

## **Explicitly teaching a group of “at risk” Year 5/6 students to paraphrase, will improve their overall comprehension of non fiction texts.**

### **Abstract**

Many students in the upper primary experience difficulty with reading comprehension. Once these students reach secondary level, they have to contend with processing information in a number of content areas, in order to learn, which perpetuates this problem.

The present investigation examines the effectiveness of explicitly teaching paraphrasing to a group of “at risk” year 5/6 students, to improve comprehension.

A group of eight students were selected from two separate 5/6 classes. These students were chosen based on the results of previous comprehension testing that was implemented at the beginning of the school year. All students had comprehension task scores less than 51% and were recognised as being “at risk”.

This intervention group were pre-tested to assess comprehension, vocabulary and paraphrasing knowledge. These students were then explicitly instructed for 8 lessons on the strategy of paraphrasing. On-going between-sessions monitoring and anecdotal observations were recorded throughout this process. All students were then re-tested using the same tasks and each individual’s pre and post test results were compared.

The results of this study indicate support for the hypothesis, as comprehension paraphrasing and synonym test scores all indicated improvement for these students. The study concludes that explicitly teaching the paraphrasing strategy is an effective tool for students “at risk” and can improve the students’ overall comprehension. The results also reinforce the need for explicit teaching of reading comprehension to be implemented throughout the whole school.

## Introduction

“Comprehension in reading means understanding what is read” (Parker et al; 2002).

Reading comprehension is an active process and many students in the late primary level are capable decoders but experience difficulties with comprehension of texts. Consequently they are unable to demonstrate their understanding of such. As Munro (2003) notes in the *International Journal of Learning*, this puts children who are living in the twenty first century at a severe disadvantage. As students reach the late primary/early secondary years this problem is exacerbated, as they are required to glean meaning from large sections of expository text in many content learning areas.

An able student, who comprehends a text, can draw inferences from the text as well as comprehending it literally. If a student is unable to understand what they are reading, how can they engage and make meaningful connections with the text as well as experiencing success in the various KLA's? Parker, Hasbrouk and Denton (2002), when investigating how to tutor students with reading comprehension problems, listed reasons why students demonstrate poor comprehension. These include; failure to understand key words and key sentences and how these relate to one another and failure to understand how the information is organized and fits together in a meaningful way. Teachers then, need to address this issue if they are to improve students overall comprehension when reading.

Many researchers believe that by teaching students specific learning strategies, the students are learning *how to learn* and can then “construct a representation of incoming information” (Katims et al; 1997). That is, the student employs particular strategies to convert information into knowledge. This approach focuses not only on the cognitive processes of the student, but also the behavioural, (what the pupil actually does).

Indeed the self-talk that occurs before, during and after these sessions, is an essential step in learning how to learn. Munro (2003) writes of the importance of students becoming proficient in using cognitive dialogues and learning to use reading comprehension strategies “initially when directed, and then independently and spontaneously as the need arose”. As does Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2007) when discussing student independence during instruction, “by nurturing meaningful talk about reading and learning you can monitor and support student’s metacognitive use of strategies”. This then allows the teacher to reduce the scaffolding as students become more proficient at learning.

Such specific learning strategies have been designed to help develop processing procedures “to promote a students active and thoughtful engagement with text material” (Loxterman, Beck & McKeown, 1994, cited in Katims et al; 1997). One of these explicit learning strategies is the “RAP” paraphrasing method (Schumaker, Denton, & Deshler, (1984, cited in Hagaman et al; 2008), whereby students

- (1) **R**ead a paragraph
- (2) **A**sk themselves questions about the main ideas and details within that paragraph
- (3) **P**ut the main ideas and details into their own words.

This strategy is based on the idea that by paraphrasing, the students will remember the main ideas and details within a text, with far more accuracy. Alternatively, Hagaman and Reid (2008), used the mnemonic ARP to teach students how to paraphrase, paired with another model which used a six step process of strategy instruction. They found that the reading comprehension of struggling readers improved in expository text recall.

Katims and Harris (1997) found that the students who were taught the RAP method outperformed their peers in reading comprehension, when pre-test and post-test scores were adjusted for potential differences. In their study they investigated the effects of teaching the paraphrasing strategy, with and without learning disabilities. It was found that this was an effective method for the students because it helped them to remember and apply the three main steps in the procedure. This supports the validation for using the acronym within the classroom to improve all students' comprehension.

Similarly, Munro (2003) found that by using seven literacy teaching procedures, students' comprehension at secondary level improved, with the greatest gains being shown by the less able readers. He argues that systematic, explicit and consistent literacy teaching is needed in all subject content areas. Fisk and Hurst (2003), support this finding by noting that "when students are taught a technique for how to paraphrase text, paraphrasing can strengthen comprehension of both fiction and non-fiction". They claim that paraphrasing works so well, because it integrates all modes of communication that is, reading, writing, listening and speaking.

It is important to note that although a paraphrase may contain a number of synonyms, it is not intended to be a word for word translation. Rather a good paraphrase will convey the meaning of the original text using the student's own vocabulary and phrasing. It is a genuine re-writing, concentrating on expressing main ideas and details in the student's own words. Fisk and Hurst (2003) believe that by making a connection to the text, the student will form a personal response to it and demonstrate a fuller understanding of the text.

This present study aims to extend earlier research by examining the effectiveness of explicitly teaching the RAP paraphrasing strategy to a small group of year 5/6 students with reading comprehension difficulties in order to improve their paraphrasing and overall comprehension skills. It is hoped that these students will be able to independently apply the specific learning strategies necessary for good comprehension and use the metacognitive skills they have been taught throughout this teaching unit.

### **Hypothesis:**

**Explicitly teaching a group of "at risk" Year 5/6 students to paraphrase, will improve their overall comprehension of non-fiction texts.**

### **Method:**

#### ***Design***

The current study is a naturalistic inquiry, designed to track a group of selected Year 5/6 students and their improvement in comprehension, following the explicit teaching of paraphrasing non-fiction texts.

Due to the teaching situation at the time of analysis, this study does not use a control group, but focuses on an intervention group of eight students in a withdrawal situation.

This intervention group were pre-tested. They were then taught eight sessions on paraphrasing and were then re-tested using the same assessment tools. These results were then compared individually and also within the intervention group.

### ***Participants***

Students were selected from two separate classes of Years 5/6 and attend a school in the western suburbs of Melbourne where there is a proportionately high number of ESL pupils.

All students were chosen based on previous testing results implemented throughout the school at the beginning of the school year. The results of the PROBE reading assessment was the main data used in selection whereby all students from year 3 to 6 complete both a non fiction and fiction passage. The school has carried out this practice for several years; therefore all students are familiar with this form of assessment.

The year 5 class had completed the PROBE fiction text “Kevin” and a non fiction passage entitled “Blue Whale”. The Year 6’s had been assessed on “The Parrot” (fiction) and the non fiction “Oil”. Students were chosen on the basis of their scores for this comprehension task. The students’ scores which fell into the lowest 13% were selected, with preference going to the oldest students first. All achieved less than 51% on comprehension tasks within the PROBE reading assessment, with most scoring significantly lower than their peers in the mainstream class.

Most of these pupils performed poorly in the inferentially based questions. The class teachers identified them as students who, although can decode whilst reading, still experience difficulties in completing most comprehension tasks within the mainstream classroom.

After consultations with both Year 5/6 teachers and the school literacy coordinator a group of three Year 5, and five Year 6 students were selected with three females and five males in the group. These participants will be referred to as “the group” or “the intervention group” throughout this study. It is interesting to note that over 50% of these pupils had completed the Reading Recovery program several years earlier.

Table 1 below shows relevant information pertaining to these intervention students, including their age and previous testing results (PROBE Reading Assessment).

Table 1 Participant details

<b>Student</b>	<b>Gender F=0 M=1</b>	<b>Year Level</b>	<b>Age in MONTHS</b>	<b>ESL No=0 Yes=1</b>	<b>Earlier Intervention No=0 Yes=1</b>	<b>LNSL Needs</b>	<b>PROBE RESULTS FICTION</b>	<b>PROBE RESULTS NON- FICTION</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	142.00	1	1		20%	50%
<b>B</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	126.00	0	0		30%	30%
<b>C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	137.00	0	1		50%	20%
<b>D</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	144.00	1	0		50%	20%
<b>E</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	120.00	1	0		50%	50%
<b>F</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	143.00	1	1		20%	30%
<b>G</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	130.00	0	1		30%	30%
<b>H</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	134.00	0	1	speech	20%	30%

### ***Materials***

The intervention group were assessed using the items listed, prior to, and following the series of teaching sessions.

(Note: As stated, PROBE Reading Assessment was not used as a testing tool during this research, but rather as a basis for selection, implemented during previous whole class testing).

### **Assessment Items:** (Pre and post testing)

- TORCH~ Tests of Reading Comprehension (Second Edition, 2003)  
Non-fiction texts: -Year 5 “Donna Dingo”  
-Year 6 “Matches”

Non fiction components of this task were chosen as the students were also investigating the concept of exploration in their mainstream classroom inquiry unit and non fiction texts were to be the focus. The only non fiction TORCH text appropriate for year 5 was “Donna Dingo” and the only choice for Year 6 being “Matches”.

- Paraphrasing Task (Munro 2005)

The task was administered to the intervention students as a group. As most of the pupils could decode, students were asked to read the text to themselves, then try to say it another way by changing as many words as they can, whilst still retaining the meaning of the passage. The group completed the practice examples before attempting the task.

- Synonym Task (Munro 2005)

The task was administered to the intervention students as a group once again. The first word was read out aloud and written on a whiteboard for all to transcribe onto their own student form. They were then asked to think of and write another word that says the same thing as the first. Students were encouraged to think up to three synonyms for each word (see “Procedure”).

**Texts:** Extracts of four different texts were used during the sessions and were chosen from collections of materials housed for teaching Years 3 and 4. When a Smog readability was performed on these texts it was found they were all at an appropriate level for this intervention group.

All were non fiction, which was aimed at providing students with some background information for their inquiry unit “Going Beyond” being conducted in the mainstream classroom. This unit of work examines exploration into mountain regions, deep sea and outer space and also looks at world explorers in history. At the same time, report writing on various animal topics was being taught in the class, so the two initial texts used were chosen for this reason.

- “Hide and Sneak” by Jo Tayler, (Comet Magazine, 2007)
- “Quirky Quokkas” by Jill McDougall (Explore Magazine, 2002)
- “Climbing Mount Everest” by Brigitte Muir , (National Geographic, 2004)
- ”Jesse’s Awesome Adventures” by Briar Jensen, (Explore Magazine, 2002)

### **Paraphrasing:**

Paraphrasing lesson format adapted from: “Paraphrasing Strategy”, ( Munro, 2006) and “Comprehension-Paraphrasing” Appendices, Literacy Intervention Strategies, Appendix 3b, (Munro 2008)

**Other materials:** Whiteboard, writing implements, student workbooks, teacher anecdotal records, RAP poster.

### ***Procedure***

The pre and post testing tasks on this study were group administered to all participants in the intervention group in a withdrawal setting in the following order:

1. Synonym Task
2. Paraphrasing task
3. TORCH Tests of Reading Comprehension

The synonym task was conducted during the pupils usual literacy block, with written answers. The students initially seemed unsure as to what a synonym was, but after discussing and attempting the practice examples, seemed confident enough to try. Students were encouraged to provide up to three synonyms for each word provided, rather than the prescribed five. This was due to the cohort of the intervention group comprising of a high number of ESL students with intervention needs and this made the task less overwhelming for them. The post test was conducted in the same fashion.

Each student received 2, 1 or 0 points per word according to the Synonym Task Scoring Criteria (Munro 2005), however with this modification, their raw score was marked out of 174 instead of 290 and then converted to a percentage (see Appendix 3 & 4).

The Paraphrasing Task was administered on the same day, during the same literacy block and again, the pupils seemed to be unsure of how to paraphrase, but the practice examples provided them with enough confidence to attempt it. This task was scored according to Paraphrasing Task Scoring Criteria (Munro, 2005) using Scoring system 1. As there were 16 items in the task, and 2 points could be scored for each item, each individual was marked out of 32. This was then converted to a percentage.

The TORCH Reading Comprehension Test (2003) was administered two days later during the children's literacy block once again. This was marked according to the TORCH guidelines with raw scores being allocated a standardised "TORCH Score", and with the appropriate error margin taken into account.

### ***Session Procedure***

During the following week the teaching sessions began. These were conducted four times a week in a withdrawal situation with the whole intervention group, lasting for a duration of approximately sixty minutes.

As stated, the sessions were based on Munro's "Paraphrasing Strategy,"(2006) that involved "working on one sentence at a time in terms of its literal meaning" (Munro 2004) and was adapted according to the students' particular needs. The first session followed the steps as set out in the "Introducing Paraphrasing" lesson with scaffolding for the students gradually being reduced as each lesson progressed and the pupils became more adept at the skills involved.

During the first session the students were introduced to the RAP acronym:

**Read the text**

**Ask yourself questions about the main ideas and details**

**Put these into your own words while still maintaining the meaning.**

The teacher modelled paraphrasing and cued the students to do the same. The teacher then reviewed what had done, giving appropriate feedback, and the pupils practiced this strategy in small groups by transferring this skill to another text after the teacher had modelled appropriately.

At the end of the first session and for each subsequent lesson, the group reviewed what they had done. This was either/both done orally or individually and on occasions, written as a reflection in their workbooks.

In the sessions that followed, the acronym was used to support the students in remembering the three steps. Teacher modelling was gradually reduced, as they moved from paraphrasing as a whole group into small groups, sentence by sentence; then to pairs of sentences in small groups; and finally paraphrasing whole paragraphs, firstly in small groups then individually.

Once the students had taken part in the initial lesson, most subsequent sessions consisted of a re-telling of the passage from the previous session, when pupils say what they remember about the text. Students then shared a re reading of this previous passage whereby the teacher cued the students to paraphrase each sentence as they read it. The new passage is then introduced. (If it was a new topic for the children, it was briefly introduced and the students used their prediction skills).

Students then read the new text together, discussing and identifying main ideas. From these the students listed key content words for the passage. They then suggested possible synonyms for these selected words together. The students' then re visited the RAP strategy and verbalised this, before attempting to paraphrase sentences aloud. Lastly the pupils would try to write their paraphrases and then share these.

In order to monitor progress of each student in the intervention group, they were required to complete a paraphrasing task independently, following sessions 2, 4 and 6. This consisted of paraphrasing one additional unseen paragraph taken from the current text the group was working on, so that the context was familiar to the children. This task was then scored according to the "Paraphrasing Task Scoring Criteria", (scoring system 1) and converted to a percentage (see fig3. in results)

## **Results**

The results for this current study support the hypothesis that explicit teaching of a paraphrasing strategy to a group of "at risk" students will improve their comprehension of non fiction texts.

The gains for the students in the intervention group indicate progress, particularly in the synonyms and paraphrasing assessment. Increases in the TORCH comprehension scores were smaller, with one student showing no gain at all.

Table 2 Pre and Post Test Results for all tasks.

Student	Age in MONTHS	Year Level	TORCH Raw PRE	TORCH Score PRE	Error Margin	TORCH Raw POST	TORCH Score POST	Error Margin
A	142	6	9	47.9	3.3	9	47.9	3.3
B	126	5	8	35.7	3.4	11	41	3.4
C	137	6	1	26.7	6.9	4	38.2	4.0
D	144	6	7	44.4	3.4	7	44.4	3.4
E	120	5	11	41	3.4	13	44.5	3.4
F	143	6	8	46.1	3.4	9	47.9	3.3
G	130	5	5	29.7	3.8	14	46.4	3.6
H	134	6	10	49.6	3.3	11	51.3	3.4
Student	Age in MONTHS	Paraph Raw PRE (32)	Paraph % PRE (32)	Paraph Raw POST (32)	Paraph % POST (32)	% Improve. Paraph		
A	142	11	34%	23	72%	38%		
B	126	9	28%	12	38%	9%		
C	137	18	56%	23	72%	16%		
D	144	18	56%	26	81%	25%		
E	120	25	78%	29	91%	13%		
F	143	14	44%	26	81%	38%		
G	130	20	63%	22	69%	6%		
H	134	18	56%	25	78%	22%		
Student	Age in MONTHS	Synonyms Raw PRE	Synonyms % PRE (174)	Synonyms Raw POST	Synonyms % POST (174)	% Improve. Synonyms		
A	142	28	16%	43	25%	9%		
B	126	24	14%	45	26%	12%		
C	137	26	15%	37	21%	6%		
D	144	52	30%	77	44%	14%		
E	120	48	28%	63	36%	9%		
F	143	33	19%	81	47%	28%		
G	130	40	23%	58	33%	10%		
H	134	46	26%	90	52%	25%		

*TORCH Comprehension Test*

Pre testing on the TORCH comprehension test indicate that the students completing the Year 5 task (i.e. Donna Dingo), were all on, or below the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile for their year level (refer to table 3). Post testing trends suggest that the same group improved, ranging from the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile to as high as the 51<sup>st</sup> percentile.

The Year 6 task (“Matches”), post testing trends also indicate a progression, with the groups pre testing percentile score ranging from 25 to 47 and the post testing figures showing an improved percentile rank of 25 to 54, (excepting the score of student C in both cases). While the growth in scoring is not prolific, it does indicate an improvement in comprehension of most students (refer to Table 3).

Table 3. TORCH Reading Comprehension Percentile Rankings

Student	Year Level	Age in MONTHS	Percentile Rank Pre	Percentile Rank Post
B	5	126	15	30
E	5	120	30	43
G	5	130	5	51
A	6	142	39	39
C	6	137	1	8
D	6	144	25	25
F	6	143	32	39
H	6	134	47	54

Percentile ranks = normed score

Most students found this task quite difficult, especially in the pre testing situation. Even during the post test, many pupils seemed unable to locate the main ideas of the text in order to answer the questions posed.

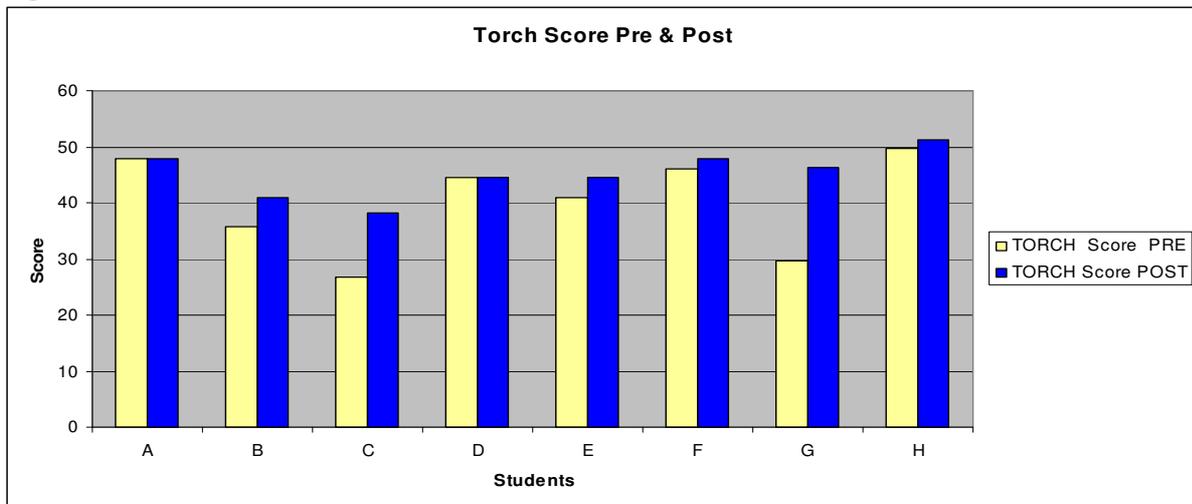
Student C’s pre testing on the TORCH comprehension task was extremely low compared to the group overall, scoring only one correct answer with a torch score of 26.7(see table 2). The post test result for this student was an improvement with a torch score of 38.2, which is only in the 8<sup>th</sup> percentile rank for year 6, but is still a small increase (refer to table 4).

It is interesting to note that it is only Student A’s score remained static for both the TORCH pre and post test, indicating no improvement in overall comprehension. If the error margin of +/- 3.3 is taken into account however, it could be concluded that there had been a slight increase or decrease in the score, but none of a significant nature (see table 2)

Student B also experienced reasonable improvement in scores for the Donna Dingo task, increasing from the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile rank for the pre test, to the 37<sup>th</sup> percentile for the post test for that year level (refer to table 3).

As can be seen in Fig.1 below, the results for the overall group are indicated, with small gains in scores immediately apparent.

Fig 1. . TORCH task Pre and Post Test Results.



### Synonym task

The synonym task (Munro 2005), showed a marked improvement by all students in the intervention group in the use of synonyms with the average increase in scores for the group at 14% (refer to table 4).

Table 4. Synonym Task Pre and Post Test Results

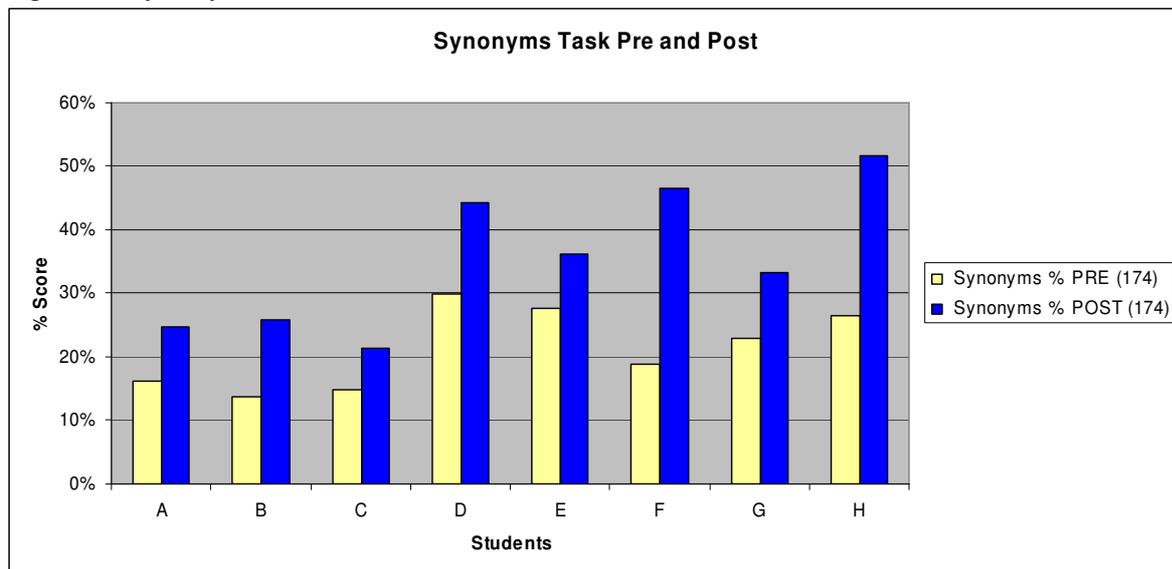
Student	Gender F=0 M=1	Year Level	Age in MONTHS	Synonyms Raw PRE	Synonyms % PRE (174)	Synonyms Raw POST	Synonyms % POST (174)	% Improve. Synonyms
A	1	6	142	28	16%	43	25%	9%
B	1	5	126	24	14%	45	26%	12%
C	0	6	137	26	15%	37	21%	6%
D	0	6	144	52	30%	77	44%	14%
E	1	5	120	48	28%	63	36%	9%
F	1	6	143	33	19%	81	47%	28%
G	0	5	130	40	23%	58	33%	10%
H	1	6	134	46	26%	90	52%	25%
<b>Average Percentages</b>					<b>21%</b>		<b>35%</b>	<b>14%</b>

Note: all raw scores are marked out of 174 rather than 290, then converted to a percentile.

All students made significant gains in post test attempts, completing the task in a quicker and more confident manner than when attempting the pre test.

The trends for the group as a whole, demonstrated a reasonably wide range of scores for this task, as can be seen below in fig. 2.

Figure 2. Synonyms task Pre and Post Test Results.



As indicated, the smallest gain was once again student C, beginning with a pre test score of 15% and increasing this by only 6%, to 21%.

Students A, E and G all demonstrated an increase of 9 and 10% improvement. However it should be noted that Student A's initial pre test score was only 16%, whereas both Students E and G had a higher pre test score for this task and hence a higher result for the post test, scoring 36% and 33% respectively (refer to table 4).

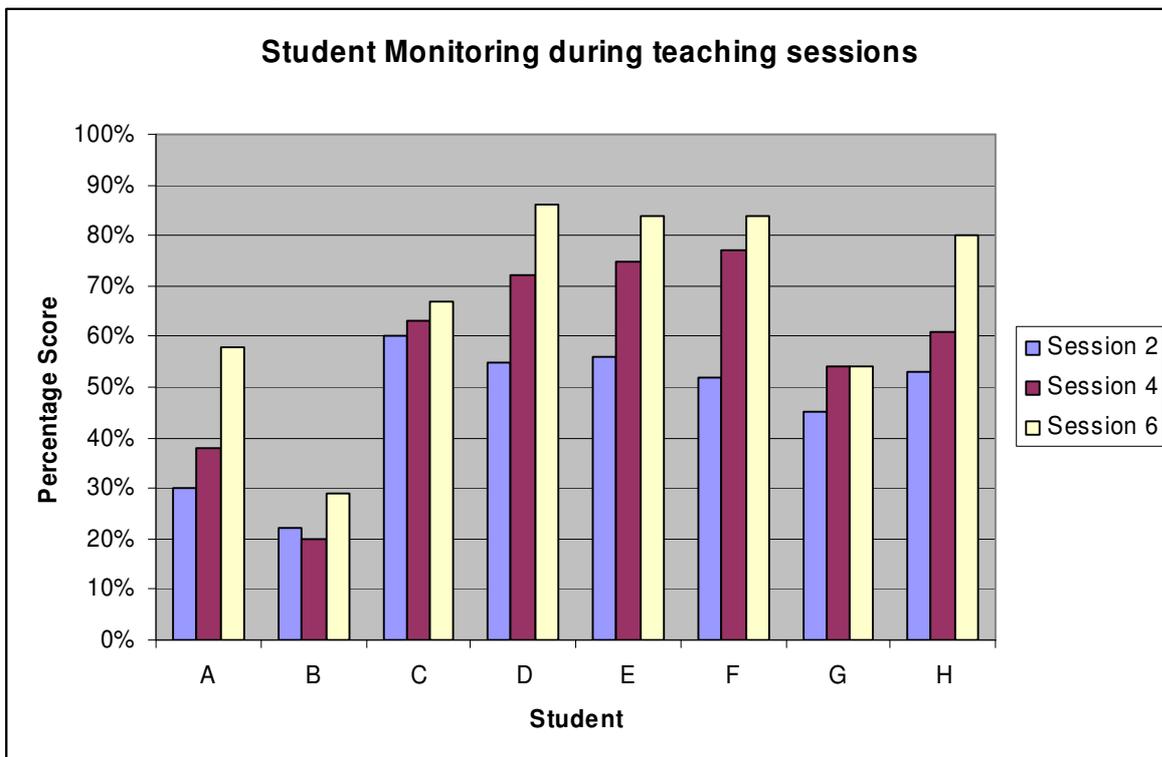
A substantial gain for Student F, from (19% to 47%), and student H,( 26% to 52%) indicate that the synonym knowledge of these two pupils increased dramatically from pre to post testing, as their prior knowledge was certainly not the highest within the intervention group as can be seen from the pre test results,(see fig.2 and table 4)

The pupil with the highest pre test result (Student D), showed an increase of 14%, which, (as has been noted), was the average improvement for the group. Notwithstanding, this student still maintained a post test score amongst the highest results for the group suggesting a consistent gain.

*Paraphrasing task*

Students’ progress throughout the teaching sessions indicated that all students were improving in their paraphrasing technique. This was confirmed by the “between sessions monitoring” that was conducted following sessions 2, 4 and 6 (refer to fig. 3 below)

Figure 3. Student on-going Monitoring during teaching sessions



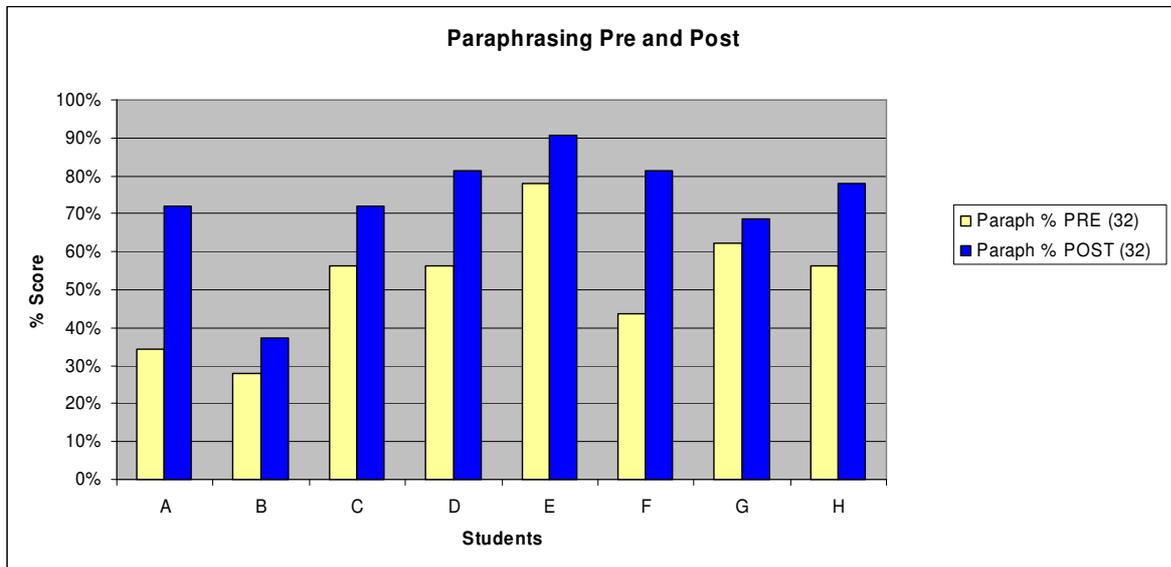
All pupils attempted these monitoring tasks quite confidently and most students indicated improvement as the sessions progressed, except in the case of student B, whose results fell following the second monitoring task.

Similarly, all students made significant gains in the assessed paraphrasing task (Munro, 2005), with the group showing scores of up to 91%, with an average improvement for the overall group of 21% (see table 5)

Table 5 Pre and Post Test Results for Paraphrasing Task

Student	Gender F=0 M=1	Year Level	Age in MONTHS	Paraph Raw PRE (32)	Paraph % PRE (32)	Paraph Raw POST (32)	Paraph % POST (32)	% Improve. Paraph
A	1	6	142	11	34%	23	72%	38%
B	1	5	126	9	28%	12	38%	9%
C	0	6	137	18	56%	23	72%	16%
D	0	6	144	18	56%	26	81%	25%
E	1	5	120	25	78%	29	91%	13%
F	1	6	143	14	44%	26	81%	38%
G	0	5	130	20	63%	22	69%	6%
H	1	6	134	18	56%	25	78%	22%
<b>Average Percentages</b>					<b>52%</b>		<b>73%</b>	<b>21%</b>

Figure 4. Paraphrasing Task Pre and Post Test Results



As can be seen, the smallest gain of 6% was for Student G. This student began with the second highest pre test score of 63%, suggesting this student had some prior knowledge of the task at hand. It is surprising to discover that, with a post test result of 69%, Student G's post test score was amongst the lowest within the group.

The remainder of results of paraphrasing for individual students, supported the hypothesis of this study, with most pupils showing a fairly predictable trend (see fig. 4 & table 5). Student B had the lowest pre testing score with 28% and scored the lowest in the post test within the group. An improvement of 9% was still demonstrated, however this is below the average gain for the group.

Student E began with the highest pre testing score of 78% and post tested at an impressive 91%, which was the highest result obtained within the group. It should be noted that at 120 months old, student E was the youngest participant.

A result that is not consistent across tasks was that of Student C. This pupil exhibited the lowest scores in the pre and post testing for both the synonyms and TORCH tasks yet scored around the group average in both pre and post tests for the paraphrasing tasks.

Both Students A and F performed extremely well on this task, scoring 72% and 81% for the post test respectively. This gave both pupils an improvement score of 38%, which is well above the group average gain (see table 5). Student F also displayed the most significant improvement within the group in the synonyms task as indicated previously in table 4 and fig.2.

## **Discussion**

The aim of this study was an attempt at determining whether teaching a paraphrasing strategy to a small group of students who are 'at risk', would improve their overall comprehension. Improvement was assessed by comparing their performance with one another during the teaching unit, and after implementing pre and post tests, and by monitoring group trends in both cases.

In light of this, the results for all tasks support the hypothesis of this research, with the synonym and paraphrasing task scores reinforcing this idea more than the TORCH tally.

Due to teaching constraints and the Year 5/6 camp being held at the time of testing, the pre and post tests were all held over two days, and many of the students within the intervention group commented on the fact of being subjected to constant testing situations.

This occurred especially in the case of the TORCH task implementation, which most of the students found very difficult. Indeed some of the students became weary and possibly careless in their application. Certainly the TORCH comprehension test was the least conclusive of all the tasks in lending weight to this hypothesis. It was also deemed appropriate to use only the TORCH non-fiction texts when testing, as non-fiction passages were to be used during the teaching unit. This was due to the mainstream 5/6 classes focussing on non-fiction texts for their integrated unit.

This however proved very limiting for the testing situation, with only one non-fiction text appropriate for Year 5, i.e. Donna Dingo. This was specified as not appropriate for Year 6. The text "Matches" was the only non-fiction choice suitable for Year 6, 7 and 8, but not appropriate for Year 5. This passage proved to be far too complex for the Year 6 children in the intervention group during the pre test, with many unable to identify the main ideas and key terms, mainly due to terminology and phrasing used. "Donna Dingo" was an easier text, but most of the Year 5 children showed difficulty in comprehending the passage also. During the post test situation, too, most students had difficulty transferring their increasing ability to identify main ideas, use synonyms and apply the paraphrasing strategy learnt at a sentence level to the TORCH comprehension task.

In hindsight, it would have been more effective and less demanding on the students to test all using the same text provided in the TORCH comprehension task, even if it was a fiction passage, e.g. "Cats" ( which is suitable for Years 4,5 and 6).

The TORCH post testing involved the use of the exact same texts (as advised in the TORCH tests of reading comprehension teacher manual), which, in itself may have affected students post test scores (especially the Year 6's). These intervention students may have

used negative self talk before even attempting the post test, knowing they were being asked to work with a text they could barely comprehend several weeks earlier.

Parker et al; (2002) noted this difficulty with students who experience comprehension problems, in that they fail to understand key words and therefore the main idea in a text. If students struggle with this concept, then the meaning of the whole passage is lost. In the case of this study, the students did just that, and although did indicate some improvement in their overall comprehension, according to post test results, did not show as conclusive an increase as in their vocabulary knowledge (Synonyms task) and skill at paraphrasing (Paraphrasing task).

Certainly students showed gains in their ability to generate synonyms, but still had difficulty providing additional synonyms during both the pre and post test tasks, even though they were encouraged to do so. Throughout the teaching unit, the pupils were able to provide one to two synonyms for a key word, but in most cases were unable to suggest more. This is likely to be due to the cohort of the intervention group presenting a mostly E.S.L. background. Many of the key words that were selected by the teacher and students in the group were unfamiliar to them, so that it was difficult for the pupils to even predict what the word might mean or any other word that may be associated with it.

This was also the reason the scoring for the synonym task was adjusted accordingly, scoring only up to three responses for a word, rather than five. The whole task was then scored out of 174 (see Appendix 3 & 4).

All students benefited from the use of the RAP acronym, (Schumaker et al; 1984, as cited in Hagaman and Reid 2008), by helping them to remember the three steps in the paraphrasing strategy. They stated the steps before paraphrasing during each lesson, and by the third lesson, did not need to refer to the RAP chart that was displayed, as the process had become a meta-cognitive one. These students in the intervention group were also able to explain the procedure to their classmates and teacher, once back in the mainstream classroom.

Of all the assessment tasks, the students paraphrasing results were the most conclusive in supporting the hypothesis. Students exhibited the highest rate of improvement here. A factor that influenced this could have been the student's familiarity with the procedure of the paraphrasing strategy as per Munro's suggested routine (2006). Once the acquisition of synonyms and the RAP strategy was in place, the students quickly developed the ability to paraphrase, gradually working independently of teacher scaffolding.

Further to this, the explicit teaching within the strategy, most likely helped the pupils to practise and master this concept. Fisk and Hurst (2003) found that teaching paraphrasing for comprehension was helpful in reinforcing reading skills such as identifying main ideas and supporting details and as Katims and Harris (1997) state, "by teaching students specific learning strategies the students are learning 'how to learn'".

Certainly the withdrawal and small group teaching situation the intervention group participated in, encouraged positive performances from these normally reluctant learners. All students actively participated in these teaching sessions (excepting student G who participated irregularly), and focussed learning formed a large part of the lesson. As mentioned, the initial scaffolding to aid the students was gradually reduced as the lessons progressed, which enabled these 'at risk' students to imitate expert teaching practices and each other. Consequently, their confidence in attempting tasks increased. They knew they could attempt new practices without the fear of ridicule or embarrassment from their mainstream peers.

The youngest pupil in the intervention group, Student E, was very reserved in the mainstream class and his participation was minimal. However, in the small intervention focus group, he was a vocal participant and achieved a very pleasing result in most of his post tests, most notably in the paraphrasing task, scoring 91%. This lends weight to the findings of Likewise, the findings of Almasi et al; (1997) as cited in Fisk et al; (2003) propose that providing opportunities for students to interact with one another and to challenge others ideas during discussion, supports higher level thinking.”

An anomaly of the post testing results was that of Student G, who achieved approximately the group average score and group average rate of improvement for the synonym task only. This student performed well below the improvement rate for the whole group in the paraphrasing task and achieved the second lowest score, yet scored one of the highest within the group for the TORCH comprehension test. This was also the highest rate of improvement within the group for the TORCH. It is difficult to know if this student performed to the best of their ability in the paraphrasing task. According to the class teacher this student can be difficult in the mainstream class and has a very laconic attitude to learning. The students performance of the paraphrasing strategy in the intervention group was strong, although the participation of this student was very unpredictable. The routine format of the sessions may have not catered for this students learning style. Nevertheless, based on the other score components, Student G’s comprehension did improve.

As students embraced the paraphrasing strategy, a number of the older students became quite adept at re-ordering and re-wording whole sentences rather than just substituting synonyms. This is the aim of teaching the paraphrasing technique as Fisk and Hurst (2003) affirm; “Paraphrasing is not intended to be a word- for- word translation, but rather a genuine rewriting, concentrating on expressing main ideas and supporting evidence, in the students own words. This is sometimes a difficult concept for students who will tend to approach a re-write in a sentence-by sentence manner. But a good paraphrase will convey the meaning of the original document using the students own vocabulary and phrasing.” As a consequence, the students who paraphrased in this manner in the post test, were allocated a score accordingly so therefore performed strongly.

The between sessions monitoring proved to be valuable feedback for the teacher. The student gains that occurred were most likely because these three tasks followed on from what was being covered in the teaching units, and was therefore in context for the learners. Student B’s result for the second of these tasks fell slightly, but this may have been due to being absent the previous session.

The reflective nature of the review component concluding each session in the unit, played an integral part in students becoming proficient at paraphrasing. The pupils reflections in their journals and their statements about what they have learnt during the sessions supports the findings of Kelley et al; 2007, who states, that by encouraging meaningful talk about reading and learning, the metacognitive use of strategies by students will be supported.

### **Implications for teaching practice and future recommendations**

All the intervention students benefited from learning and applying the RAP acronym, and the three step paraphrasing strategy. The acronym helped these “at risk” children to organize what they had read, and so were able to put the steps into practice independently by session 5. It was also an advantage for these students from an ESL background to self manage this routine in order to identify and ask questions about the main idea and details before attempting to paraphrase.

As these students were “at risk”, the small group withdrawal situation suited most of their learning styles. All of the students except for one, were happy enough to leave their peers in the mainstream class and certainly seemed confident to attempt new practices in this setting.

With only eight in the intervention group the opportunity for proficient oral language models was limited. Students had to rely on the intervention teacher providing appropriate structures especially during the earlier teaching sessions. Anecdotal notes and teacher observations indicate that pupils had difficulty generating synonyms and relied on “safe” words for substitution.

This may suggest that students need to have a sufficient level of prior knowledge in oral language to gain the most from this strategy. It also suggests that oral language structures, linked to developmental stages need to be more explicitly taught throughout the school, so that students can develop their meaning making motors in vocabulary and consequently improvement in overall comprehension. This also highlights the need for a whole school approach in implementing these strategies.

Consideration must be given to the time frame for teaching these sessions, as two or three more lessons may have shown additional gains for the pupils. Attending only eight sessions may have seemed out of context for the students and it would benefit all to ensure the teaching unit continued for slightly longer.

Anecdotal records also indicate text choice for teaching the paraphrasing strategy is an important consideration. As these intervention students have comprehension difficulties, it is vital that they can read the text in order to understand it. Texts used in the teaching sessions were all chosen as “easy” passages for these pupils. However, high interest choices were limited, especially as these had to fit the inquiry unit criteria. It was interesting to note that when a Smog was performed on other “suitable” texts designed for Years 3/4, they actually ranged in reading levels as high as Year eight!

Pre and Post test results also suggest how vital teacher scaffolding (combined with gradual removal) is, for these students who are “at risk”. These learners need modelled structures to begin any new strategy, which in turn leads them to self manage their own learning. Reviewing their actions and reflecting on what they had learnt is also an essential part of this process and enables the pupils to build their personal set of reading comprehension strategies that they can draw upon. So that students continue to view reading as a process whereby ideas and information are conveyed to the reader, it is important to revisit and revise these strategies to ensure they are embedded in the child’s long term memory.

Results of this current study show that reading comprehension levels have improved for “at risk” students who have been taught the paraphrasing strategy. Further to this research, the use of the paraphrasing strategy could be investigated using fiction texts and the effect of this on “like” students. As there is a strong emphasis on Literature Circles (as well as Reciprocal Teaching) in the senior area of many primary schools, learning to paraphrase fiction would provide added support for these pupils with reading comprehension difficulties.

Even though on-going monitoring was occurring between sessions, students did not receive explicit feedback on these results. A possible future direction would be to see how explicit feedback would effect student progress and post test scores. The pupils self efficacy could then be explored and the effect this would have on any results.

## References:

Fisk, C. & Hurst, B. (2003). *Paraphrasing for Comprehension*. *The Reading Teacher*, 57, 2, 182-185.

Hagaman, J. L. & Reid, R. (2008). *The effects of the paraphrasing strategy on the reading comprehension of middle school students at risk for failure in reading*. *Remedial and Special Education*, 29, 222.

Katims, D.S. & Harris, S. (1997). *Improving the reading comprehension of middle school students in inclusive classrooms*. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 41, 2, 116-123.

Kelley, M. J. & Clausen-Grace, N. (2007). *Comprehension Shouldn't be Silent: From Strategy Instruction to Student Independence*, 248.

Munro, J.K. (2003). *Fostering literacy learning across the curriculum*. *International Journal of Learning*, 10, 326-336.

Munro, J.K. (2002). *High reliability literacy teaching procedures: a means of fostering literacy learning across the curriculum*. *Idiom* 38, 1, 23-31.

Munro, J.K. (2004). *The use of reading comprehension strategies at multiple levels of text processing*. *International Journal of Learning*, 11, 836.

Parker, R., Hasbrouck J.E. & Denton, C. (2002). *How to tutor students with reading comprehension problems*. *Preventing School Failure*, 47, 1, 45-47.

## Testing Materials

Mossenson, L., Hill P. & Masters G. (1987). *TORCH Tests of Reading Comprehension*. Australia: ACER.

Munro J.K. (2005) *Paraphrasing Assessment Task*.

Munro J.K (2005) *Synonyms Assessment Task*.

## Teaching Materials

Dutch, R.A. (1983) *Roget's Thesaurus*. Ringwood, Melbourne, Penguin Books.

Jensen, B. (2002). *Jesse's awesome adventures*. *Explore Magazine*, Melbourne, Pearson Education, 4, 3-5.

Taylor, J. (2007). *Hide and sneak*. *Comet Magazine*, Melbourne, Pearson Education, 4, 8-9.

McDougall, J (2002). *Quirky quokkas*. *Explore Magazine*, Melbourne, Pearson Education, 2, 10-11.

Muir, B. (2004). *Climbing Mount Everest*. National Geographic, Melbourne, Barrie, Publishing.

Munro, J.K. (2008) *Appendices, Literacy intervention strategies*.

Munro, J.K (2006) *Paraphrasing Strategy*

# Appendix 1 - Data Set

## Participant details

Student	Gender F=0 M=1	Year Level	Age in MONTHS	ESL No=0 Yes=1	Earlier Intervention No=0 Yes=1	LNSL Needs	PROBE RESULTS FICTION	PROBE RESULTS NON- FICTION
A	1	6	142.00	1	1		20%	50%
B	1	5	126.00	0	0		30%	30%
C	0	6	137.00	0	1		50%	20%
D	0	6	144.00	1	0		50%	20%
E	1	5	120.00	1	0		50%	50%
F	1	6	143.00	1	1		20%	30%
G	0	5	130.00	0	1		30%	30%
H	1	6	134.00	0	1	speech	20%	30%

## Pre and Post Test Results for TORCH Task

Student	Gender F=0 M=1	Year Level	Age in MONTHS	TORCH Raw PRE	TORCH Score PRE	Error Margin	TORCH Raw POST	TORCH Score POST	Error Margin
A	1	6	142	9	47.9	3.3	9	47.9	3.3
B	1	5	126	8	35.7	3.4	11	41	3.4
C	0	6	137	1	26.7	6.9	4	38.2	4.0
D	0	6	144	7	44.4	3.4	7	44.4	3.4
E	1	5	120	11	41	3.4	13	44.5	3.4
F	1	6	143	8	46.1	3.4	9	47.9	3.3
G	0	5	130	5	29.7	3.8	14	46.4	3.6
H	1	6	134	10	49.6	3.3	11	51.3	3.4

## Pre and Post Test Results for Paraphrasing Task

Student	Gender F=0 M=1	Year Level	Age in MONTHS	Paraph Raw PRE (32)	Paraph % PRE (32)	Paraph Raw POST (32)	Paraph % POST (32)	% Improve. Paraph
A	1	6	142	11	34%	23	72%	38%
B	1	5	126	9	28%	12	38%	9%
C	0	6	137	18	56%	23	72%	16%
D	0	6	144	18	56%	26	81%	25%
E	1	5	120	25	78%	29	91%	13%
F	1	6	143	14	44%	26	81%	38%
G	0	5	130	20	63%	22	69%	6%
H	1	6	134	18	56%	25	78%	22%
<b>Average Percentages</b>					<b>52%</b>		<b>73%</b>	<b>21%</b>

## Pre and Post Test Results for Synonyms Task

Student	Gender F=0 M=1	Year Level	Age in MONTHS	Synonyms Raw PRE	Synonyms % PRE (174)	Synonyms Raw POST	Synonyms % POST (174)	% Improve. Synonyms
A	1	6	142	28	16%	43	25%	9%
B	1	5	126	24	14%	45	26%	12%
C	0	6	137	26	15%	37	21%	6%
D	0	6	144	52	30%	77	44%	14%
E	1	5	120	48	28%	63	36%	9%
F	1	6	143	33	19%	81	47%	28%
G	0	5	130	40	23%	58	33%	10%
H	1	6	134	46	26%	90	52%	25%
<b>Average Percentages</b>					<b>21%</b>		<b>35%</b>	<b>14%</b>

## Paraphrasing

**Read** a paragraph

**Ask** yourself questions about the main ideas and details.

**Put** the ideas into your own words. Try to change as many words as you can.

## Appendix 3 – Modified Synonym Task Scoring Criteria

### SCORING

#### Synonym Task Scoring Criteria

*Synonym/Depth: First Correct Response*

2 points: Same meaning as the target word both semantically and grammatically

1 point: Has the same meaning as the target word semantically (not grammatically)

0 points: others

*Additional Rules for Scoring*

1. Only include the first **three** words that the child wrote for each item
2. If a child provides varied word forms as his or her response, e.g. leave: go / going / gone, only accept the root form “go”
3. Accept plural if the response is distinctly different from the target word e.g. child: children / little people, accept “little people” but not “children”

# Appendix 4 – Modified Synonym Task Student Form

## Synonyms Task: Student Form

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	First word	Additional words		
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				
26.				
27.				
28.				
29.				

## Appendix 5 - Teaching Unit Paraphrasing

**Explicitly teaching a group of Year 5/6 students who have reading comprehension difficulties to paraphrase, will improve their overall comprehension of non fiction texts.**

### Session 1

**Text: Hide and Sneak**

#### Introduce the strategy:

*Today we are going to do something today to help you remember what you read. It is called paraphrasing. This is when you change words, sentences and paragraphs so that you can read or say the text in your own way without changing the meaning.*

*You can use the word RAP to remember what to do when you paraphrase.*

(Teacher displays chart and talks about the acronym with the group).

*Let's look at this text called Hide and Sneak about animals camouflaging themselves.*

(Teacher introduces text briefly. The children should be familiar with content as they have been writing reports on different animal types in the mainstream class. This text also has accompanying photos.)

#### Teacher models and cues student activity:

*I will read it and I want you to read it yourself with me. Then I will try saying it a different way. Then I will ask you to try. I will write down what I say and what you say as a group.*

Teacher reads each sentence and students identify the main idea. The teacher then paraphrases and records this on the whiteboard. Students list possible synonyms and try to come up with a common paraphrase for the group which is recorded.

Sentence read	Teacher paraphrases	Words to substitute with synonyms
In nature many animals use camouflage to hide themselves.	Lots of animals in our world use the markings on their bodies to hide themselves.	use/camouflage/hide/nature/ animals
Some animals are hiding from predators.	A few of them are protecting themselves from being eaten by other animals.	animals/hiding/predators
Others use camouflage to sneak up on their prey.	Some animals hide themselves so they can catch their dinner.	others/camouflage/sneak/prey
Some animals use camouflage to look like something dangerous to intimidate their enemies.	Some creatures try to disguise themselves so they appear bigger or scarier to their predators.	animals/camouflage/look/dangerous/intimidate/enemies

**Teacher reviews the action:**

*Let us look at what we just did. We read each sentence, asked ourselves about the main idea and then said it in other ways. See how it helped you to understand what the text said?*

*Do you have any questions?*

**Students practice paraphrasing:**

Teacher repeats this for the rest of the text sentence by sentence. The teacher models the paraphrase first and the class then tries to paraphrase as a whole group. The teacher regularly reminds them of the RAP acronym and how they are applying this.

**Teacher reviews the action:** *What can you remember to do to help yourself to paraphrase?*

**Students transfer the action to other texts:** *Now you are going to practice doing this to some other sentences in small groups. Read each sentence. Ask yourself questions about the main idea and details. Then put the ideas into your own words by trying to change as many words as you can without changing the meaning and write down what you thought of.*

Teacher corrects students' responses.

**Students review what they did:** *Tell me what you know about paraphrasing and what steps you should follow to paraphrase a text?*

Students articulate steps in paraphrasing and then record these in their workbooks.

**Read the text**

Ask yourself questions about the main idea and details.

Put these into your own words without changing the meaning

**Session 2****Text: Quirky Quokkas****Consolidating/reviewing new strategy**

Students review the steps taken last session on paraphrasing:

**Read the text**

Ask yourself questions about the main idea and details

Put the ideas into your own words and try to change as many words as you can without changing the meaning.

**Text retelling**

Students say what they remember about the text from the previous session by retelling passage.

**Text re-reading**

Students and teacher re-read selected sentences from last session. Teacher cues use of paraphrasing as reading: *“Can we say this in a different way?”* Each student reads a sentence and then paraphrases, trying to change as many words as possible.

### **Orientation and reading of new text**

Teacher introduces new text which is written in a report format. Students predict possible structure and vocabulary. Teacher and pupils read aloud new passage (first two paragraphs) then discuss main ideas and details together.

### **Listing of key content words**

Teacher and pupils list key content words:

*Pint-sized kangaroos*

*Rounded ears*

*Furry coat*

*Short tails*

*Small*

*Powerful*

*Hide*

*Dense scrub*

*Nocturnal*

and suggest synonyms for these.

### **Teacher models and cues student paraphrasing activity**

Students revise the RAP strategy, referring to the displayed chart.

Teacher then models a paraphrase sentence by sentence. After each example teacher cues students to paraphrase aloud, using listed synonyms.

### **Writing new sentences**

Students write a sentence by sentence paraphrase in small groups. These are shared with the whole group and discussed.

### **Review and reflection**

Students articulate the actions they took while paraphrasing. Students also write a reflection in their workbooks: "*One thing I have learnt today*"

### **Ongoing monitoring between sessions**

The group read aloud the last paragraph of this text that has not been previously viewed by the students. This text is paraphrased silently and individually and is collected for ongoing assessment of individual's progress.

## **Session 3**

### **Text: Climbing Mount Everest**

(Chapter 1 "On our way to Mt. Everest")

### **Consolidating the strategy**

Students revise the steps for paraphrasing.

### **Text retelling**

Students retell the passage from the previous session.

### **Text rereading**

Students and teacher re-read selected sentences from last session. Teacher cues use of paraphrasing as reading, "*Can we say this a different way* Each student reads a sentence and then paraphrases, trying to change as many words as possible.

### **Orientation and reading of new text**

Teacher introduces new text which is a text documenting the journey of a modern day explorer's attempts to scale Mount Everest. This forms part of the children's integrated unit for the term. Students predict possible format of text and likely vocabulary. Teacher and pupils read aloud new passage together, discussing main idea and details.

### **Listing of key content words**

Teacher and pupils list key content words of passage:

*Mountains*

*Sherpas*

*Journey*

*Guide*

*Climb*

*Porter*

*Base camp*

*Oxygen*

*Rest*

and suggest synonyms for these.

### **Teacher models and cues student paraphrasing activity**

Students articulate the steps in paraphrasing without looking at the RAP chart.

Teacher then models paraphrasing pairs of sentences in the passage. After each pair of sentences has been paraphrased by the teacher, she cues the students to paraphrase the same pairs aloud, using listed synonyms.

### **Writing new sentences**

Students paraphrase pairs of sentences in small groups. These are shared with the whole group and discussed.

### **Review and reflection**

Students write how they think they are progressing in paraphrasing and any difficulties they are encountering.

## **Session 4**

### **Text: Climbing Mount Everest (Chapter 2 "Mt. Everest Base Camp")**

#### **Revising the strategy**

With the individual's permission, the teacher shares some reflections of single students with the group. Pupils then recap on the steps of paraphrasing using the RAP acronym.

#### **Text retelling**

Students retell the passage from the previous session with the emphasis on using synonyms from the list the group had compiled.

**Text rereading**

Students and teacher reread selected sentences from the last session. Teacher cues students to paraphrase. Each student reads a chosen sentence from the text and then paraphrases, trying to change as many words as possible.

**Reading of new text**

The teacher and students read the four paragraphs of the chapter entitled “Mt. Everest Base Camp” together, paragraph by paragraph. Pupils identify main ideas and details of passage.

**Listing of key content words**

Teacher and pupils list key content words of text:

*Base camp*

*Porters*

*Glacier*

*Climbers*

*Tents*

*Meals*

*Rest*

*Crevasses*

and suggest synonyms for these.

**Teacher cues student paraphrasing activity**

Group revises the RAP acronym. Students read aloud pairs of sentences in whole group and attempt to paraphrase aloud. Teacher cues students where necessary.

**Writing new sentences**

In small groups, students write a paraphrase for pairs of sentences from the text.

**Review and reflection**

Pupils write down steps of paraphrasing without referring to any stimulus

**Ongoing monitoring between sessions**

The group read aloud the last paragraph of this text that has not been previously viewed by the students. This text is paraphrased silently and individually and is collected for ongoing assessment of individual’s progress.

**Session 5****Text: Climbing Mount Everest  
(Chapter 4 “Valley of Snow”)****Revising the strategy**

Students revise the steps of paraphrasing. Teacher provides feedback from previous sessions assessment.

**Text retelling**

Students retell the text from the previous session with the emphasis on using synonyms from the list the group had compiled.

**Text rereading**

Students re-read selected pairs of sentences from last session. Teacher cues use of paraphrasing as reading, "Can we say this a different way?" Each student reads pair of sentences and then paraphrases, trying to change as many words as possible.

**Reading of new text**

The teacher and students read the new chapter entitled "Valley of Snow" together, paragraph by paragraph. Pupils identify main ideas and supporting details of passage.

**Listing of key content words**

Pupils list key content words from the text in whole group:

*Knot of fear*

*Hike*

*Crossing*

*Journey*

*Oxygen*

*Valley*

*Base Camp*

*Prepare*

and list synonyms for these.

**Student paraphrasing activity**

Group revises the RAP acronym. Students and teacher read aloud each paragraph in whole group activity and attempt to paraphrase aloud. Teacher cues students where necessary.

**Writing new text**

In small groups, students write a paraphrase of each paragraph.

**Review and reflection**

In pairs, one student shows another the steps of paraphrasing as if the second student is new to the procedure.

**Session 6****Text: Climbing Mount Everest  
(Chapter 5 "Reaching the Summit")****Revising the strategy**

Students review the RAP acronym

**Text retelling**

Students retell the text from the previous session with the emphasis on using synonyms from the list the group had compiled.

**Text rereading**

Students and teacher reread whole paragraphs from previous session. At end of each paragraph, teacher cues students to paraphrase what they have read, trying to change as many words as possible.

**Reading of new text**

Students read the new chapter entitled “Reaching the Summit” aloud together, paragraph by paragraph. Pupils identify main ideas and supporting details of passage.

**Listing of key content words**

Pupils list key content words from text in whole group:

*Ledge*

*Summit*

*Oxygen Tanks*

*Forecast*

*Steep*

*Proud*

*Courage*

*Alone*

And list synonyms for these.

**Student paraphrasing activity**

Group revises RAP acronym. Students read out text sentence by sentence and paraphrase in whole group activity.

**Writing new text**

Each student individually writes a paraphrase of each sentence.

**Review and ongoing monitoring between sessions**

Students review RAP acronym. The group read aloud the last paragraph of this text that has not been previously viewed by the students. This text is paraphrased silently and individually and is collected for ongoing assessment of individual’s progress.

**Session 7****Text: Jesse’s Awesome Adventures  
(Part 1)****Review and revise**

Teacher and pupils recap on the assessment from previous session and teacher provides feedback. Students discuss how they remembered and implemented the steps of paraphrasing.

**Text retelling**

Students retell the text from the previous session with the emphasis on using synonyms from the list the group had compiled

**Text rereading**

Students and teacher reread whole paragraphs from previous session. At end of each paragraph, students paraphrase aloud what they have read, trying to change as many words as possible.

**Orientation and reading of new text**

Teacher introduces new text which is a text documenting the journey of a modern day explorer’s attempts to sail around the world solo. This forms part of the children’s

integrated unit for the term. Students predict possible format of text and likely vocabulary. Teacher and pupils read aloud new passage together, discussing main idea and details.

### **Listing of key content words**

Pupils identify main ideas and details of text in small groups and form own list of synonyms for these. Use of Thesaurus and dictionaries are allowed.

Possible key words include:

*Dream*

*Sailing*

*Loan*

*Purchase*

*Set sail*

*Confident*

*Gale*

*Perished*

*Survived*

### **Student paraphrasing activity**

Students write the out the steps of paraphrasing. They then read each paragraph silently and paraphrase aloud paragraph by paragraph in whole group activity.

### **Writing new text**

In small groups, students write a paraphrase of each paragraph.

### **Review and reflection**

Students verbalize what they did during the session and why.

## **Session 8**

### **Text: Jesse's Awesome Adventures (Part 2)**

#### **Review the strategy**

Teacher informs students that they will not be reviewing the procedure aloud. Students are allowed time to metacognitively revise the steps of paraphrasing.

#### **Text retelling**

Students retell the text from the previous session with the emphasis on using synonyms from their own individual list.

#### **Text rereading**

Students silently reread whole paragraphs from previous session. At end of each paragraph, students paraphrase aloud what they have read, trying to change as many words as possible.

#### **Reading of new text**

Students read new passage silently, then discuss main ideas and details aloud in whole group and discuss possible synonyms for these without listing them.

**Student paraphrasing activity**

Students read silently each paragraph and paraphrase paragraph by paragraph aloud in whole group activity.

**Writing new text**

Each student individually writes a paraphrase of each paragraph.

**Review and reflection**

Each student writes a reflection on the overall sessions and what they think they have achieved. They then proceed to orally explain the paraphrasing steps to their mainstream class (either on their own, in pairs or in small groups).