

Teaching Children in Year 4 Repeated Reading of the Same Texts in a Whole Class Situation will Improve their Reading Fluency and Comprehension Skills.

ABSTRACT

In this study children received instruction in Repeated Reading of text in a Whole Class situation. Previous Research Projects have shown the benefits of individualized instruction and explicit teaching to individuals or small groups which have resulted in improvements in a child's reading ability. This study investigated the impact on children's reading ability when taught in a whole class situation. The children received intervention over 10 sessions. These sessions involved 5 prior to the school holidays and 5 post holidays. There was a two week break for these holidays.

This Study returned the findings that Repeated Reading of Texts in a whole class situation is a valuable tool in helping children to improve their Reading Fluency and Comprehension. Results have shown that the children who received this intervention have recorded increased reading outcomes.

The children were taught a reading strategy specific to Repeated Reading. This strategy could then be applied to other curriculum areas to further the child's comprehension of text. The results indicate that teaching Repeated Reading Strategies does result in an increased Comprehension level and an increase in the child's ability to read a passage fluently.

Findings support the belief that Repeated Reading Strategies can be taught in a whole class setting and that the teaching of this skill will improve a child's reading. This strategy can also be used and applied to others Curriculum areas as well as reading and Literacy. This practice can and should be used by children in all Curriculum areas that require the children to read passages of text.

Introduction

Many students in primary school although competent at reading words they lack skills to read a passage fluently. This apparent lack of skills impacts not only on the child's fluency but can also affect the child's ability to comprehend the texts they are being exposed to. Repeated Reading of appropriate meaningful texts is one technique that can be used to help students achieve reading fluency.

In response to a need to develop a meaningful approach to reading instruction a method of Repeated Reading (Dowhower, 1989; Samuel, 1979) is used to have readers re-read and practice reading a text until a level of fluency is achieved, Samuels believes that this method allows the reader to develop word recognition skills to a point of automaticity which is a necessary skill for fluent reading Dowhower (1989) notes that researchers have compiled a list of studies that investigated the use of Repeated Reading as a technique for improving reading ability. Evidence now exists that it is a viable instructional tool not only for remedial readers but also for developmental readers in mainstream classes. Repeated reading aloud as a strategy increased the child's comprehension ability and their fluency. Martinez and Rover (1985) reported that repeated reading aloud at home and at school resulted in more talk about the familiar story and that the children's responses to questioning indicated a greater understanding of the text. Bromage and Mayer (1983) found that the first time the text was re-read it was more likely to involve rote learning however additional Re- Reading helped the students remember more meaningful structures and ideas.

Dowhower (1989) outlined two categories of repeated reading texts assisted or unassisted. Assisted Repeat Reading involves a read-alone model where the child uses a live or taped model of the passage when reading and an unassisted repeat reading model where no model was used. In both models researchers (Samuels, 1979 (Dowhower 1987, Dahl, 1984) found that the students increased their reading rate, comprehension, Dowhower (1987) found that in a study of 2nd grade students had a comprehension increase of between 66% and 88% on pre and post test unpracticed passages. David La Berge and Jay Samuels (1974) recognized the need

To construct a model of what it meant to acquire automaticity in reading. They

Stressed that reading fluency was based on the rapidity of micro level sub skills (e.g.

. letter-sound rules, letter combinations and the meaning of words and their connection. They believe that when these skills became automatic more time can be allocated to more sophisticated comprehension skills. Based on these studies Dahl (1974) and Samuels (1985) designed the Repeated Reading technique where students read a passage repeatedly to improve and increase fluency and that fluency will contribute to comprehension of texts improvement.

Therrien and Kumina (2006) believe it is important to consider for elements when deciding whether and how to implement a Repeated Reading intervention. They believe it is important to determine if the group has the necessary pre requisite skills example letter sound rules, blending etc. Secondly what format will the intervention take i.e. in a whole class situation, small group or one on one? For this study we will be using an assisted model using the teacher and peer group reading. Thirdly the need to implement the essential instructional component of the lesson. In this study the instruction will use a model described later in the procedures section in this paper. This procedure meets all of the criteria recommended by Therrien and Kubina.

Oral reading fluency i.e. the ability to read a text quickly and accurately is a critical reading skill. Using Repeated Reading of texts as a strategy is one method to build reading fluency and comprehension skills. Dowhower (1994) suggested that the method of Repeated Reading of texts should be integrated into daily literacy sessions for both struggling and competent readers. In her studies she found that Repeated Reading lead to higher levels of recall, deeper processing of words in texts and generated fluency abilities in new passages.

In this study I will investigate the impact Repeated Reading has on students reading fluency and on there comprehension. Evidence supports the view that Repeated Reading of appropriate texts is a valuable tool to be used in daily literacy sessions.

The children will follow a set model in each session and it is hoped that the children will continue to use this model in their own reading.

It is anticipated that as the children experience more success in their reading their self efficacy will increase and thus they will become more confident in their own ability to attempt new texts not only in literacy but in all aspects of their reading at school and at home.

METHOD.

DESIGN

The study conducted uses the case study OXO design i.e. .test, teach, test. Changes in the children's comprehension and fluency following explicit teaching of Repeated Reading Techniques will be monitored. This study will investigate changes in two groups of Year 4 children, one group being the teaching group and the second group the control group. The sessions with the teaching group will be conducted in a whole class environment.

PARTICIPANTS

All of the children in this study are in Year 4. Children from the teaching group are in a Year 4/5 grouping and the control group is from a Year 3/4 class. The children attend an inner city primary school with an enrolment of 168 pupils where the children come from various backgrounds including English and Non English speaking. Many of the children live in households where family members are often not fluent in English and this has been shown to impact on the children's opportunity to speak English at home. As this project was looking at the impact of teaching Repeated Reading strategies in a whole class situation all children in Year 4 were invited to participate in this study. Thirteen children indicated their willingness to participate in the study out of a possible 17 Year 4 students enrolled at the school. {Two children were overseas at the time of the study and two did not return consent forms to participate.} The group comprised 8 Male and 5 Female students. The children's ages ranged from 8 years 11 months – 10 years 4 months.

Approximately 50% of both the teaching and control groups are from a Non English speaking background.

TABLE 1.

CHILD	GENDER	AGE IN MONT	TCH GROUP	CNTRL G	NESB
A	F	117	YES		-
B	F	124	YES		YES
C	M	110	YES		-
D	M	109	YES		YES
E	M	115	YES		-
F	M	118	YES		YES
G	G	109	YES		YES
H	F	109		YES	YES
I	F	123		YES	YES
J	M	117		YES	-
K	F	109		YES	-
L	M	107		YES	-
M	M	111		YES	YES

MATERIALS.

All children in both groups had been tested by their class teachers using the Torch and Burt Tests. These results have formed the basis of the child’s pre-teaching score. The children in the teaching group will receive specific and explicit teaching in Repeated Reading while the children in the control group receive their normal classroom teaching. As stated previously although all children are in Year 4 they are in different class groupings. At the end of the intervention sessions all children will be re-tested to determine the impact of the intervention on the children’s reading ability. It is anticipated that the teaching group will demonstrate an improved reading ability as a result of the intervention. Should this be the case it will support the case that whole class instruction in Repeat Reading of text is a

valuable tool that can be used to improve a child's reading ability. Five different texts were chosen for use in the sessions (appendix 1). Two sessions were spent reading each text thereby increasing the child's confidence and familiarity with the vocabulary. Each of the texts was given a fry readability assessment to determine the appropriate level for this group of children. The texts were chosen from class reading schemes that are available for year 4 at this school.

Procedure

This study was conducted with year 4 students. As stated earlier this group was made up of a teaching group and a control from an inner city Melbourne school, due to the number of year 4 children at this school it was necessary to collect the data and conduct the teaching with year 4's from a group of yr 4/5 pupils (teaching group) and group of Year 3/4 pupils (control group). The implementation of the study consisted of ten teaching sessions. Five of these sessions were held prior to the term one school holidays and five post holidays. The sessions were held in classroom situation (teaching group). Each session lasted approximately 40 minutes, at the completion of the 10 sessions all the students (control and teaching group) were retested to determine changes in results and comparing pre test and past teach results and nothing changes between teaching and control groups. The teaching procedures for each session were based on the following steps.

- Introduce text
- teacher reads aloud (children follow)
- teacher/class read together
- child reads to partner
- child reads alone
- child completes reading response
- child takes text home to read to parents

The texts chosen were re read over two sessions. I.e.

- Text 1 - session 1+2
- Text 2 - session 3+4
- Text 3 - session 5+6
- Text 4 - session 7+8
- Text 5 - session 9+10

The children were asked at the end of each session to express their feelings about how well they went in the session and how useful a strategy is Repeated Reading in helping them to read more confidently. After each session the children took the read text home to further practice by reading to an adult at home. This will encourage the child to continue their reading practice by reading aloud at home. The children were asked where possible to record and listen to their reading after they had read the passage. This was not always possible as not all children had access to a tape recorder. To overcome this, the school was able to lend some recorders to children on a rostered basis. With the cost of these tape recorders getting cheaper it would be a valuable teaching aid that could be purchased by schools for loan by the students.

Following the tenth session the students completed the Burt and Torch tasks again to give a comparison between pre and post teaching sessions. These results will be used when determining the effectiveness of the teaching strategy. These results will be given to the class teachers so that they can decide whether or not to introduce Repeated Reading as a teaching strategy in their classroom. Parents of participating students will also receive feed back on their child's results.

RESULTS

The results obtained from this Project supports the view that teaching Repeated Reading strategies to Year 4 children in a whole class situation does improve their reading comprehension and fluency. The scores obtained by the students in their post testing all showed compared to their pre-intervention test results. It is noted that that both the teaching group and the control groups recorded improvements in both their Burt and Torch scores. Possible reasons for an improvement in the Control Groups results are, {A} that reading receives a high priority in all Literacy sessions at this school and {B} the class teacher responsible for the children in the Control Group was aware of the nature of this project and indicated that he had implemented some aspects of the Repeated Reading intervention with his class as part of his literacy sessions. In regard to the teaching group all students who indicated their willingness to participate in the project were present for all ten sessions.

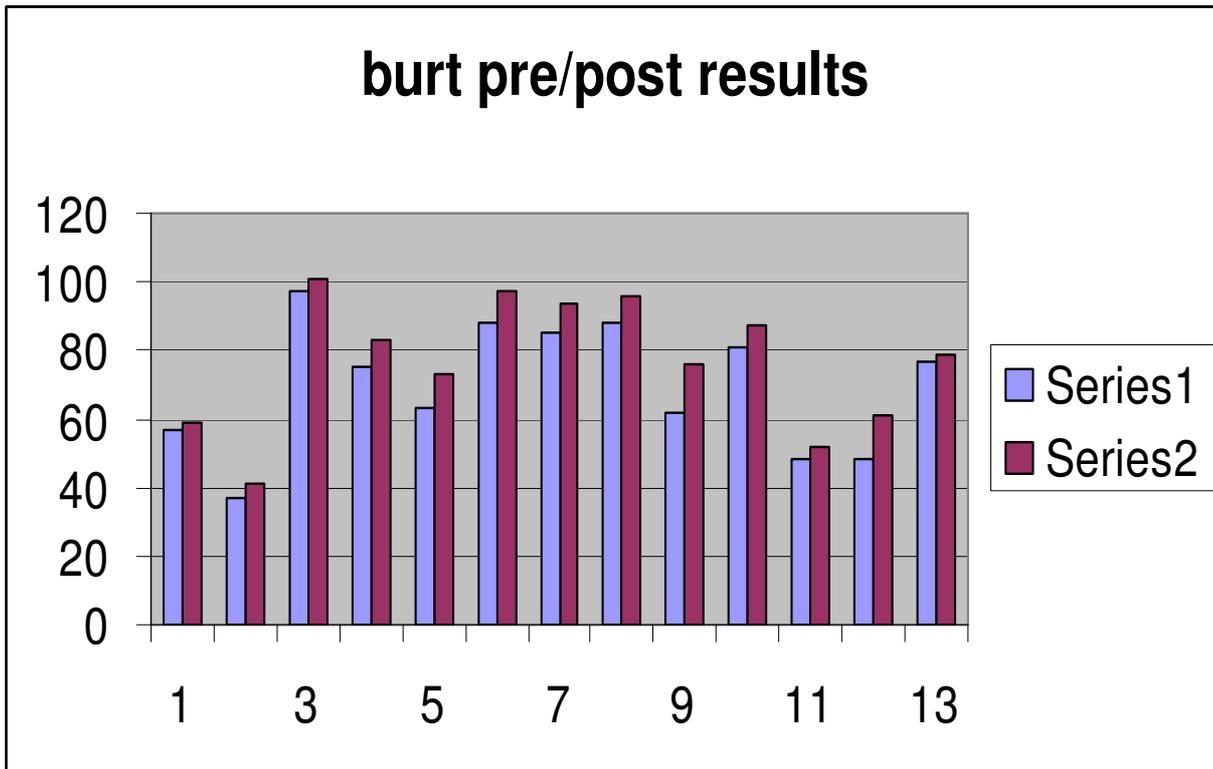


Table 1

All students in both the teaching and control groups recorded gains in their Burt Test scores. Students 4, 5, 6 and 7 recorded the highest overall gains by increasing their score by at least 8 words. Students 1, 2 and 3 recorded gains of between 2 and 4 words.

The table supports the view that all children in the teacher group i.e., children one to seven, have shown considerable improvements in their ability to read words. Children in the study recorded increases in their overall score. Child two although recorded the lowest raw score recorded a 5% increase in word recognition as opposed to child three who recorded the highest raw score but only at 3% increase in between pre and post teaching. The teaching group recorded between 2% and 9% increase in their scores pre and post test.

Percentage Increase in Burt scores, pre/post

Teacher group.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2%	5%	3%	7%	9%	8%	8%

Control Group.

8	9	10	11	12	13
7%	13%	6%	4%	4%	2%

It was noted that child nine in the control group recorded a 13% increase in their post test score. This information will be relayed to the class teacher for further investigation.

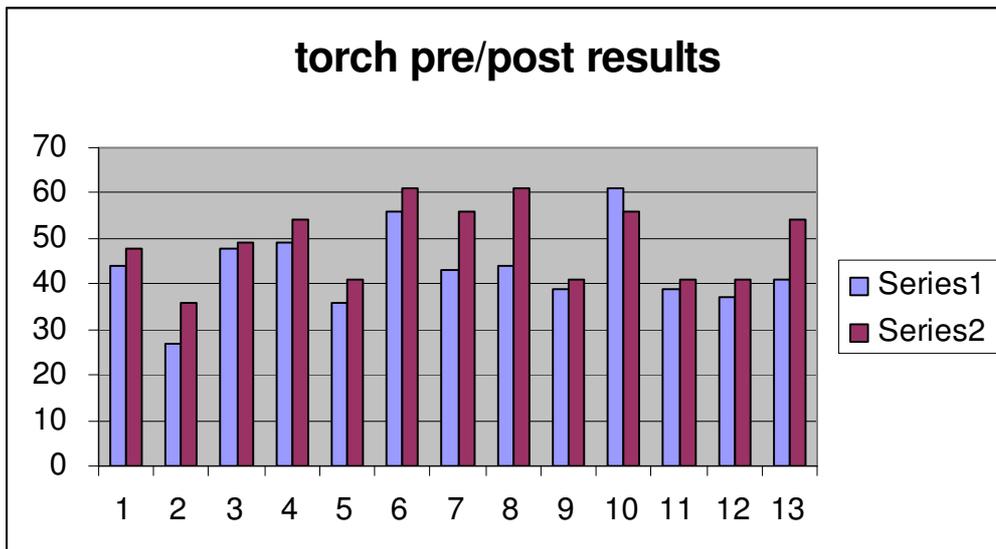


Table 2

Torch test comparisons pre and post test for all students in both teaching and control groups were recorded and analysed. All students in the teaching group i.e. students 1-7 demonstrated an increased Torch score following the intervention. All students scored a Torch score of 40 or above with the exception of student 2 who scored 36. It should be noted that this child also scored the lowest Burt score. Students 1, 3,4,5,6 and 7 scored higher post test scores than the entire control group with the exception of students 8, 10 and 13.

Students 2 and 7 demonstrated the most significant post test results compared to the pre test prior to the teaching sessions beginning. Student 7 although recording the

third lowest pre test result improved to return the second highest post test result behind student 6. This student's result was the third highest comparing both the teaching and control groups. Students in the teaching group {students 1-7} demonstrated significant improvement in both the Torch and Burt results. Students in the control group {students 8-13} also showed improved scores in their post tests. As stated earlier this result may have been inadvertently affected by the class teacher's use of Repeated Reading strategies in his class while this study was in progress. This being the case the evidence further supports the use of Repeated Reading as a strategy to improve comprehension and fluency. As seen by the results in Table 2 Torch scores by 5 of the 7 teaching group {students 1-7} or 71% were above 48 while in the control group {students 8-13} only 3 of the 6 students or 50% achieved this result

Averages for pre/post testing with both the teaching and control groups reveal no real changes. Both groups had an average pre test torch score of 43 and 49 for the post test. In the teaching group students 1, 2 and 5 scored below the average while students 3, 4, 6 and 7 scored the average {49} or above. The control group returned similar results with students 9, 11 and 12 {below 49} and students 8, 10 and 13 scoring the average or above.

The students were also asked to comment on their efficiency as readers after the ten teaching sessions. Children in the teaching group reported that they felt more confident with their reading because they were able to practice the passage several times which allowed them to get to know the text and understand the story.

Parents were also asked to comment on their child's reading during and after the intervention. Most reported a stronger interest by their child in reading and most commented that their reading fluency had improved and that their children were keen to read at home

DISCUSSION

As a result of the research on this project evidence supports the view that teaching Repeated Reading of text to children in Year 4 does improve children's reading fluency and comprehension.

Dowhower[1989] citing Anderson [1981] suggests that fluency and comprehension are goals for all readers. Anderson believes that fluency training may be the missing ingredient in classroom reading instruction. This belief supports Allingtons [1983] that oral reading fluency is a neglected reading goal for both poor and good readers. Dowhower {1989} believes that in teaching the technique of Repeated Reading we now have evidence to show that Repeated Reading procedures produce gains in speed and accuracy, result in better phrasing and expression, and enhance recall and understanding for both good and poor readers.

The students in this study have shown an improvement in their reading as demonstrated by their Burt and Torch Test results. It was also noted that as the children became more confident and at ease with the format of the sessions they became more confident in reading the text. At first some children seemed uncomfortable reading aloud to their peers, however as the sessions continued this apprehension and nervousness lessened the children became more at ease in the sessions as they had the passage modeled before they had to read to a peer. This modeling proved to be a useful tool particularly for the poorer readers. As children are often asked to and expected to read aloud in class as part of their everyday learning this type of modeling can give the child confidence to attempt the task. Repeated Reading, especially after the modeled component allows the reader to read with confidence in a less threatening situation.

Results of this research support the belief that Repeated Reading does help children's reading fluency and comprehension. This strategy could be introduced not only in literacy sessions but in all situations that require children to read passages of text. Through the introduction of this model into classroom learning the children will be given the opportunity to practice their reading more often and become more confident when reading text. Due to the amount of time it takes to repeatedly read a passage this technique would be more valuable for use in shorter

passages {up to 200 words} in length. Using the model of Repeated Reading in different subject areas would also give the children multiple opportunities to enhance their reading skills.

Within the classroom Repeated Reading of text could be used at many Year Levels e.g. for Year Two Big Books and their accompanying texts can be used with the teacher providing the modeling by reading the big book and the children then reading the books to themselves and their peers. In the middle and senior grades, age and grade appropriate newspaper articles can be read not only increasing the Childs reading ability but also their knowledge. The use of these articles could either be stand alone topics or integrated into their classroom studies. Children would then have access to multiple copies via photocopies which would allow them to take the text home to get further practice by reading to their parents.

As this study was conducted over a relatively short time with a rather small sample group further research using a larger sample group and at different year levels would be required to determine the overall effectiveness of Repeated Reading as an effective strategy for improving reading comprehension and fluency. If this strategy was implemented over a longer period more definitive results would become evident i.e. are the results sustained, does the child's reading continue to improve as the strategy becomes more regularly used either in literacy sessions or other subject areas?

This study was directed at a whole class intervention. This being the case there is going to be some children who will benefit more than others. As children in a mainstream classroom have different entry points this model may need to be modified to meet the needs of all children. For better readers this method may become boring due to the repetitive nature of the teaching model. Therefore the teacher must decide how to best deal with all children so all their needs are met. This method of intervention is certainly valuable but the class teacher must be aware of all students' needs and the challenges they face.

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RESOURCES

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Burt Test.

TEXTS USED IN EACH SESSION

SES	TEXT	FRY L	SERIES	PP.
1	THE TRAIN HOME	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	28-29
2	THE TRAIN HOME	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	28-29
3	MAKING WAVES WAVES	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	16-17
4	MAKING WAVES WAVES	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	16-17
5	HAPPILY EVERAFTER	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	26-27
6	HAPPILY EVERAFTER	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	26-27
7	RAIDER OF THE SECRE PLACE	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	28-29
8	RAIDER OF THE SECRE PLACE	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	28-29
9	TERRY PHILLIPS	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	36-37
10	TERRY PHILLIPS	YR. 4	MOMENTUM	36-37

TEACHING UNIT

SESSION 1

TEXT: THE TRAIN HOME.

INTRODUCE METHOD.

TODAY WE ARE TO LEARN A STRATEGY THAT WILL HELP US TO BECOME BETTER READERS. IT IS CALLED REPEATED READING. WE ARE GOING TO READ A PASSAGE SEVERAL TIMES SOMETIMES BY OURSELVES, SOMETIMES TO A PARTNER AND AT OTHER TIMES WE WILL BE READING ALTOGETHER.

EXPLAIN PROCEDURE.

INTRODUCE TEXT.

- STEP 1 TEACHER READS PASSAGE WHILE CHILDREN FOLLOW.
- STEP 2 TEACHER AND CLASS READ TOGETHER.
- STEP 3 CHILDREN READ TO PARTNER.
- STEP 4 CHILDREN READ ALONE.
- STEP 5 READING RESPONSES.
- STEP 6 CHILDREN TAKE TEST HOME TO READ TO PARENTS

SESSIONS TWO- TEN. FOLLOW THE PROCEDURE OUTLINED IN FIRST SESSION.

SESSION 2	RE- READ	THE TRAIN HOME.
SESSION 3	READ	MAKING WAVES.
SESSION 4	RE- READ	MAKING WAVES.
SESSION 5	READ	HAPPILY EVER AFTER.
SESSION 6	RE-READ	HAPPILY EVER AFTER.
SESSION 7	READ	RAIDERS OF THE SECRET PLACE.
SESSION 8	RE-READ	RAIDERS OF THE SECRET PLACE.
SESSION 9	READ	TERRY PHILLIPS GENIUS.
SESSION 10	RE-READ	TERRY PHILLIPS GENIUS

FOLLOWING THE FINAL TEACHING SESSION THE CHILDREN ARE RE-TESTED TO DETERMINE POST INTERVENTION BURT AND TORCH SCORES TO ASSESS EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TEACHING STRATEGY.

PARENT FEEDBACK SURVEY.

Dear Parents,

As you are aware your child has been participating in a Research Project investigating the impact of Repeated Reading of Text on their reading ability. I would like you to complete the following short survey to gauge your perception of your child's reading behaviors as a result of the project.

Yours Sincerely,

Please circle your response.

1. Since the project began My child's reading appears to be

The same.

Appears better.

2 My child now reads to me

Never

Sometimes

More often.

3 My child's reading enjoyment seems to be.

The same

shows some enjoyment

really enjoys reading.

4 Do you have to ask your child to read to you?

YES

NO

SOMETIMES.

5 Does your child approach you to listen to them read?

Never

Sometimes

Often.

Other Comments.

Excel Data showing students information and pre/post test results

CHILD	GENDER	AGE IN MONTHS	TCH GRP	CNTRL GR	NESB	BURT PRE	BURT PO	TOR PRE	TOR POS
A	F	117	Y			57	59	44	48
B	F	124	Y		Y	37	41	27	36
C	M	110	Y			97	101	48	49
D	M	109	Y		Y	75	83	49	54
E	M	115	Y			63	73	36	41
F	M	118	Y		Y	88	97	56	61
G	M	109	Y		Y	85	94	43	56
H	F	109		Y	Y	88	96	44	61
I	F	123		Y	Y	62	76	39	41
J	M	117		Y		81	87	61	56
K	F	109		Y		48	52	39	41
L	M	107		Y		48	61	37	41
M	M	111		Y	Y	77	79	41	54