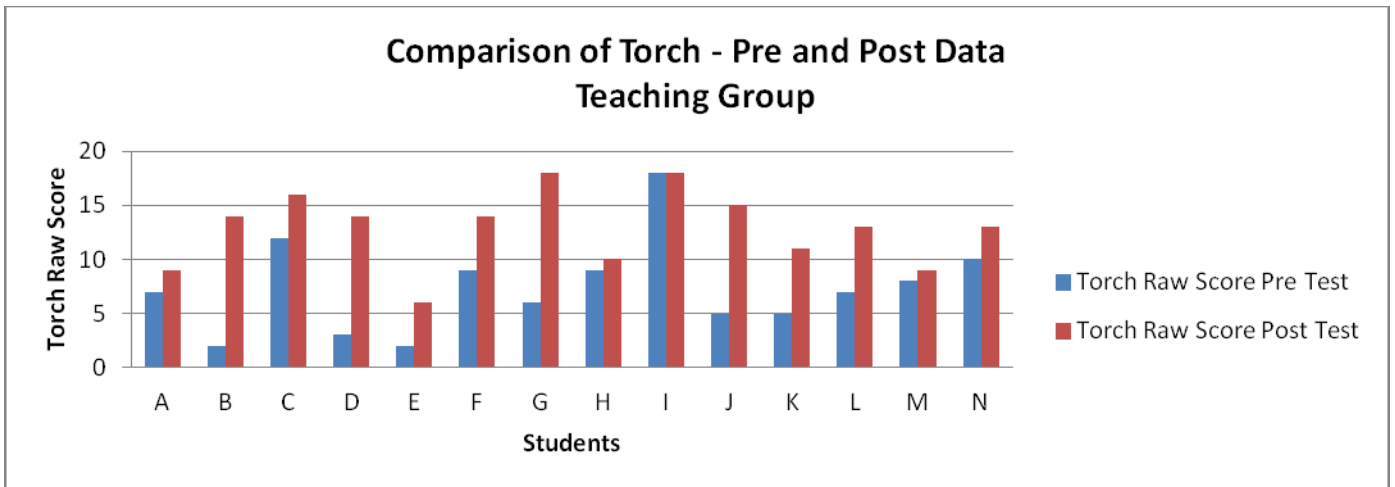
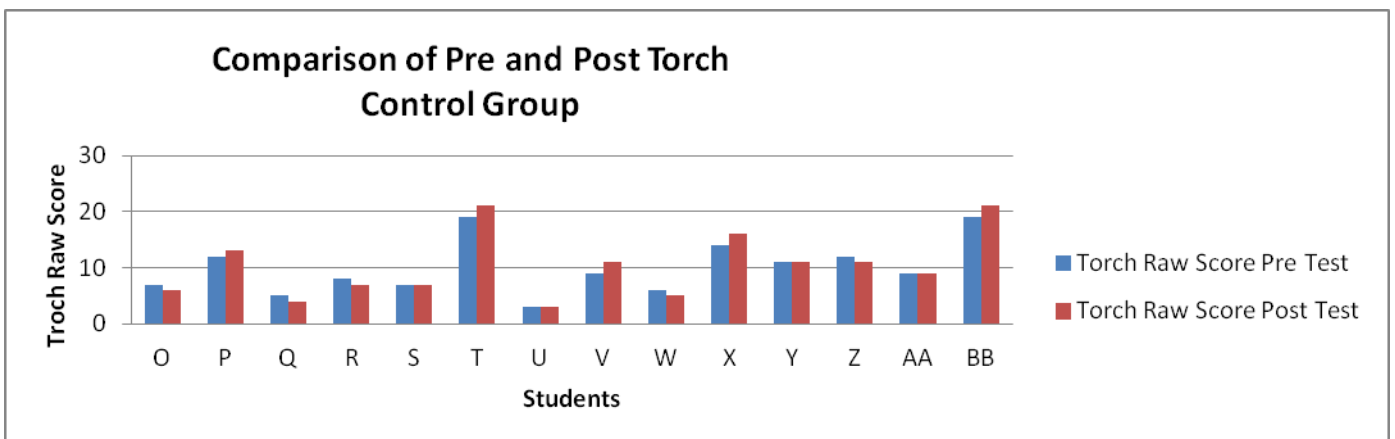
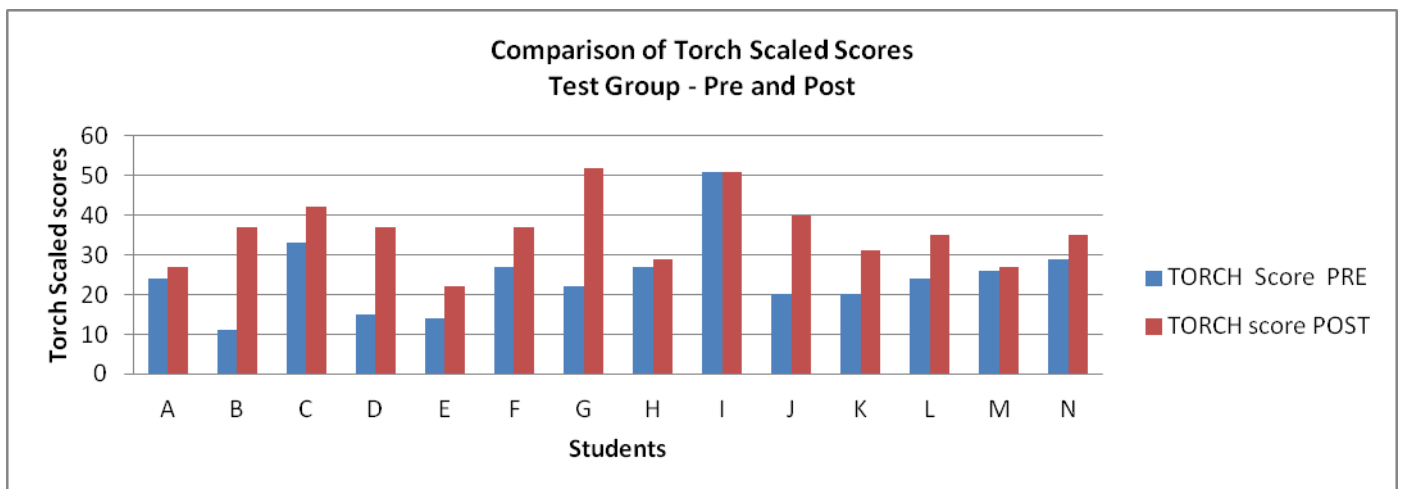


Figure 4

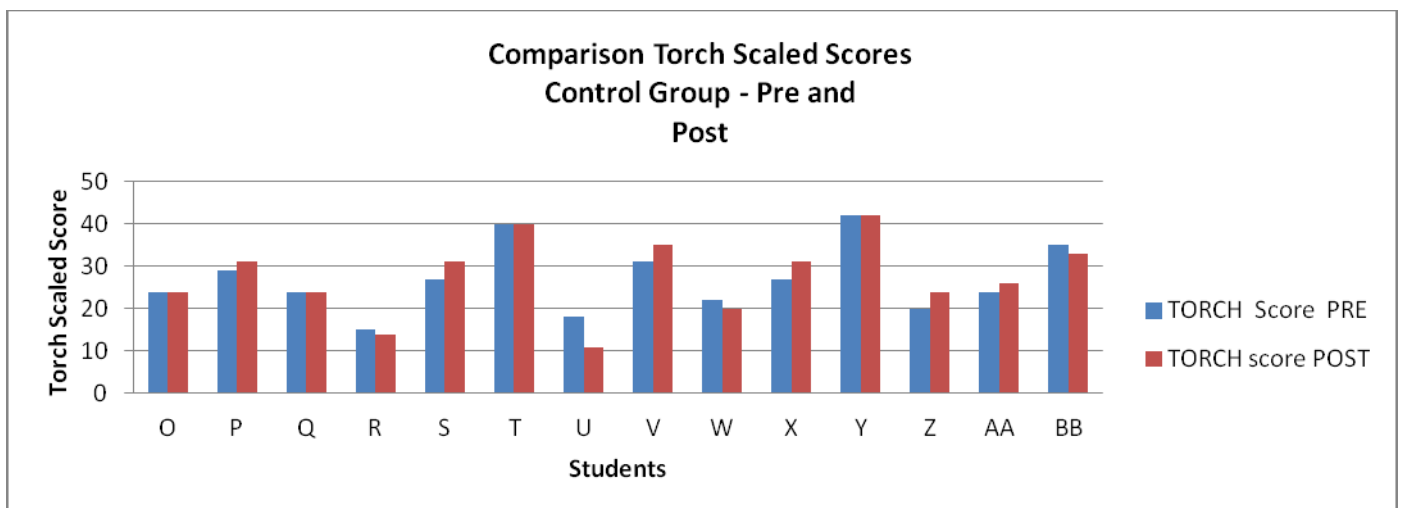


**Figure 5 and 6** compare the pre and post Torch scaled scores of the teach and control group. These scores were measured against the year three level pattern of response form, from the Torch Teacher Manual. The teaching group's average score for the pre test was 24.5 (scaled score) which approximately has the group sitting between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> percentile on this year three comprehension test. The teaching group's post-test was 35.8 (scaled score) which increased the average percentile to just above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. This learning trend is positive for these year two students indicating that they are able to achieve the comprehension levels of an average grade three student. The control group's pre test average (scaled score) was 27, which was just above the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile for year 3 students. The control group's average post-test (scaled score) was 27.5 showing again that the learning trend indicated little movement and again placing the group just above the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile. These results show that the teaching groups learning trend was positively affect by the 10 sessions of focused teaching clearly growing the teaching group's knowledge more so than the control group.

**Figure 5**

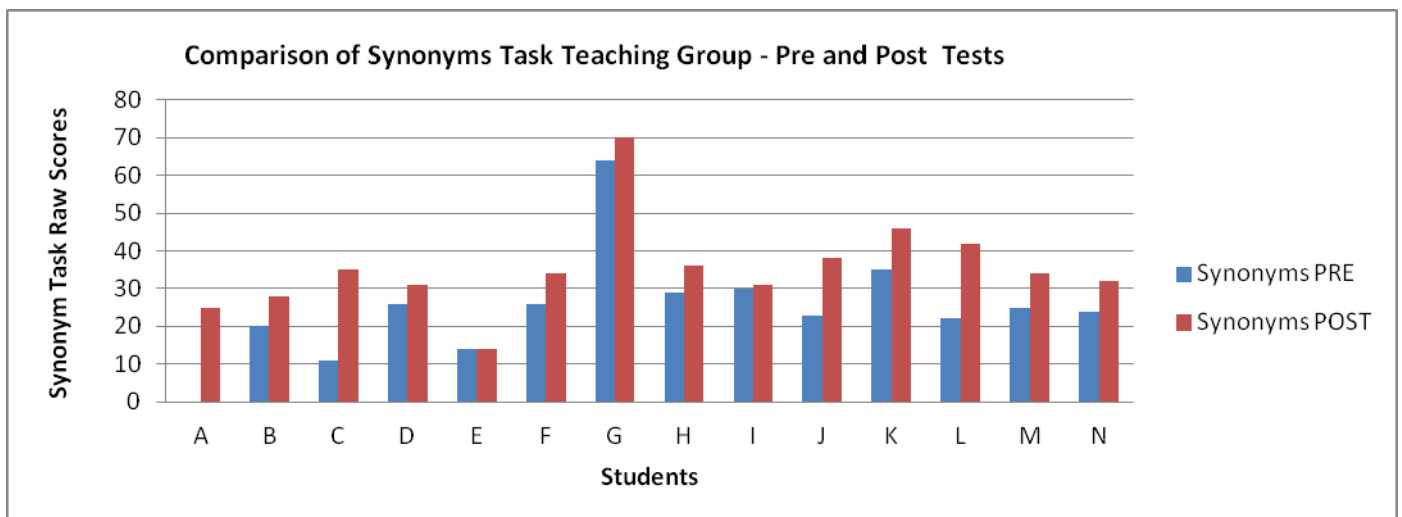


**Figure 6**

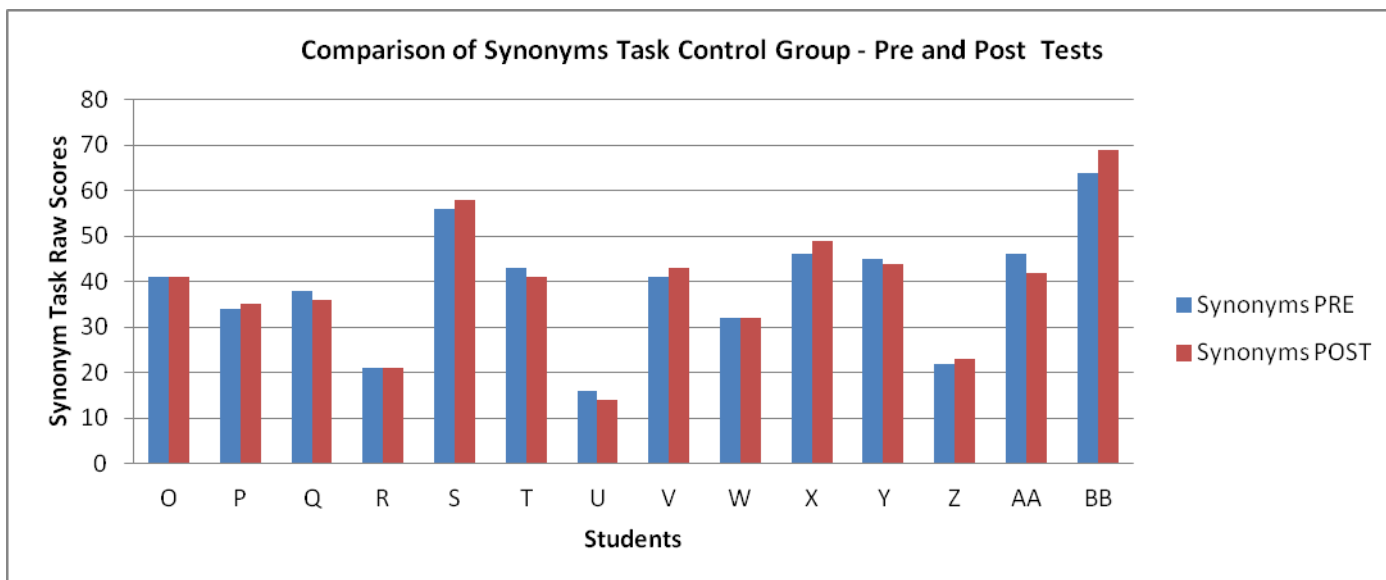


**Figure 7 and 8** show the pre and post-test raw score data of the synonyms task for the teaching and controlled groups. The pre test data again shows the control group achieving a higher average of 38.1 over the teaching group whose average was 24.9. This shows the difference in understanding of synonyms pre teaching. The teaching group’s post-test was 35.4 showing a positive learning trend, as the average improvement for the group was a raw score of 10.5. The control group’s post test average score was 39.1 showing an average improvement of the group of .2. Clearly, there was a great growth in understanding for the teaching group. The control group’s data indicates they had better comprehension strategies compared with the teaching group although the control group’s strategies showed very little change over the two-week period as opposed to the teaching group who did improve their comprehension strategies as indicated by the average growth.

**Figure 7**



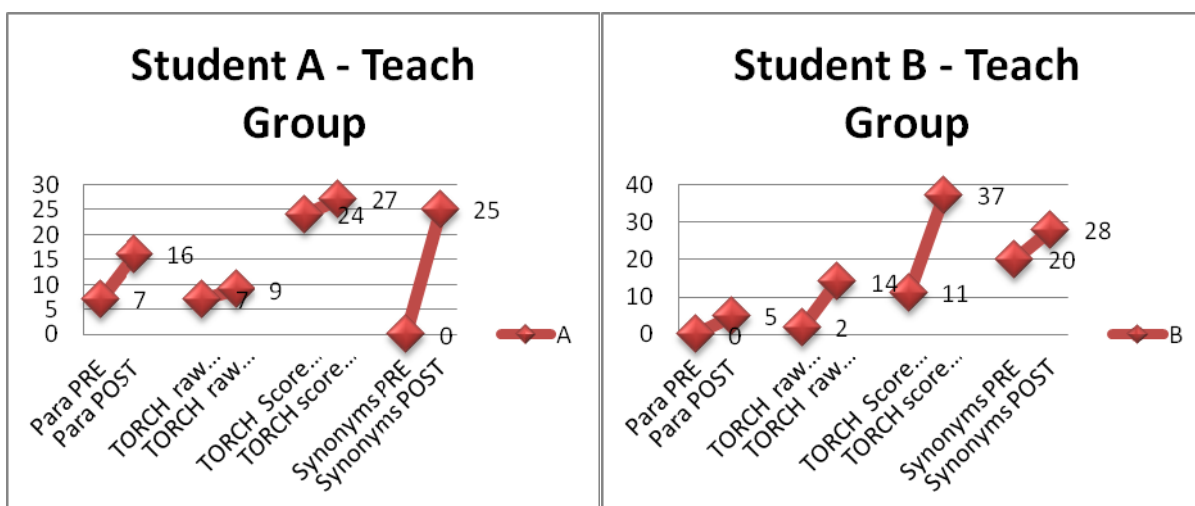
**Figure 8**



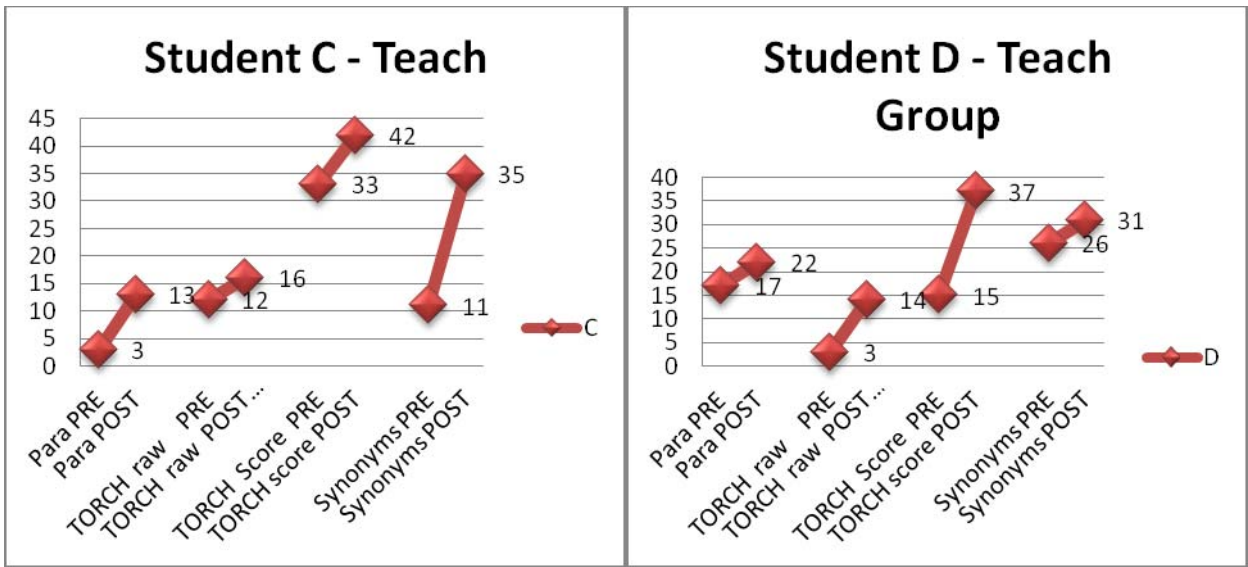
### Individual Results - Teaching Group

The range of scores possible on the synonym task (0-300) makes the growth in data seem smaller in comparison to the other tests used.

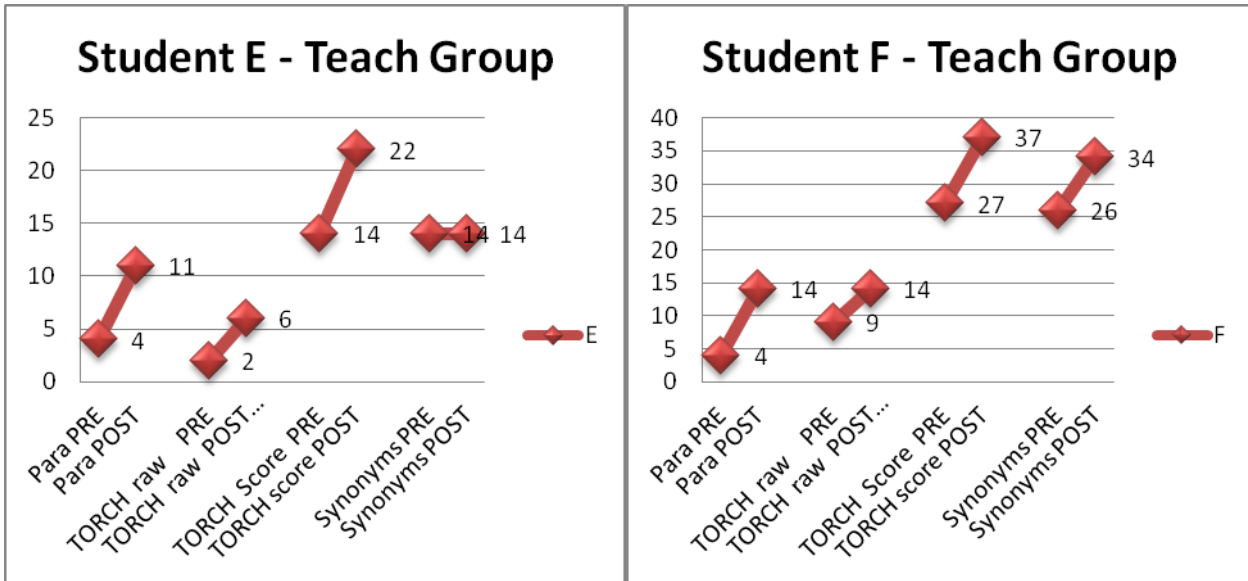
**Student As** results indicated growth in all three tests, although there was not a great growth in the Torch test for comprehension. Student A showed their knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 28%, their comprehension improved by 10.5% (calculated on the raw score) moving from just below the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile to just above the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 8.3%. **Student Bs** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Bs knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 16.5%, their comprehension improved by 63% (calculated on the raw score) moving from below the scale to above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 2.6%.



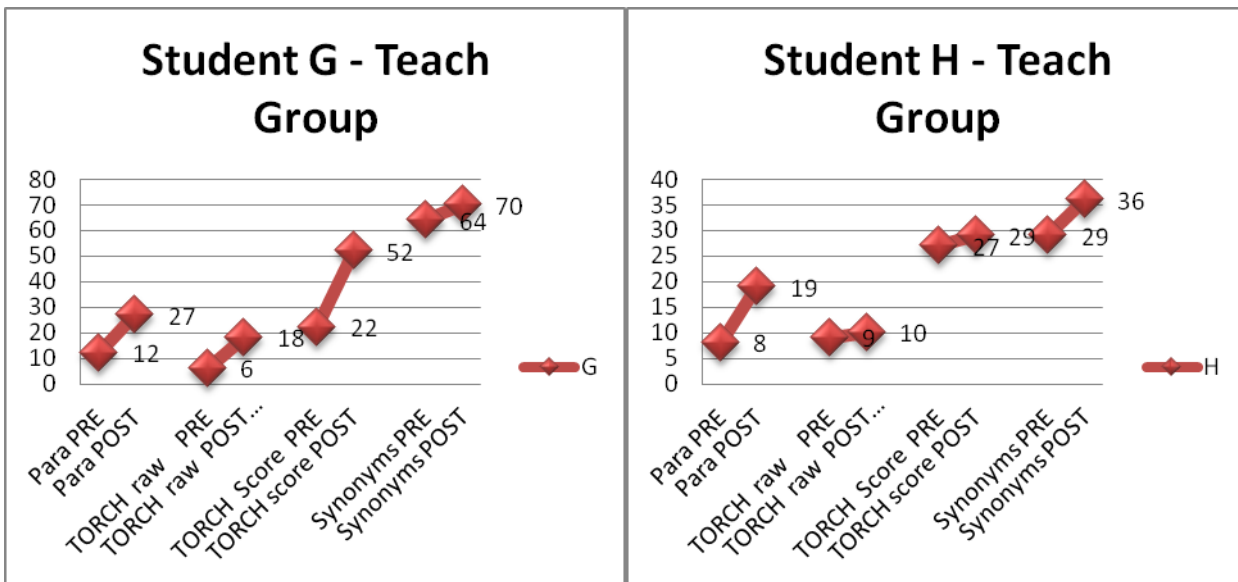
**Student Cs** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Cs knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 31.2%, their comprehension improved by 21% (calculated on the raw score) moving from the 45<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 8%. **Student Ds** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Ds knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 15.6%, their comprehension improved by 57% (calculated on the raw score) moving from below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 55<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 1.6%.



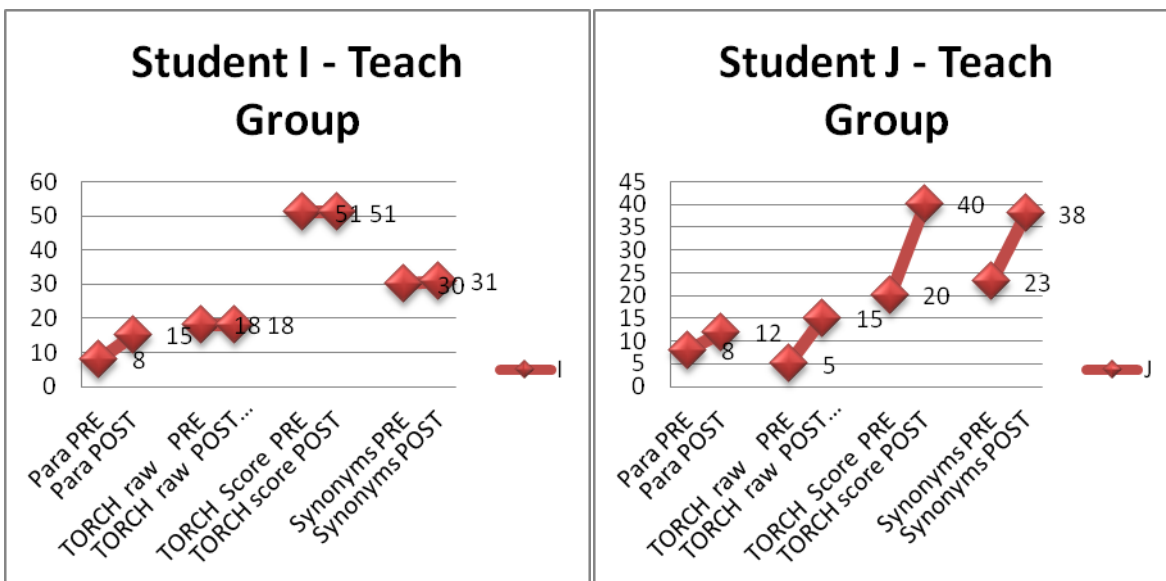
**Student Es** results indicated growth in two tests. Student Es knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 21.8%, their comprehension improved by 21% (calculated on the raw score) moving from below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms remained the same with no improvement. Student E missed the last 3 sessions. **Student Fs** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Fs knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 31.2%, their comprehension improved by 26.3% (calculated on the raw score) moving 30<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 55<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 2.6%.



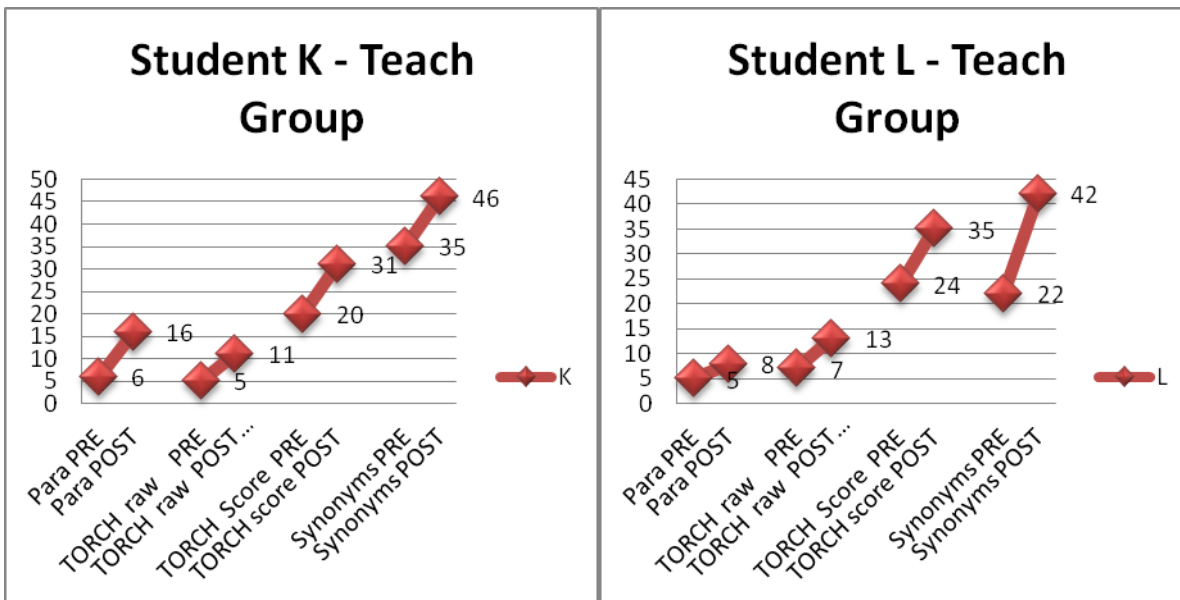
**Student Gs** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Gs knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 46.8%, their comprehension improved by 63.1% (calculated on the raw score) moving from 20<sup>th</sup> percentile to above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 2%. **Student Hs** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Hs knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 34.3%, their comprehension improved by 5.3% (calculated on the raw score) moving from 30<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 38<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 2.3%.



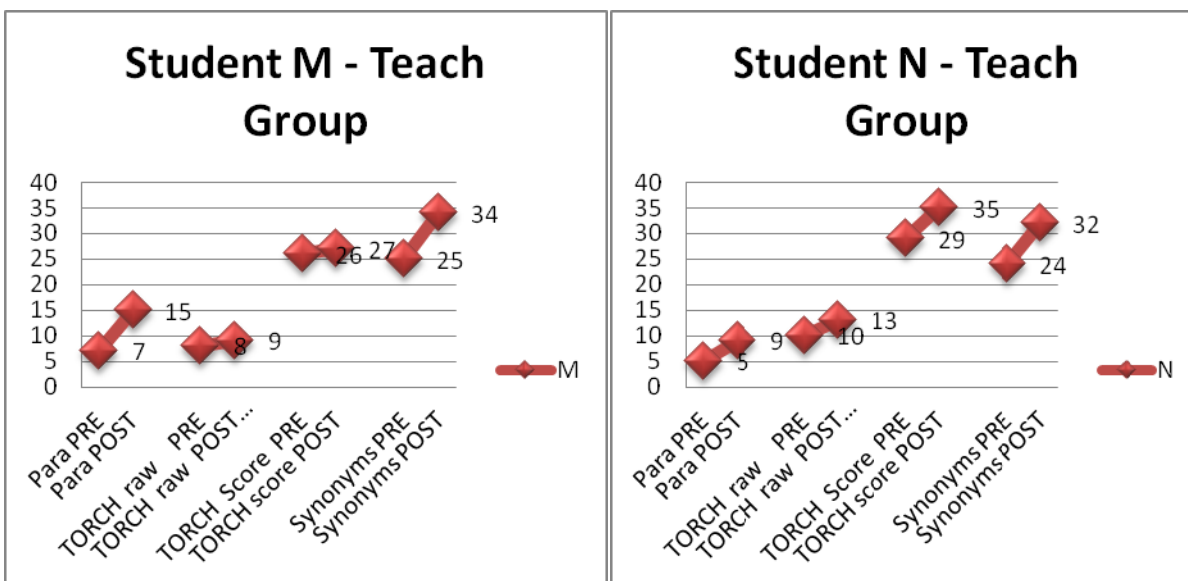
**Student Is** results indicated growth in two tests. Student Is knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 21.8%, the comprehension improved by 0% (calculated on the raw score) remaining above the 90th percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by .3%. **Student Js** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Js knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 12.5%, the comprehension improved by 52.6% (calculated on the raw score) moving from 10th percentile to above the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 5%.



**Student Ks** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Ks knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 31.2%, their comprehension improved by 31.5% (calculated on the raw score) moving from 24th percentile to the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 3.6%. **Student Ls** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Ls knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 9.3%, their comprehension improved by 31.5% (calculated on the raw score) moving from 24th percentile to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 6.6%.



**Student Ms** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Ms knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 25%, their comprehension improved by 5.2% (calculated on the raw score) moving from 26th percentile to the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 3%. **Student Ns** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Ns knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 12.5%, their comprehension improved by 15.7% (calculated on the raw score) moving from 35th percentile to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by 2.6%.

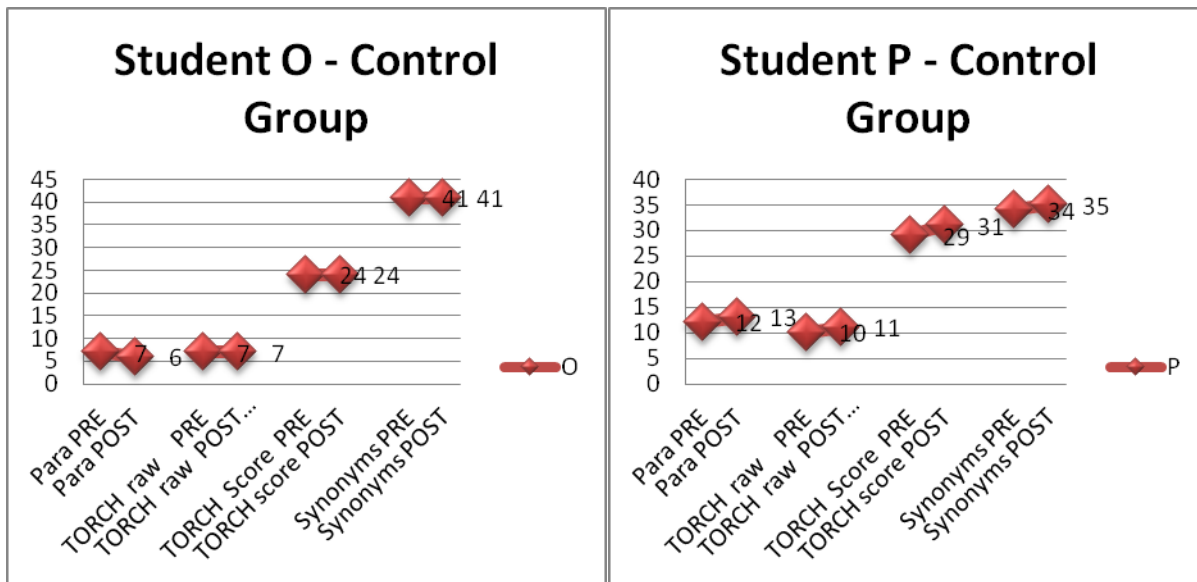


The teaching groups test results show a range of positive growth with all students in two or more of the tests, indicating that explicit teaching of synonyms and paraphrasing positively affect each students skills.

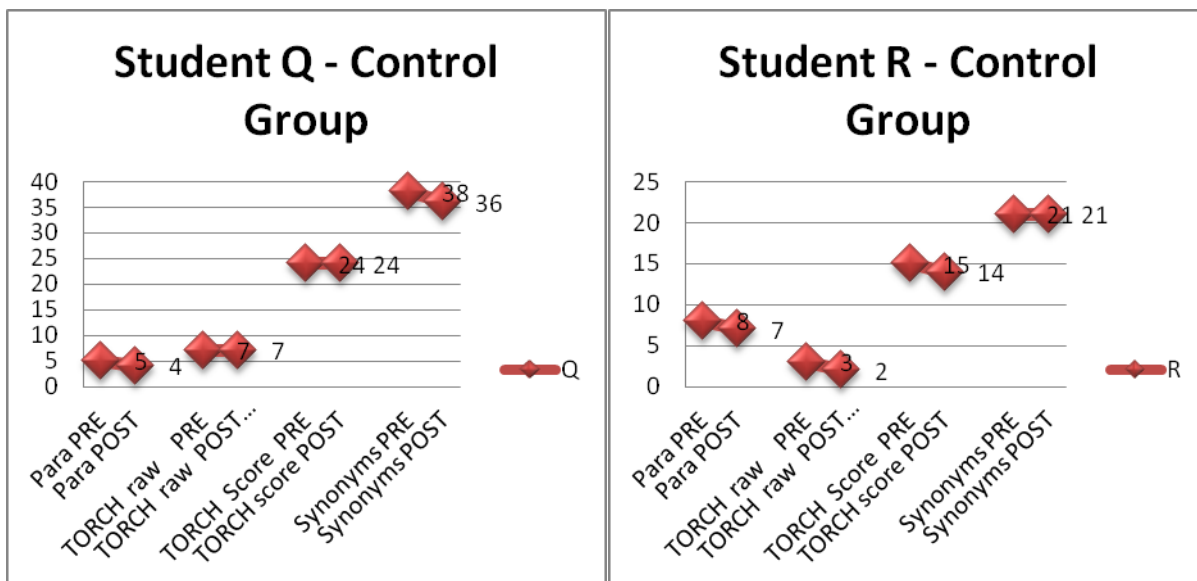
### Control Group

**Student Os** results indicate no growth in the three tests. Student Os knowledge of paraphrasing decreased by 3.1%, their comprehension showed no improvement (calculated on the raw score) remaining at the 30th percentile and their knowledge of synonyms showed no improvement. **Student Ps** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Ps knowledge of paraphrasing improved by 3.1%, their comprehension improved by 5.2% (calculated on the raw score) moving from 39th percentile to the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms improved by .3%.



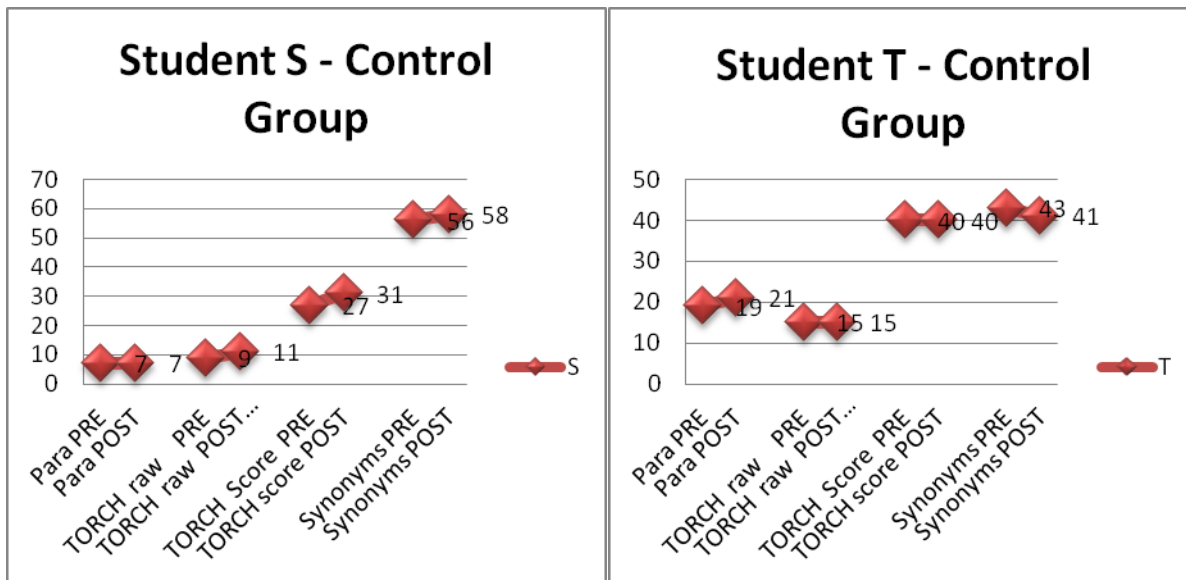


**Student Qs** results indicated no growth in all three tests. Student Qs knowledge of paraphrasing decreased by 3.1%, their comprehension remained the same (calculated on the raw score) remaining on the 23<sup>rd</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms decreased by 0.6%. **Student Rs** results indicated no growth in all three tests. Student Rs knowledge of paraphrasing decreased by 3.1%, their comprehension decreased by 5.2% (calculated on the raw score) remaining below the 10th percentile and their knowledge of synonyms remained the same.

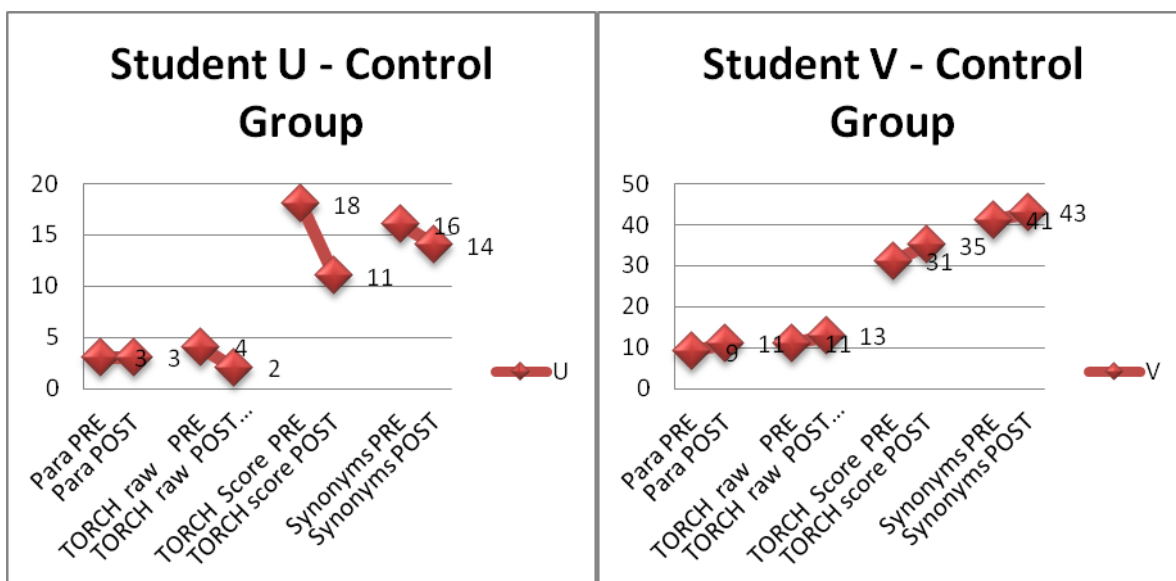


**Student Ss** results indicated growth in two tests. Student Ss knowledge of paraphrasing remained the same, their comprehension increased by 10.5% (calculated on the raw score) moving from the 38<sup>th</sup> to the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms increased by .6%. **Student Ts** results indicated sporadic growth in the tests. Student Ts knowledge of paraphrasing increased by 6.25%, their comprehension remain the same (calculated on the raw score) remaining on the 62<sup>nd</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms decreased by .6%.

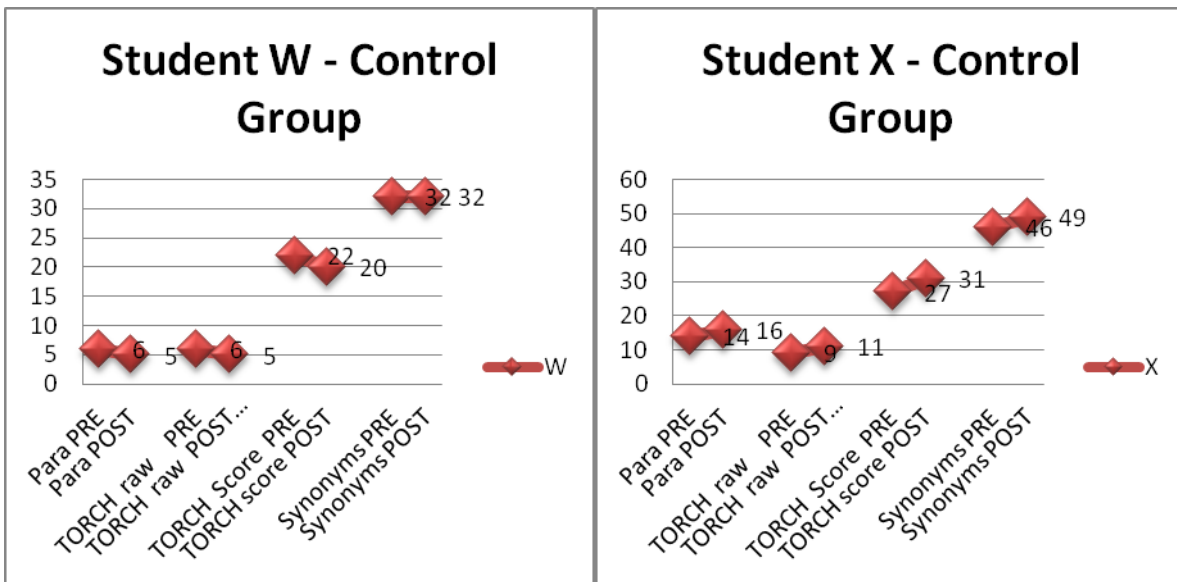




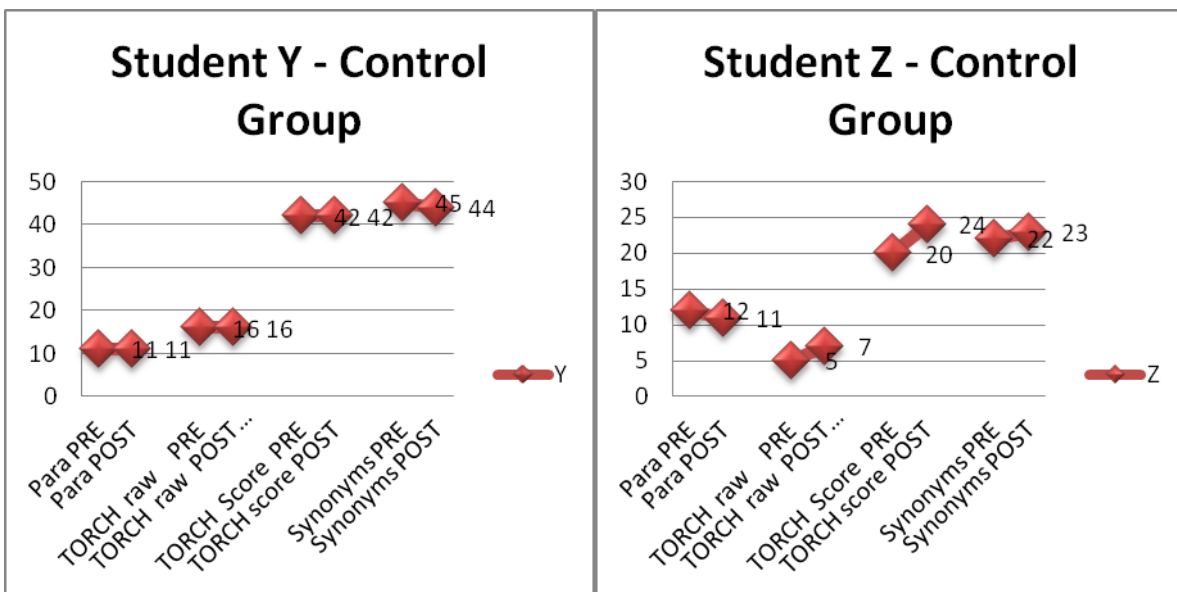
**Student Us** results indicated no growth in two tests. Student Us knowledge of paraphrasing remained the same, their comprehension decreased by 10.5% (calculated on the raw score) decreasing from the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile to below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms decreased by .6%. **Student Vs** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Vs knowledge of paraphrasing increased by 6.2%, their comprehension increased by 10.5% (calculated on the raw score) increasing from the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile to the 56<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms increased by .6%.



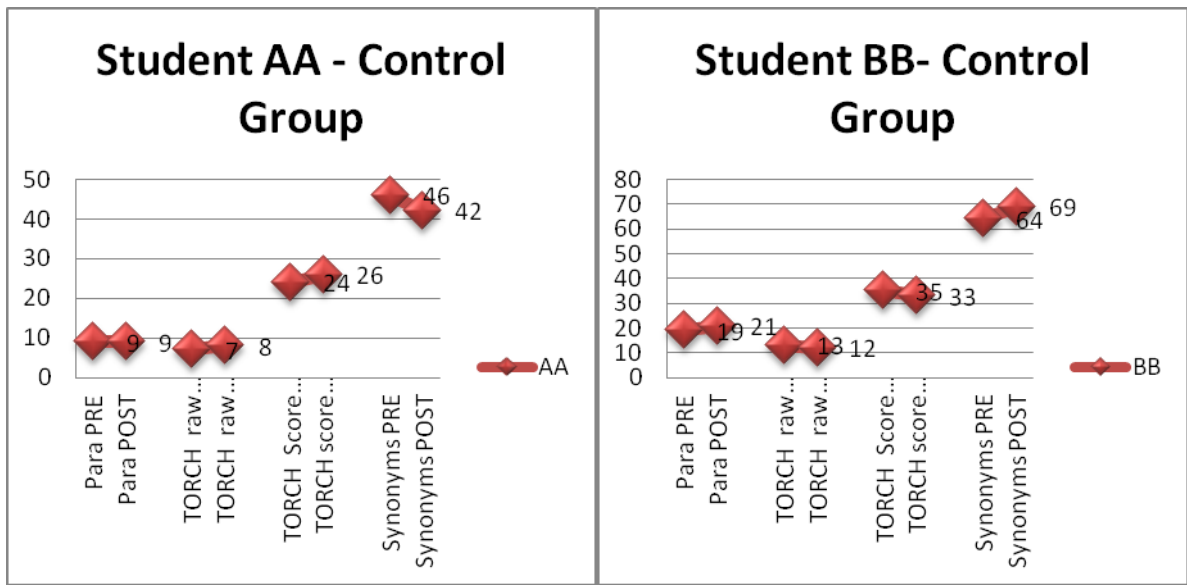
**Student Ws** results indicated no growth in all three tests. Student Ws knowledge of paraphrasing decreased by 3.1%, their comprehension decreased by 5.2% (calculated on the raw score) decreasing from the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms remained the same. **Student Xs** results indicated growth in all three tests. Student Xs knowledge of paraphrasing increased by 6.2%, their comprehension increased by 10.5% (calculated on the raw score) increasing from the 31<sup>st</sup> percentile to the 41<sup>st</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms increased by 1%.



**Student Ys** results indicated no growth in all three tests. Student Ys knowledge of paraphrasing remained the same, their comprehension remained the same (calculated on the raw score) remaining at the 68<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms decreased by .3%. **Student Zs** results indicated growth in two tests. Student Zs knowledge of paraphrasing decreased by 3.1%, their comprehension decreased by 10.5% (calculated on the raw score) increasing from the 14<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms increased by .3%.



**Student AAs** results indicated growth in one test. Student AAs knowledge of paraphrasing remained the same, their comprehension increased by 5.2% (calculated on the raw score) increasing from the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms decreased by 1.3%. **Student BBs** results indicated growth in two tests. Student BBs knowledge of paraphrasing increased by 6.2%, their comprehension decreased by 5.2% (calculated on the raw score) decreasing from the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 48<sup>th</sup> percentile and their knowledge of synonyms increased by 1.6%.



The control group results show some small negative and positive growth, with a number of students data unchanged in all the tests conducted. Indicating there was a minimal impact on their use of synonyms and paraphrasing, as well as no great effect on their comprehension over the two weeks.

The learning trend for the teaching group is positive and supports the hypothesis that teaching explicit strategies of synonyms and paraphrasing improves student’s ability to comprehend. The learning trend of the control group although initial results indicate a more successful use of comprehension strategies was of sporadic growth with some showing small gains, small loses and some remaining the same.

**Teaching Group**

One other informal pre and post-test was conducted to show the students in the teaching group how their knowledge had grown. Each student was asked prior to the first lesson and at the conclusion of the final lesson to answer the following questions

1. What is paraphrasing?
2. What are synonyms?
3. How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?

The pre test answers were mostly made up of ‘I don’t know or unsure’, a couple of students had a guess, one writing down for question 1. rhyming words, ,and for question 2. spelling. None of the teaching group were familiar with the language and all students were unable to answer the questions correctly. The post-test was a chance to celebrate, as all students were able to answer the three questions correctly. The students had their pre and post-tests on the same sheet so they were able to see concrete evidence of their own growth of knowledge. Two students asked in lesson three if they could have the sheet back as they wanted to change their answers. These students quickly indicated growth in their understanding and ability to articulate this.

**Discussion**

The findings of this project support the initial hypothesis of explicitly teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to grade 2 students improves reading comprehension of nonfiction text. The teaching group results indicated an improvement in the use of synonyms and paraphrasing, confidently affecting the average growth in comprehension. The teaching group's growth in knowledge quickly became obvious throughout the lessons; it became clear that using the Collins model of teaching (1989) enabled the students to develop their skills in a carefully scaffolded way using a slow release of responsibility. The teaching group understood that through putting text into their own words they would be better able to understand, retell and remember what they were reading.

These results maintain the findings of Gajria, Jitendra, Stood, & Sacks (2007), Fisk (2003), Kletzien (2009), Katims (1997), Schumaker, Denton & Deshler (1984), Hagaman (2008) (2010), Wilhelm (2001), Vygotsky and Beales (1983) who reported that teaching can be successful if explicitly structured, focusing on particular learning strategies. Those students targeted with explicit teaching would increase their knowledge about the strategies taught and improve their comprehension proficiency. As Vygotsky (1956), noted students would require ongoing support to consolidate and continue their growth. As with any skill learnt, it is important to practice to maintain and grow understandings and move students to the zone of actual development (ZAD) supported by Vygotsky's (1956) early work.

The ten lessons used were developed using the Collins model of teaching (1989). As Katims (1997) indicated, it is important for students to be able to articulate, reflect and review their learning and see how it will influence their knowledge in a broader sense. The lessons plan indicates in the second side column the use of the 6 teaching strategies (appendix 1). This process was very successful and students began to anticipate the reviews and questions asked as to how these skills would help us, as they chanted responses to me whilst on yard duty, some parents reported their children were enthusiastically teaching family members the meaning of paraphrasing and synonyms as well as how this was helping them to learn. Not all students had home support and this possibly affected their ability to consolidate their learning. All lessons did provide for students to articulate, explore and reflect (Collins Model 1989) although it would be possible that the students who also received support at home had more of a chance to articulate their learning as Katims (1997) suggested, students need opportunities to explain their learning and the skills they are using.

Central to the ten lessons was the use of Schumaker's (1984) RAP acronym, which was an easy to learn acronym guiding students and supporting their actions to improve comprehension. It was important for students to remember this acronym and to understand the implementation process to support their comprehension. It was clear that some student's success was affected by the whole group instruction and that their learning could have been scaffolded, possibly in a much smaller focus group than within the fourteen students in the teaching group. Students A, H and M showed the least improvement in their comprehension; although orally they showed understanding, their writing and spelling skills affected their results. These three students did not finish the Torch test in the time required and expressed their dislike of such tests, needing to be continually encouraged to focus and do the work required. Students A, H and M's teacher indicated these students need longer thinking time to process information and answers. Students A, H and M require plenty of assistance as well as visual aids to support their learning. These students required further scaffolding and it is possible that with longer time on the Torch test they would have been able to improve their results. Interestingly on the pre test, these students did not complain, but on the post-test realised they need to understand certain words to complete the test and came up on a

number of occasion to ask me what certain words meant. This indicated that they are monitoring and asking questions as they read, they are expecting to comprehend because of their recent explicit teaching.

During the lessons it became obvious that students were successfully identifying a few key words and changing these, although the sentence was only being altered by one to three words and the structure remained the same. These students need more explicit modelling, coaching, and scaffolding. A strategy that may have been more explicit for these students could have been to cut up sentences and look at changing and rearranging these, always being sure to maintain meaning.

A strategy used throughout the lessons to support comprehension was for the students to ask questions and look to connecting with the story. The modelling and coaching was more of a focus in the early lessons. During lesson two, a student was shocked that the mother emu laid the eggs and left them with the father to look after never to return. This student reported that he/she would much prefer to be a human because he/she loved their mother and they thought it was sad that the baby emus did not know their mothers. John Munro (Munro, Literacy Intervention Strategies, 2011) talks about how important this connection with prior knowledge is for the reader to make meaning. This was a strong focus in the first five sessions, but personal connections could have been more of a focus in the last five session lessons.

With the exception of student I all students (Student I scored 18 out of a possible 19) results indicated positive gains in their Torch score indicating that the explicit teaching of synonyms and paraphrasing were successful strategies in affecting the teaching groups comprehension scores. Student I's initial high results indicate that this student already had some good questioning strategies supporting comprehension at this level. Student I's scores did not show any movement on the Torch test, making the same mistake on the pre and post-test. Student I reported that they remembered the answer they recorded the first time and wrote the same answer.

On completion of the lessons all students were able to successfully articulate their learning both orally and in written form through the pre and post questions (Appendix 2). This was a positive and enjoyable experience for the students and teacher (although this did not positively influence all students' comprehension scores, all students except student I showed improvement, but three students only improved their score by one question). All students could see their pre test and that they had recorded that they did not know what synonyms or paraphrasing were, therefore they were unable to answer question 3 about reading comprehension. All students celebrated their post-test, with their regular teacher and at assembly with the whole school. The lessons were designed using information on Australian animals as this was the grades inquiry topic in term 4. The teaching group was able to continue to celebrate their learning by teaching groups of two or three grade ones and twos about these animals. Further lessons took place to reinforce the teaching groups learning as well as develop peer tutoring. The teaching group were experts in teaching the RAP acronym, guiding synonym, and paraphrasing activities with their peers. Student's feedback was very positive from both the teaching and learning groups. Many students were asking when we would be having lessons like this again.

It is important to note that these lessons are not isolated and these skills and strategies require further support and the students need continued opportunities for consolidating and supporting their learning. As Schumaker (2009), reports students need to master learning strategies and this will often require more than ten 35-minute lessons. Students will need to have successful experiences using synonyms and paraphrasing to see how it supports their learning both inside and outside the classroom.

This research project will be the focus in professional learning team meetings to stimulate teacher pedagogical understanding and content knowledge around affective teaching models and explicit teaching strategies to address student's needs and outcomes. Through the school review process it was identified that our year three NAPLAN results for reading comprehension could improve in light of the year five data. We acknowledge that this is not just the responsibility of the year three teachers and see that the data collected to date in the junior school does not have a comprehension component. This is rich information to celebrate teacher affect when using targeted strategies to answer the needs of students. The video footage of lessons 1, 5 and 10 show the format of the lessons to highlight the Collins model of teaching with colleagues. It also highlights the student oral participation and enthusiasm for their learning as well as how each student experiences success. This footage will be a rich resource to use to scaffold teachers learning about successful strategies.

The results suggest that the explicit teaching of synonyms and paraphrasing text using the strategy of RAP as a comprehension procedure improves student's ability to understand text. Students need to develop their ability to question texts to connect with, understand, and importantly put text into their own words. Future research would look at other strategies such as activating prior knowledge, visualising, predicting inferring, synthesizing and monitoring as comprehension procedures. To look at our teachers designing their own mini action research project with pre and post testing and lessons plans based around assisting readers through their reading zones of proximal development. To use this process of action research to support teacher learning, to share, to articulate, to explore and reflect together to effect student outcomes.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1

**Lesson plans – Goal: Explicitly teach synonyms and paraphrasing to year two students to improve reading comprehension**

L e s s o n s	Collins Model  Responsibility of the teacher/student	<h1>Procedure</h1>
1	<p>Evidence for student self reflection during lessons</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Teacher Models Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Student Articulates</p>	<p><b>Self Assessment – Appendix 2</b></p> <p>Introduce the Goal for the next ten sessions - <b>PARAPHRASING AND USE OF SYNONYMS WHEN WE READ</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. introducing paraphrasing to students:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Paraphrasing means putting what you have read into your own words.</li> <li>b. Synonym is a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word in the same language</li> <li>c. You paraphrase by reading something, thinking about what it means, and then say again it in your own words.</li> <li>d. Paraphrasing is a useful strategy to check to be sure that you have understood when reading something difficult or something that is important to remember.</li> <li>e. If you cannot paraphrase after reading, it is important to go back and reread to clarify information.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Discuss key words – Synonyms, paraphrasing and introduce the acronym RAP. Each student will have a folder in which all work will be stored over these lessons. Coloured posters of RAP and a definition of a synonym and paraphrasing provided for all students and discussed.</li> <li>3. Play a synonym game (appendix 4 ) students look for and match like words</li> <li>4. Introduce text – ‘Emus Ground Birds’ (text adapted from National Geographic – Appendix 3)</li> <li>5. Talk about the title and discuss what we think the story might be about – create a mind map as the students contribute their ideas.</li> <li>6. Teacher reads text</li> <li>7. Read through text together</li> <li>8. (Think Aloud Teaching Strategy) Teacher models identifying synonyms and key phrases by underlining them in the first and then second paragraph. Teacher explicitly points out the rewording as changing key words and phrases in to her own words. Teacher reads original version and then reworded version. Pointing out to students that by putting the text in her own words, she is better able to understand it and remember it. Teacher also encourage students to make connections to their own world as they read e.g. In ‘Emu’s Ground Birds’ the male emu looks after the eggs and chicks and the mother leaves after laying the eggs – In what ways is this similar or not to our own lives?</li> <li>9. Teacher and students apply same process to the third and fourth paragraph. (Students suggest which words or phrases the group could reword)</li> <li>10. Review lesson – go over main terms and encourage students to teach someone at home what a synonym is.</li> </ol>



2	<p>Teacher Models/ Coaches Student Articulate</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Students Articulate and reflect</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review lesson – Revise a synonym. Students share who and how they taught synonyms to – encouraging students to use their cognitive skills. Students hear they will be teaching another group about the animals they are learning about for next terms inquiry topic on Australian animals. They will teach their groups about identifying key words and using synonyms as well as paraphrasing to understand information about Australian Animals.</li> <li>2. Play synonym game (appendix 4) this time students are asked to put their left finger on a word and see how quickly their right finger can find the synonym for that word.</li> <li>3. Review the story – ‘Emus Ground Birds’ students retell paraphrase story with a partner. Discuss how much of the story you could remember and what you think helped you remember. Model making connections between he story and what we know as a group.</li> <li>4. Introduce text – ‘Echidnas’ (adapted from National Geographic – Appendix 4) Discuss prior knowledge, what are mammals and what connections can we make to our own lives.</li> <li>5. Talk about the title and first sentence and discuss what we think the story might be about – students discuss briefly with a partner things they know about Echidnas.</li> <li>6. Teacher reads text</li> <li>7. Read through text together</li> <li>8. Teacher models paraphrases the first paragraph using the think aloud-teaching strategy on white board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Step one – highlight key words</li> <li>- Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms</li> <li>- Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same</li> <li>- Step four – read paraphrased version</li> </ul> </li> <li>9. Students work through paragraph 3, 4 and 5 with the teacher. Paraphrasing together on to smart board</li> <li>10. Review lesson – go over main terms and encourage students to teach someone at home what paraphrasing is. Highlight modelled tips to help with paraphrasing - RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense. Students take home folders and are encouraged to use words from synonym game and play with someone at home.</li> </ol>
3	<p>Teacher Models/Coaches</p> <p>Students Articulate</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Students Articulate</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review last lesson – Revise what a synonym/paraphrasing/RAP. Students share who and how they taught paraphrasing to .Discuss and model tips to help with paraphrasing - RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense.</li> <li>2. Play synonym memory game (appendix 5) students think of one or more synonyms for bonus points.</li> <li>3. Talk about the title and first sentence and discuss what we think the story might be about – students discuss briefly with a partner things they know about Echidnas.</li> <li>4. Discuss prior knowledge – model making connections between our life and the echidnas</li> <li>5. Teacher reads text</li> <li>6. Read through text with students</li> <li>7. Teacher models paraphrases the first paragraph using the think -aloud teaching strategy on white board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Step one – highlight key words</li> <li>- Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms</li> <li>- Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same</li> <li>- Step four – read paraphrased version</li> </ul> </li> <li>8. Students work through paragraph 3, 4 and 5 with the teacher. Paraphrasing together on to smart board</li> <li>9. Review the story – ‘Echidnas’ students paraphrase story with a partner. Partners do one paragraph at a time. Discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the story maintain the same information using other words</li> <li>- did it make sense when you read the story through</li> <li>- Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense).</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	Students Articulate	10. Review lesson – go over main terms and encourage students to teach someone new what paraphrasing and synonyms are. Students take home folders and read their version of echidnas
4	<p>Teacher Coaches Students articulate, reflect and explore</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds Students articulate</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate and explore</p> <p>students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review last lesson - Go over key words and understandings – synonyms, paraphrasing, RAP, how do you check if the synonym you chose has a similar meaning – discuss how putting text into our own words helps us when we read.</li> <li>2. What can we use to find out more words that have the same meaning?</li> <li>3. Introduce the Thesaurus – model the looking up of words e.g. hot, then students practice looking up some words highlighted from the text</li> <li>4. Discuss homework</li> <li>5. Introduce – ‘The Australian Red Back Spider’</li> <li>6. Discuss prior knowledge – model making connections between our life and the Spiders</li> <li>7. Read through text with students</li> <li>8. Teacher models paraphrases the first paragraph using the think aloud-teaching strategy on white board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Step one – highlight key words</li> <li>- Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms</li> <li>- Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same</li> <li>- Step four – read paraphrased version</li> </ul> </li> <li>9. Students work through paragraph 2, with the teacher. Paraphrasing together on to smart board</li> <li>10. Students work through paragraph 3 &amp;4, with a partner. Paraphrasing together</li> <li>11. Share</li> <li>12. Review the story –Discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the story maintain the same information using other words</li> <li>- did it make sense when you read the story through</li> <li>- Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense).</li> </ul> </li> <li>13. Review lesson – Read over posters and put them in to your own words. Discuss how these skills will help us in school</li> </ol>
5	<p>Teacher Coaches Students articulate, reflect and explore</p> <p>Teacher models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches scaffolding</p> <p>students articulate and explore</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds Students articulate and explore</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review last lesson - Ask students to go over key words and understandings using flash cards with key words and questions – synonyms, paraphrasing, RAP, how do you check if the synonym you chose has a similar meaning – discuss how putting text into our own words helps us when we read (why and how).</li> <li>2. Review homework</li> <li>3. Thesaurus – (appendix 6 – word in story sheet) students find two interesting words from any of the texts read so far and look for synonyms – share in groups of 3 or 4</li> <li>4. Students read through text ‘The Australian Red Back Spider’</li> <li>5. Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Step one – highlight key words</li> <li>- Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms</li> <li>- Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same</li> <li>- Step four – read paraphrased version</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the story maintain the same information using other words</li> <li>- did it make sense when you read the story through</li> <li>- Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense).</li> </ul> </li> <li>7. Review lesson – questions similar to lesson 4</li> </ol> <p>Read over posters and put them in to your own words. Discuss how these skills will help us in school.</p>

<p>6 + 7</p>	<p>Teacher Coaches Students articulate</p> <p>Teacher scaffolding students articulate</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds Students articulate and explore</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate, explore and reflect</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate, explore and reflect</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review last lesson -</li> <li>2. Thesaurus – (appendix 6 – word in story sheet) students find two interesting words from any of the texts read so far and look for synonyms – share in groups of 3 or 4</li> <li>3. Students read through text ‘The Australian Red Back Spider’</li> <li>4. Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Step one – highlight key words</li> <li>- Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms</li> <li>- Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same</li> <li>- Step four – read paraphrased version</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the story maintain the same information using other words</li> <li>- did it make sense when you read the story through</li> <li>- Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense)</li> </ul> <p>How can these skills help us read and understand in all classes</p> </li> <li>6. Pose Questions from the text that call for students to have interpreted text. Students answer orally e.g. What is unique about the red colouring of the Australian Red Back Spider?</li> <li>7. Introduce booklet on Kangaroos (Title - You Don’t Look Like Your Mama – series Winners – Life Science publisher MACMILLAN)</li> <li>8. In groups students are asked to read and apply the following to page one of the booklet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Step one – highlight key words</li> <li>- Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms</li> <li>- Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same</li> <li>- Step four – read paraphrased version</li> <li>- Reflect – what did you learn?</li> </ul> </li> <li>8. Discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the story maintain the same information using other words</li> <li>- did it make sense when you read the story through</li> <li>- Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense).</li> </ul> </li> <li>9. Review session - skills</li> </ol> <p>Discuss how these skills will help us in school</p>
<p>8 + 9</p>	<p>Teacher scaffolds</p> <p>Students articulate, explore and reflect</p> <p>Students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review last lesson</li> <li>2. Booklet on Kangaroos (Title - You Don’t Look Like Your Mama – series Winners – Life Science publisher MACMILLAN) Kangaroo Traits page 10 – 13</li> <li>3. In groups students are asked to read and apply the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Step one – highlight key words</li> <li>- Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms</li> <li>- Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same</li> <li>- Step four – read paraphrased version</li> <li>- Reflect – what did you learn?</li> </ul> </li> <li>9. Discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the story maintain the same information using other words</li> <li>- did it make sense when you read the story through</li> <li>- Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense).</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Review session</li> </ol> <p>How can we use these skills in all classes – students Think/Pair/share</p>
<p>1 0</p>	<p>Teacher scaffolds where necessary</p>	<p>Read silently the last page of the Kangaroo booklet – ‘Living in a Group’ Paraphrase Read each paragraph silently (When paraphrasing sentences students need to be reminded that it is not a summary. Students should paraphrase the sequence of events.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. In dividually students are asked to read and apply the following</li> </ol>

Students articulate, explore and reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Step one – highlight key words</li> <li>- Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms</li> <li>- Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same</li> <li>- Step four – read paraphrased version</li> <li>- Step five – did your paraphrasing still hold the same message</li> <li>- Reflect – what did you learn? Think/Pair/Share</li> </ul>
Students articulate, explore and reflect	Post test the initial three questions for students to self assess and discuss what they have learnt. Students review what they have learnt and how they can continue to use these skills

**Appendix 2**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Developing Comprehension**

**Goal** – To understand the importance of paraphrasing and synonyms when reading.

Pre Assessment –

Answer the following Questions.

- What is paraphrasing?

.....  
 .....

- What are synonyms?

.....  
 .....

- How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?

.....  
 .....

Post Assessment –

Answer the following Questions.

1. What is paraphrasing?

.....  
 .....

2. What are synonyms?

.....  
 .....

3. How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?

.....  
 .....

## Appendix 3

Name:

<b>R A P</b>		<p><b>Paraphrase-</b></p> <p>to reword something using other words, e.g. He <b>held</b> a <b>little</b> <b>rose</b> in his <b>hand</b>' or 'The boy <b>gripped</b> a <b>small</b> <b>flower</b> in his <b>fist</b></p>	<p><b>Synonym –</b></p> <p>a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word e.g. 'tear' and 'rip'.</p>
<b>R</b>	<b>Read</b>		
<b>A</b>	<b>Ask Questions</b>		
<b>P</b>	<b>Put into your own words</b>		

## Appendix 4

Synonym Matching Game

<b>home</b>	<b>noisy</b>
<b>frightened</b>	<b>small</b>
<b>laugh</b>	<b>start</b>
<b>begin</b>	<b>house</b>
<b>trap</b>	<b>giggle</b>
<b>little</b>	<b>scared</b>
<b>loud</b>	<b>warm</b>
<b>hot</b>	<b>catch</b>

## Appendix 5

Synonym Matching game 2.

<b>angry</b>	<b>friend</b>
<b>trip</b>	<b>mad</b>
<b>pal</b>	<b>voyage</b>
<b>sugary</b>	<b>rock</b>
<b>stone</b>	<b>stole</b>
<b>toss</b>	<b>sweet</b>
<b>took</b>	<b>throw</b>
<b>enjoy</b>	<b>like</b>
<b>flame</b>	<b>fast</b>
<b>quick</b>	<b>fire</b>

## Appendix 6

Name:

# **SYNONYMS**

are words with the same meaning.

<b>Words from a thesaurus</b>	Think of as many as you can, remember to keep the same meaning.

