

**Explicit teaching in vocabulary development using synonyms,  
to year two students, increases comprehension and  
reading accuracy at the whole text level.**

**Abstract**

Research has shown that there is a close correlation between reading comprehension and vocabulary development. This study examined the effects of explicitly teaching vocabulary building strategies, focusing on synonyms, to four year two students who had difficulty with reading accuracy and comprehension, when reading texts at and below their year level. The four intervention students were taught, in a withdrawal group, over 10 sessions, to *'use what they knew and make pictures in their heads and then think of synonyms to substitute for the unknown words'*. Four similar students were used as a control group and were not taught the strategy.

Every member of the intervention group improved their ability to generate synonyms significantly, where as the control group did not show any improvement. There was however, very little difference in both group's results in reading accuracy and comprehension improvement.

The study suggests that teaching students to use synonyms to help them develop their reading accuracy and comprehension needs more time and additional opportunities throughout the day, in order to show improvement in reading accuracy and comprehension. The strategy would probably benefit students, if it was used as a part of regular classroom practice.

## Introduction

Every year we find a number of year two students, some having completed Reading Recovery successfully, and other students who have learned to read and become competent readers by the end of year one, but then tend to plateau at about Reading Recovery Level 15-16. Often they seem to have difficulty in being able to move on to more complex texts. They can be quite competent at decoding, but struggle with comprehension when they are faced with too many unknown words, possibly because of their limited vocabularies.

Rupley and Nichols (2005) believe that children's ability to learn vocabulary is crucial for improving comprehension and reading development. They state that "Struggling readers often lack the experiences associated with texts encountered in schools" (p.242). They go further to discuss the strong link vocabulary makes between decoding and comprehension. Joshi (2005) sites Clark (1993) pointing out that children generally acquire 10 new words a day from the age of two and by the time they are six they have an average vocabulary of 14,000 words, but this unfortunately does not pertain to all children. Much research has shown that students who begin school with strong vocabularies become better readers and those with weaker vocabularies have difficulty learning to read competently. "Students' level of vocabulary knowledge has been shown to be an important predictor of reading ability and reading comprehension" (Hickman, et al. 2004 p. 721). Blachowicz (2004) tells us that preschool children have great discrepancies in the size and content of their vocabularies. She believes this is dependent on their experiences and not their lack of intelligence, and so, can be remedied in classrooms with high literacy learning and good vocabulary instruction.

When texts are assessed for their readability, they are generally tested on vocabulary complexity according to Joshi (2005). He also discusses the 'Matthew Effect', which refers to a verse in the book of Matthew in the Bible that states that, 'the rich get richer and the poor get poorer'. It is used as an analogy of how children that are good at reading, read widely and build large vocabularies, while those that struggle with reading, read less and increase

their vocabularies more slowly. Most would agree that vocabulary is developed through wide reading but Richek (2005) observed that it must also be taught.

Hickman, et al. (2004) suggest that when teaching vocabulary we need to focus on words of high utility that can be used in multiple contexts. It is very important that we also link the new words we are teaching with words, experiences and concepts that are already known to the students, and they also suggest a thematic approach when selecting texts to extend and develop vocabulary, which will strengthen connections and develop meaningful concepts. Rupley and Nichols (2005) argue that we must go further than definitional knowledge, but particularly develop contextual knowledge. If words are more meaningful, they are more easily learned and retained, than if they are just memorized. If we know a word beyond its definition, we are more able to use it in different situations and integrate it with what we already know. Nichols and Rupley (2004) tell us that we must provide many different teaching strategies and opportunities to allow children to internalize new words. Teachers should use visual aids, kinesthetic associations and teach students to make visual pictures. Among the many recent strategies that were promoted in the research (Aldridge, 2005; Davis, 1990; Farris, et al. 2004; Hickman, et al. 2004; Joshi, 2005; Laframboise, 2000; Nichols, et al. 2004; Richek, 2005) all suggested that children don't just need to learn new words but they need to have many opportunities to use the new words they have learned.

My personal observations on most of these students, suggest that the difficulties they are encountering could well be due to lack of experiences, below average interaction with oral language and depth and time spent reading, which would account for their lack of vocabulary knowledge. As they read more complex texts, they encounter more and more unknown words and comprehension and accuracy becomes more difficult. The teaching of vocabulary development skills will help these students to learn strategies to use, when they encounter new and unknown words within a text, and then be able to make sense of it. If the students learn to understand and enjoy more of what they are reading, it should cause them to read more, use these skills more, develop their meaning making motors and increase their vocabularies.

## **Present Study**

This present investigation aims to enhance earlier research by examining the influence of teaching explicit vocabulary knowledge by 1) learning to use synonyms and 2) reading for comprehension and accuracy. Vocabulary will be taught within the context of full text factual and fictional reading material. The students participating in this study will be younger in contrast to those students taking part in the previous research and because of this, the lessons will be structured differently to meet the ability level.

**Prediction:** Explicit teaching in vocabulary development using synonyms increases comprehension and reading accuracy at the whole text level by year two students.

## **Method**

**Design:** The study uses a case study OXO design in which the gain in comprehension and accuracy, following the explicit teaching of using synonyms in context to develop vocabulary, when reading factual and fictional texts, is monitored throughout the ten lessons.

**Participants:** Eight year two students were selected for this study from three different year one/two classrooms. They had all become competent readers by the end of year one, but then in year two did not seem to continue to show progress. Four were to receive the intervention, while the other four were to act as the control group. The control group allowed for comparison to indicate if the intervention led to improvement in learning behaviour.

Name	Age	Text Level	Prior interventions	Record of Oral Language score (During Prep)	Home Language	Gender
Intervention Student A	7.7	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group instruction</li> <li>• Grr-read</li> </ul>	21	English & Italian	Male
Intervention Student B	8.5	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Recovery</li> <li>• Small group instruction</li> <li>• Speech Assessment</li> </ul>	19	English	Male
Intervention Student C	8.0	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Recovery</li> <li>• Small group instruction</li> </ul>	24	English	Male
Intervention Student D	7.6	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Recovery</li> <li>• Small group instruction</li> <li>• Grr-read</li> <li>• Speech Assessment</li> </ul>	6	Portuguese & English	Female
Control Student E	7.10	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Recovery</li> <li>• Small group instruction</li> </ul>	9	Arabic	Female
Control Student F	7.11	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group instruction</li> </ul>	26	English	Female
Student G	7.1	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group instruction</li> <li>• Grr-read</li> </ul>	15	English	Female
Control Student H	7.9	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group instruction</li> <li>• Grr-read</li> </ul>	24	English & Italian	Male

**Materials:** Materials used include the following

- **Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 1999)** was used to find the reading age of both reading accuracy and reading comprehension.
- **Synonym Task (Munro, 2005)** was used to test student's ability to generate synonyms.
- **Prepared sentences on chart paper adapted from *My First Australian Thesaurus*** to be used for shared reading activities for the first 2 lessons
- **4 Big Books** to be used for shared reading during lessons 3 to 6.
- **2 sets of guided reading texts** to be used for guided reading during the last 4 lessons
- **Chart paper, textas and pencils**
- **Individual exercise books** for students to do their written activity in.
- **A teacher journal** to keep anecdotal information for each of the 10 lessons
- **Flashcards** to record the new words from each session so they can be reviewed in the following sessions.

**Procedure:**

All eight participants were given the pre and post tests individually. The pre and post tests included the Neale Analysis (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1999) forms 1 and 2 to acquire age equivalents with particular attention to the accuracy and comprehension elements, and the Synonym Task (Munro, 2005) to measure the student's ability to generate synonyms. The four intervention students were withdrawn from their classrooms during the morning literacy block for 35-45 minutes for 3 days each week. The ten teaching sessions were conducted in a cloak room between two of the year one/two classrooms. During the first six sessions the teacher and students participated in shared reading sessions with lists of sentences and big books. Possible unknown vocabulary was selected by the teacher from the reading material prior to the lessons. The new words, with their synonyms, were listed on a synonym chart.

After reading the texts, the students were drawn back to the sentences where the new vocabulary was sighted. The children were taught to use what they knew from the other words in the sentence to make a mental picture (visualize) and try to think of another word/s (synonym/s) for the unknown word that would help them understand the sentence. Each student was asked to share their synonyms and understandings and then the synonyms were added to the chart. When all words had been dealt with, they went back and reviewed the day's new words. Students then chose one new word from the chart and wrote it with its synonyms, as a simple concept map, and then with the help of the whole group composed a new sentence, writing it in their exercise book with a quick illustration. At the culmination of the lesson, each student shared their work with the group and verbalized the strategy they had learned to help them understand their reading. A similar pattern was followed during the last four lessons, but the children were given individual copies of the same text. The teacher used the synonym chart in the same way, but the students read individually, with the teacher taking turns to listen to each student read and noting their reading accuracy, comprehension and how they were using the synonym strategy. The same type of vocabulary discussion followed, including the addition of new synonyms to the vocabulary chart.

## Results

The results are shown here in two parts, first the group's overall results and then the individual results including teaching session observations.

Although it was only accuracy and comprehension that this study was interested in, all eight students were assessed on their reading accuracy, their comprehension and their reading rate. The rate did however give some indication of how the students approached their reading. The pre test results showed that the majority of students were a year or more below in their comprehension and reading accuracy levels. In the post test it showed that most of the intervention students only made slight gains, if any, in both accuracy and comprehension. This was not unlike the control group's results, where one participant made slight gains in accuracy and comprehension, two made gains in accuracy but not comprehension, and the fourth student declined in both accuracy and comprehension. These results indicate that explicit teaching of vocabulary development strategies using synonyms, over a short period of time, does not increase student's reading accuracy or comprehension.

### Neale Analysis (1999)

Name	Pre test 20/4/06				Post test 16/5/06			
	Age	Accuracy	Compre- hension	Rate	Age	Accuracy	Compre- hension	Rate
Intervention Student A	7.7	6.7	6.0	6.9	7.7	6.9	6.6	7.1
Intervention Student B	8.5	6.4	6.5	6.9	8.5	6.6	6.4	10.7
Intervention Student C	8.0	6.7	6.7	6.6	8.1	6.8	6.8	7.1
Intervention Student D	7.6	6.10	6.9	6.7	7.6	6.9	6.4	7.2
Control Student E	7.10	6.8	6.5	8.2	7.11	6.10	6.8	8.1
Control Student F	7.11	6.9	6.11	8.5	8.0	6.11	6.8	8.5
Control Student G	7.1	6.4	6.7	7.10	7.2	7.0	6.10.	6.9
Control Student H	7.9	7.6	8.3	7.10	7.10	7.3	7.0	8.7

Table 1 –Pre and post test results of reading age equivalent participating students

The pre and post test results of the Synonym Task show the student’s ability to generate synonyms. In the pre test the eight participating students all had difficulty thinking of synonyms when given a word. They often gave different forms of the words, rhyming words or words with the same beginning sounds. Table 2a indicates that all of the intervention students made significant gains in their ability to produce synonyms, while table 2b shows that the control group declined slightly or made very little improvement in their ability to produce synonyms. These results indicate that explicit teaching of vocabulary development strategies, using synonyms, over a short period of time, does increase the student’s ability to generate synonyms.

### Synonym Task – Intervention Students

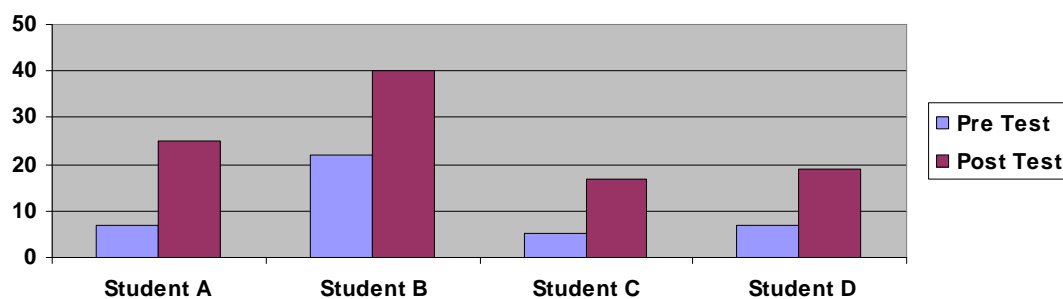


Table 2a – Pre and post test results of ability to generate synonyms (intervention group)

### Synonym Task –Control Students

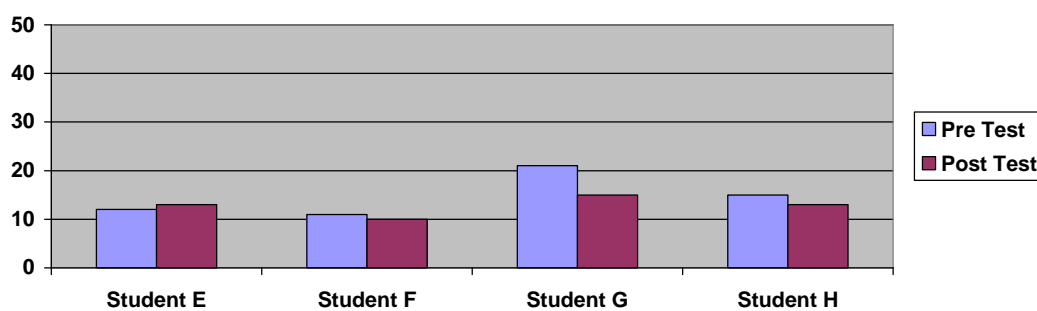


Table 2b – Pre and post test results of ability to generate synonyms (control group)

### Student A

Student A was the only intervention student to achieve gains in all areas. In the pre test he had the lowest score for comprehension and the second lowest score for the Synonym Task. He gained 2 months in reading accuracy, 6 months in comprehension and he more than doubled his ability to produce synonyms.



This student worked inconsistently through the teaching sessions. Some days he participated with lots of interest, but on other days he was quite lethargic and seemed to be uninterested. He often was very careless with his written work, copying words from the charts incorrectly, writing illegibly and had to be directed to do things appropriately. On most days, when asked to recall synonyms, he would look for the charts for an answer, rather than rely on his own memory. He showed more confidence when suggesting synonyms in group work, than in the individual work.

The results of Student A's post tests indicate that the explicit teaching of vocabulary development strategies using synonyms did increase, to some extent, the student's ability to read accurately, comprehend and generate synonyms.

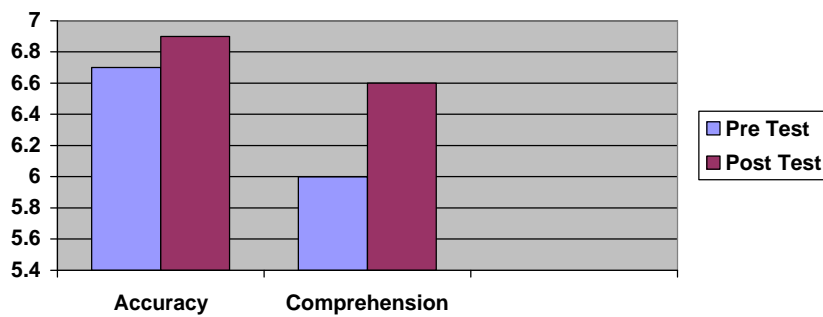


Table 3a – Student A -pre and post test results of reading accuracy and comprehension in age

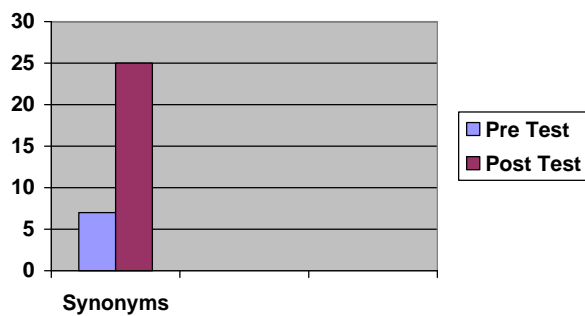


Table 3b – Student A -pre and post test results of ability to generate synonyms

## Student B

Student B had one of the lowest scores for reading accuracy in the pre test but he did gain 2 months in the post test. In both pre and post tests he read very poorly, using distinctive visual features of words only, with no monitoring for meaning or structure. In the post test he was the only student that made too many errors in the second story, to be counted in the scoring. His comprehension rate showed him to be 2 years below his actual age, and in the post test his comprehension actually regressed 1 month. This is probably due to his lack of reading accuracy.

This student was however, a real catalyst in the group for coming up with synonyms and having an understanding of words. He showed a good general knowledge of the world and was able to make links from his present knowledge, to new vocabulary. When reading with the group in shared reading, he demonstrated good understanding of the stories and factual information being read. His biggest problem was in using letter/sound analysis to read and write unknown words and in composing and structuring sentences for the writing task. He had the highest score in the pre test of the Synonym Task and was able to almost double it in the post test.

The results of Student B's post tests indicate that the explicit teaching of vocabulary development strategies using synonyms, did slightly increase the student's ability to read accurately, but did not help him with his comprehension. It did however, increase his ability to generate synonyms.

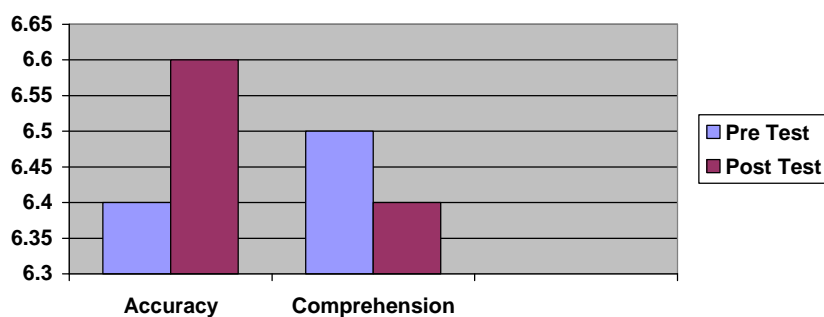


Table 4a – Student B -pre and post test results of reading accuracy and comprehension in age

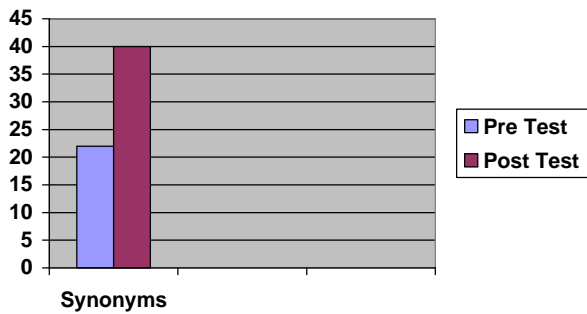


Table 4b – Student B -pre and post test results of ability to generate synonyms

### Student C

Student C had the lowest score on the Synonym Task in the pre test but was able to more than triple his score in the post test, but it is still the lowest score among the intervention students. He gained a month in both accuracy of reading and comprehension.

During most of the teaching sessions he was able to come up with synonyms and could remember synonyms from previous lessons, although he sometimes needed to be encouraged to do so. He was able to compose and write interesting sentences quite independently. On some days however, he could be quite despondent and did not contribute much to the group. He was good at remembering the strategy and was able to verbalize it early on in the lessons.

The results of Student C's post tests indicate that the explicit teaching of vocabulary development strategies using synonyms, did slightly increase the student's ability to read accurately and comprehend what he was reading and his ability to generate synonyms was improved considerably.

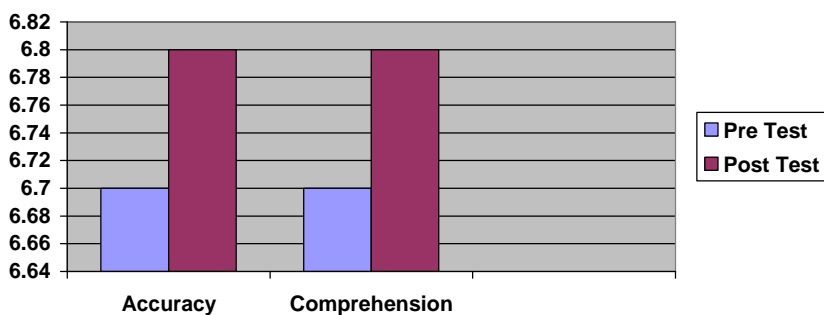


Table 5a – Student C -pre and post test results of reading accuracy and comprehension in age

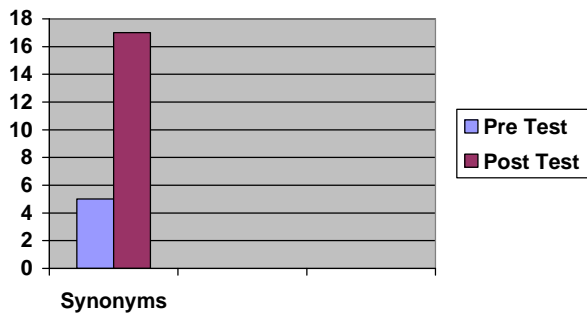


Table 5b – Student C -pre and post test results of ability to generate synonyms

### Student D

Student D had the highest reading accuracy and comprehension scores of the intervention students in the pre tests, however, both post test scores have shown regression. She lost 1 month in reading accuracy and 5 months in comprehension. Her capacity to generate synonyms has increased by 10 words, which has almost tripled her previous ability.

Although Student D was very eager to come to the group each day, she was easily distracted and at times became disengaged from the activity. She sometimes became confused with the pronunciation of a word and its meaning, such as 'error' and 'arrow', and then would mix up the meaning of the new word. She improved in her ability to remember new words as the sessions progressed but she often needed lots of support when putting her word into a new sentence. Once that was settled she quickly completed her task.

The results of Student D's post tests indicate that explicit teaching of vocabulary development strategies using synonyms, did not increase her reading accuracy or her comprehension, but it did enhance her ability to generate synonyms.

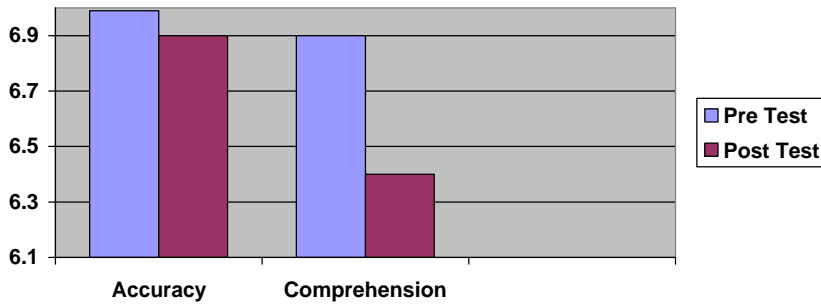


Table 6a – Student B -pre and post test results of reading accuracy and comprehension in age

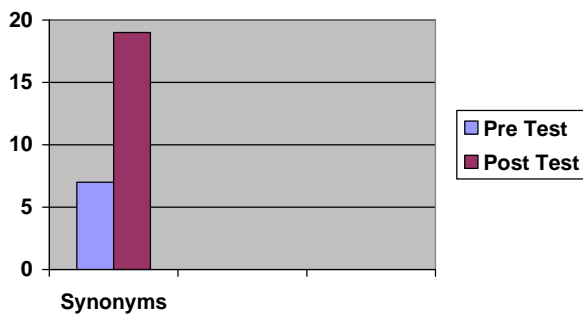


Table 6b – Student B -pre and post test results of ability to generate synonyms

## Discussion

The goal of this study was to decide whether the teaching of vocabulary building strategies, focusing on synonyms would improve student's reading accuracy and comprehension. Comparisons were made with each student in the intervention group, as well as comparing them to a control group, with similar abilities and difficulties. This research does not support the prediction for most of the students, as the gains and deficits in reading accuracy and comprehension were similar in both the intervention group and the control group.

The positives and the negatives in the scores could be due to the student's previous knowledge and interest in the stories read, the intervention group missing out on class work when working in the withdrawal group, the differences in Form 1 and Form 2 of the test, or just on the demeanor of the students on the day. It does not show any significant improvements in reading accuracy or comprehension. I believe this is probably because of the length of the intervention study. As stated earlier, Nichols and Rupely (2004) tell us

that we must provide many different strategies and opportunities to allow students to internalize vocabulary and Hickman et al. (2004) suggested that working thematically gives more opportunities for new words to be used and internalized in context. 'Because words are learned gradually, only practice can ensure that students acquire enough knowledge to use them comfortably in reading, writing, speaking and listening' (Richek, 2005 p. 419) and practice takes time. Blachowicz (2004) discussed one study of vocabulary learning where it was discovered that the students in one class learned more vocabulary than the other classes and the success was attributed to a 'word wall' in the classroom where the students had a contest to find new words throughout the day. They won points by writing the word on the wall and in being able to tell where they heard or saw the word and then by being able to use the word. I can see where our synonym chart could be adapted to a similar activity and used as part of a vocabulary development program in a classroom. I do believe good vocabulary teaching needs to take place in many ways throughout the day and not just in a withdrawal group situation.

The students did make significant gains in their ability to generate synonyms and some of the parents of the intervention students noticed and reported to me, that their children were showing an interest in using new vocabulary. This shows that their meaning making motors were working and given more time and opportunities, I believe it would start to show up in their reading comprehension.

Some of the students, particularly Student B, showed difficulty in their ability to use phonetic skills, so this made it very difficult for them to gain understanding from their reading, as they were sometimes finding it difficult to decode words easily and correctly. Along with vocabulary development strategies, most of these students also need to be taught intensive phonetic strategies such as chunking, syllabication and even onset and rime, so that they will be able to decode a word more quickly and accurately, and then be able to visualize it and think of synonyms which will lead to better comprehension.

It was interesting to see how well Student B generated synonyms and showed understanding of what we read. In discussions with him, his mother and his

teacher, I discovered that his mother reads to him regularly. He does not see himself as an able reader and is reluctant to try anything he thinks is too hard, but his mother is reading novels such as *Harry Potter* and the *Narnia* series to him, which he loves and can engage in interesting conversations about. In the withdrawal lessons he would often recall vocabulary information from his own books that he was interested in, such as the link he made from the word 'ancient' to his interest in Egyptology. Is it as explained by Joshi (2005), the 'Matthew Effect', the more Student B is read to, the more vocabulary he learns and the more he is able to generate? I believe that is a good explanation of his abilities.

Vocabulary acquisition is closely related to oral language development and it is interesting to note that many of these students in the study did not have very high scores in their Record of Oral Language at school entry and this is discussed by Hickman et al. (2004) and Rupley and Nichols (2005), where they make the point that children beginning school with low vocabularies have difficulty in developing their reading skills. Student B and D have both been assessed with speech and language problems and it was noted in the teaching sessions that both of these students struggled with composing and constructing new sentences. Student D in fact has been diagnosed with receptive language difficulties and that might account for her vocabulary confusions and her need for extra support.

### **Implications**

This study suggests that the teaching strategy of 'using what I know and making a picture in my head and then thinking of synonyms to substitute for the unknown word' helped the students learn to generate synonyms but additional time and a variety of approaches is needed to have an effect on the reading accuracy and comprehension of year two students, who are struggling to advance their level of reading. Giving the students many opportunities to use and find new vocabulary throughout the day, over a significant time period, may have more of an impact. The strategy could be very useful included in daily shared reading, reading to, and individual reading lessons with all students, and then using the new words in learning centres and other activities throughout the day. Using it as part of a thematic unit could help to reuse and recycle new vocabulary as well.

Perhaps even as a withdrawal group approach, it would have more influence with students that had better decoding skills, where they could concentrate more on the meaning of the words. There certainly are implications for using vocabulary development strategies in the classroom regularly to help develop reading accuracy and comprehension.

### **Future Research**

Future research could be conducted over a longer period of lessons to see if it made any further impact. It could also be included in normal classroom lessons and results could be measured to see what influence it made with different groups of children. It would be interesting to see the results with students that had a higher level of decoding skills but still needed to develop their comprehension abilities. A variety of strategies could be implemented in different groups or classrooms to identify the best approaches to use to help all students learn and apply new words.



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## Appendix 1: Teaching Unit

In each session the students were given a list of new words (probably unknown) that they would find in their reading for that day. They were taught a strategy of using what they knew to visualize and then to find possible synonyms so that they could comprehend their reading better. The first sessions began with lots of scaffolding, but as the students became more familiar and proficient with the technique, support was slowly withdrawn, with the students taking more and more control of the strategy. Every session began with revision of vocabulary from the previous lesson and each lesson culminated with time to share new vocabulary and verbalize the new strategy. The students had an opportunity to read and share information orally as well as an opportunity to use writing to help to internalize their learning.

Activity –Lesson 1	Task Description	Time
Introduce and clarify terms	Students will learn why they are there and what we are going to be doing. Explain what a synonym is.	3-5 min.
Text Reading (Shared Reading)	Introduce the five sentences for the lesson, one at a time, read together and identify the unknown word in each.	5 min.
Use context and synonyms to gain understanding.	Together we read each sentence and try to visualize it using what we know and then brainstorming synonyms for the unknown word. These synonyms are then added to the synonym chart as we substitute them for the unknown word in each sentence. Each time we decide as a group if the sentence then makes sense.	10 min.
Reread target words	Go through each new word on the chart for the day and have students give definitions using the synonyms	3-5 min.
Writing target words	Each student chooses a different new word from the chart and writes it in their exercise book making a simple mind map with the synonyms on one side of the double page and writing an original sentence on the other side of the double page with a quick illustration.	10 min.
Reflect	Each student shares their new word, sentence and illustration with the group. They also verbalize the strategy they have learned to help them comprehend their reading. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use what I know and make a picture in my head.</li> <li>2. Think of synonyms to substitute for the unknown word.</li> </ol>	3-5 min.

<b>Lesson 2</b>		
Revise	Review last session's words from flashcards. Read and define.	3-5 min.
Text Reading (Shared Reading)	As lesson 1 with second set of sentences	5 min.
As for lesson 1		25-30 min.
<b>Lesson 3-6</b>		
Revise	Review a selection of new words on flash cards (play game)	3-5 min.
Book Introduction	Using a big book explain this book is about ... Short discussion of what we might know about topic / book. Introduce some new words they will come across in the book. The words will already be listed on the synonym chart.	3-5 min.
Text Reading (Shared Reading)	Read big book together	5-10 min.
Use context and synonyms to gain understanding.	Go back to the pages where we saw the targeted words and guide students to: 1. Use what I know and make a picture in my head. 2. Think of synonyms to substitute for the unknown word. Each student shares the synonyms that they think of and they are added to the synonym chart as we substitute them for the unknown word in each sentence and we decide as a group if the sentence then makes sense.	10 min.
As for lessons 1-2		10-15 min.
<b>Lesson 7 and 9</b>		
Revise	Review a selection of new words on flash cards –play a game.	5-8 min.
Book Introduction	Using individual copies of the same text, explain this book is about ... Short discussion of what we might know about topic / book. Introduce some new words they will come across in the book. The words will already be listed on the synonym chart.	3-5 min.
Text Reading (Guided Reading)	Each student reads independently with the teacher taking turns to listen to each student read, making notes and taking a short running record to see how the student is using the new	10 -15 min.

	strategy for working out unknown words and comprehending what they are reading.	
Use context and synonyms to gain understanding.	Go back to the pages where we saw the targeted words and guide students to: 3. Use what I know and make a picture in my head. 4. Think of synonyms to substitute for the unknown word. Each student shares the synonyms that they think of and they are added to the synonym chart as we substitute them for the unknown word in each sentence and we decide as a group if the sentence then makes sense.	15 min.
Reread target words	Go through each new word on the chart for the day and have students give definitions using the synonyms	3-5 min.
<b>Lesson 8 and 10</b>		
Revise	Review a selection of new words on flash cards –play a game.	5-8 min.
Book review -Choral reading	Reread the new book together.	10 min.
Writing target words	As for lessons 1-6	10 min.
Reflect	As for lessons 1-6	3-5 min.

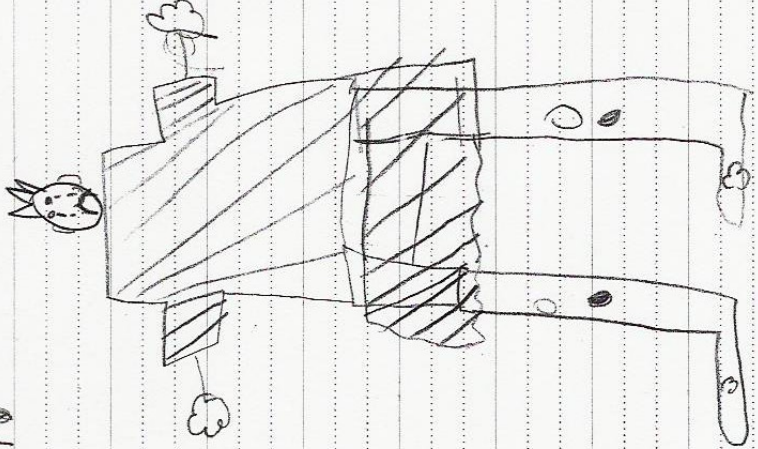
## Appendix 2: First and second session sentences

1. The dog barked and it **startled** me.
2. We put flowers in the **dull** room so it would look brighter.
3. We wore our gloves because it was a **chilly** day.
4. Undo the **latch** on the gate so we can get in.
5. She was **upset** because she lost her special necklace.
6. **Stow** this in a safe place for me.

1. The tin had a **jagged** edge.
2. Have a **nibble** of this delicious pie.
3. It is **foolish** to go out in the rain without an umbrella.
4. The little plants began to **appear** above the ground.
5. You need a strong car to **haul** a caravan.
6. I made an **error** in my work but I'll fix it.

Appendix 3: Sample of student written work

I hurt my brother  
because I bruised  
him.




hurt

harm

danger

damage

bad



## Appendix 4:

## Sample of Synonym Charts

<b>Word</b>	<b>Synonyms</b>
startled	frightened scared spooked
dull	dirty dark not bright
chilly	cold freezing winter snowy
upset	sad crying grumpy cross
latch	lock handle
jagged	sharp wiggly prickles dangerous
nibble	little bite crunch munch taste
foolish	silly stupid wrong dumb
appear	coming up grow raise shoot up rise
haul	pull take drag
error	mistake wrong decision booboo
harm	hurt damage danger bad things
creepers	vine snake like roots plaited plants
ancient	old aged
hollow	empty nothing not full
grasslands	garden park paddock field ground
herd	group gang bunch
ridged	hard strong tough
bellow	yell noise scream sound
searches	looks tries to find
clutching	holding grabbing pulling together clips
wandered	walking looking moved traveled

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