Teaching grade three and four students who are accurate decoders but poor comprehenders, strategies for determining and deepening meaning of familiar and unfamiliar words by: utilising the context of the text; generating synonyms; and using words expressively, will both improve vocabulary knowledge in breadth and depth and comprehension.

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ABSTRACT

The hypothesis for the intervention study is, *teaching grade three and four students who are accurate decoders but poor comprehenders, strategies for determining and deepening meaning of familiar and unfamiliar words by: utilising the context of the text; generating synonyms; and using words expressively, will both improve vocabulary knowledge in breadth and depth and comprehension.*

The hypothesis was formulated, based upon current research that indicates a strong link between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension, which may explain why students who are adequate decoders may be poor comprehenders.

Hence, by addressing the issue of vocabulary knowledge children's comprehension may improve.

Vocabulary knowledge is not only about breadth of vocabulary possessed (number of words), but the depth of vocabulary knowledge. The depth of vocabulary knowledge is about an individual's ability to use words in both their literal and abstract forms and it is the depth of vocabulary knowledge that is critical to comprehension.

The gap between decoding and comprehension is commonly evident in children from low socio economic backgrounds, as student's real life experiences may not provide the environment required to attain vocabulary knowledge for school success.

The gap between decoding and poor comprehension becomes most evident for the first time in the middle years of primary school.

The group of students selected for the study possessed adequate decoding abilities but poor comprehension, from middle years primary school, which has students predominately from low socio economic backgrounds.

Although overall greater gains were made by the teaching group when compared to the control group, results of the study have been inconclusive. All students in the teaching group showed improvement in synonym knowledge which suggests an improvement in vocabulary depth knowledge but only half the teaching group showed an increase in comprehension results.

Several reasons may be responsible of the outcome including , session intermittency and number (too few session over too long a period of time for skills to be consolidated and transferred out of session times).

Results suggest that the strategies used to increase student's vocabulary knowledge in breadth and depth were effective, however the study could be repeated with shorter sessions conducted daily over a period of time to

determine if frequency of sessions would make an impact on learning skills to improve comprehension, particularly the skill of finding meaning of unfamiliar/ unknown words from text.

INTRODUCTION -

"The end goal of reading is intact comprehension" (Oullette 2006. p555).

Students who are effective de-coders do not necessarily possess effective comprehension skills (Joshi 2005) . Current research indicates (Ouellette, 2006; Rupley 2005; Joshi, 2005) that there is a strong correlation between the acquisition of vocabulary and comprehension.

Joshi (2005, p209) notes "…..individuals with poor vocabulary have difficulty understanding written text", he further notes (p209) "there is a close relationship between vocabulary and comprehension".

It has also been reported (Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin 1990; cited in Oullette, 2006) that children of low socio economic status are most likely to display effective decoding and poor comprehension abilities, (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin 1990; cited in Oullette 2006) note that this gap is "especially prevalent by grade 4". One reason given for this in the research (Oullette 2006) is the gap between the student's real life experiences and the school curriculum.

Futhermore, studies indicate (Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin, 1990; cited in Oullette, 2006) that children from low income families are disadvantaged when it comes to vocabulary acquisition.

Recent research (Oullette 2006) indicates the depth component of vocabulary knowledge as having the strongest correlation to comprehension results. The term "depth vocabulary" as cited in Oullette (2006) is defined as the ability to know and use words on both literal and abstract levels.

Research further indicates (Joshi 2005) the impact of leaving poor vocabulary un-addressed in the early years of schooling in relation to student's comprehension abilities in later years of schooling. Cunningham and Stanovich (cited in Joshi, 2005) note that the correlation between vocabulary and comprehension may account for more than a 30% variance in reading comprehension by the eleventh grade.

It is believed that poor vocabulary knowledge is like "a double edged sword" for the student, if intervention does not take place, a phenomenon termed the "Matthew effect" is known to occur (Stanovich 1986, Walberg&Tsai 1983; cited in Joshi 2005).

The "Matthew effect" (Stanovich 1986, Walberg&Tsai 1983; cited in Joshi 2005, p555) describes how poor readers have a reduced opportunity to improve their reading capacity because they limit their choices to texts with familiar vocabulary in addition to reading fewer books. Paradoxically competent readers tend to choose books that challenge their existing vocabulary and read greater numbers of books, thereby continuously enhancing their opportunities to improve their reading.

However, there is hope for the student facing poor comprehension difficulties due to poor vocabulary knowledge. As research indicates (Ouellette, 2006; Rupley 2005; Joshi, 2005) the strong correlation between comprehension abilities and vocabulary knowledge, research also indicates (Joshi, 2005; Rupley, 2005; Oullette, 2006) that increasing vocabulary knowledge comprehension outcomes can be improved.

However, vocabulary knowledge must be taught so that students can know and use words in both their literal and abstract forms which is described by Oullette (2006) as "depth vocabulary".

Additionally, Joshi (2005) notes that students must be skilled using acquired vocabulary in its expressive form to make a difference to comprehension outcomes.

Rupely and Dee (2005) further comment that the effectiveness of teaching new vocabulary appears to be largely dependent upon the child making links to existing knowledge of words, hence the emphasis on teaching words in context as noted by (Joshi, 2005; Oullette, 2006) where links to the student's previous knowledge can be maximized.

Ways to assist students in making links with current knowledge to new vocabulary are noted by Rupley &Dee, (2005) who suggest strategies of webbing and semantic mapping and Joshi (2005), who describes strategies such as embedding new words in sentences, leaving words out of sentences, exploring synonyms, antonyms, structural analysis i.e morphemic roots and word origin.

Joshi (2005) also suggests a strategy Drop Everything and Write (DEAW) for 20 minutes as a teaching technique that can assist students to gain expressive mastery of new words.

The intervention study aimed to explore the link between vocabulary acquisition and acquisition of comprehension skills.

The students selected for the intervention study all display adequate abilities to decode text for their age level (PROBE 7-10.5 – appendices Excel Table A) for a decoding accuracy of 96% or higher (PROBE reading scores – Appendices Excel Table A) but have achieved poor (less than 75%) comprehension results for

either or both fiction and non fiction text (PROBE reading scores – appendices Excel Table A).

Additionally, the students selected for the intervention study are from a low socio economic region of Melbourne and the majority of school students are from families where a language other than English is the main language spoken at home.

Therefore based upon current research as reported in indicates (Ouellette, 2006; Rupley 2005; Joshi, 2005) the thesis for the study is*: "teaching grade three and four students strategies for determining meaning of unfamiliar words by: utilising the context of the text; generating synonyms and using these words expressively, will improve vocabulary knowledge and therefore comprehension in students who are accurate decoders but poor comprehenders.*

METHOD

<u>Participants</u>

A total of twelve students were involved in the intervention. Students were predominately grade three students aged between 8 and 9 with the exception of one student who was a grade four student aged 9.

The students came from two separate composite grade 3/4 classrooms.

Students were selected based upon their PROBE results (Parkin, Parkin and Poole 2002) gathered at the end of term one. PROBE is used routinely in the middle and upper levels of the school to assess decoding ability and comprehension.

Students undertaking a PROBE assessment are required to read a fiction and non fiction text aloud so their decoding skills can be recorded. After reading each text type (fiction and non fiction) students are required to respond orally to a series of questions asked by the assessor. The questions are of the following nature: literal, inferential, vocabulary, reorganisational, evaluation, reaction and are designed to assess the student's comprehension.

Students selected to participate in the study were considered competent decoders according to PROBE assessment guidelines that is, they possessed a decoding ability of 96%+ (Excel Table B – Appendices). The teaching group demonstrated an average decoding ability of 99%, the control group 96% (Excel Table B – Appendices).

For comprehension, students demonstrated a below competent comprehension ability (less than 70% accuracy –Excel Table B - Appendices) based upon PROBE assessment guidelines for at least one text type. The individual average

for comprehending text (fiction and non fiction) was 52%, the group average 51% (Excel Table B – Appendices). The teaching group demonstrated an average comprehension of 48.5%, the control group 43% (Excel Table B – Appendices)..

For 75% or 9 students (Excel Table A – Appendices) English is their second language (ESL). The teaching group consisted of 83% or 5 students from an ESL background, and the control group 67% or four student (Excel Table A – Appendices).

58% or 7 of the students (Excel Table A – Appendices) from the two groups had some form of previous intervention at the school in grade one to assist them with decoding skills. 25% or 3 students from the teaching group and 67% or 4 students from the control group had previous intervention in grade one (Excel Table A – Appendices).

Materials

Texts selected were both fiction and non fiction (Session Plans - Appendices) , as the majority of students 84% or 10 participants displayed weaknesses for comprehending both text types (comprehension score of under 75%) (Excel Table B - Appendices). All texts were graded 3.5-5.4 for the Flesch-Kincaid readability level.

Procedure.

The design used for the intervention was OXO. Students were tested for decoding and comprehension abilities using PROBE (Parkin, Parkin and Poole 2002), and for their synonym knowledge using John Munro's Synonym test (2005). All tests were conducted both before and after the intervention

Students were withdrawn from the classroom and undertook the lessons in the computer room next to their classroom. The computer room was selected because of access to *Microsoft* Dictionary and *Microsoft* Thesaurus which are more comprehensive than the classroom dictionaries and thesaurus, neither of which covered the range of vocabulary required for the lessons.

A total of five sessions comprising ten lessons were conducted over a period of five weeks. Week one consisted of one sessions, week two, two sessions were conducted, week three no sessions, week four one session and week five one session. Each session was of fifty minutes duration and contained two lessons.

The first lesson of each session consisted of 20 minutes duration and focused on students determining the meaning of words in context using either fiction or non fiction text. The steps involved, included individual students taking turns to read the text, the teacher identifying key words and asking each student, if they thought they knew the meaning of the word, to state its meaning and record it on

paper. Students were then requested to go through the steps of checking what they thought the word meant by using the surrounding words from the text. Student's suggestions were recorded on the whiteboard. Meanings were checked using *Microsoft* Word's dictionary function. Students were subsequently requested to repeat the process of using the surrounding text to determine further word meanings.

The second lesson of each session consisted of 30 minutes duration and focused on expanding students' vocabulary by determining the meaning of unfamiliar/key words using their own knowledge and *Microsoft* Dictionary. Unfamiliar / Key words were nominated predominately by the teacher.

Following on from determining meaning of unfamiliar/key words, students were encouraged to expand the depth of their knowledge of words by finding synonyms for words either from the surrounding text or from their own knowledge and subsequently verifying the meanings of the synonyms using *Microsoft Dictionary* and *Thesaurus*.

To further consolidate the expansion of student's vocabulary, students were required to complete at one or two activities that used new words acquired expressively. Upon completion of the synonym activity, children were required to select the most appropriate synonym/s from their list and replace them with the key word/words from the text.

To practice utilizing new words expressively students were required to take it in turns to read one or more sentences where the key word had been replaced by a synonym they selected from their lists. After expressively new words in oral form students were then required to write sentences using synonyms from the lists they had made and read their sentences to the group.

The amount of text content and the level of text difficultly increased throughout the study. Initially students were given short paragraphs of no more than five sentences, this gradually increased to an entire text.

In the first session skills required by the students for all five sessions were introduced. Students were asked to define the meaning of a key word in a sentence by using cues from other words in the sentence. Students attempted the activity then shared their responses. The teacher made the process explicit.

Following on from determining the meaning of a word within a sentence, two paragraphs were used covering a non fiction and a fiction text. One Key word was selected by the teacher from the first paragraph, and students were guided through the process of determining meaning of the key word from the immediate and surrounding sentences, *Microsoft* Dictionary was introduced to check definitions.

The second lesson introduced the use of synonyms and how to find synonyms using *Microsoft* Thesaurus and exploring alternate ways of using alternate words.

RESULTS

Overview

The areas assessed both pre and post intervention, covered vocabulary acquisition in the form of synonyms, decoding accuracy and comprehension.

Results did not provide clear support for the hypothesis that "teaching grade three and four students strategies for determining meaning of unfamiliar words by: utilising the context of the text; generating synonyms and using these words expressively, will improve vocabulary knowledge and therefore comprehension in students who are accurate decoders but poor comprehenders"
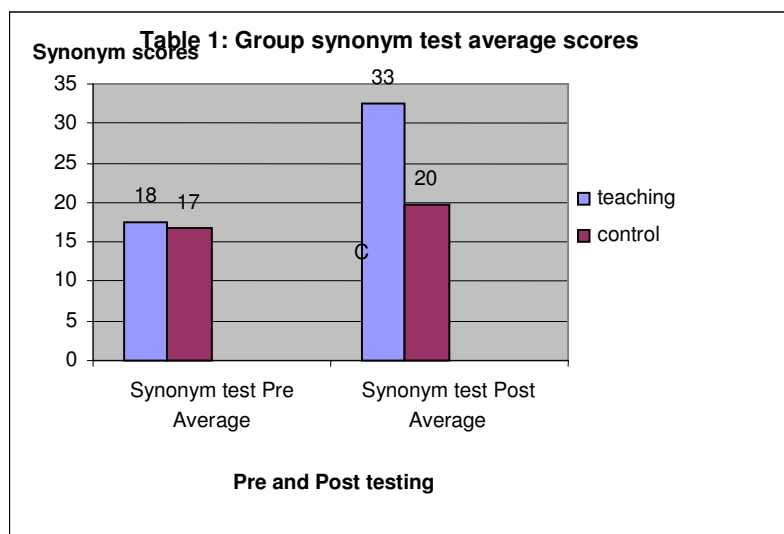
Although the teaching group demonstrated a greater increase in average results in two of the three areas tested (synonyms and comprehension), the average deviation was higher in both of these areas for the teaching group (synonym test .8, PROBE comprehension .7) when compared to the control group (synonym test .2, PROBE comprehension .4) (Excel Table B – Appendices)
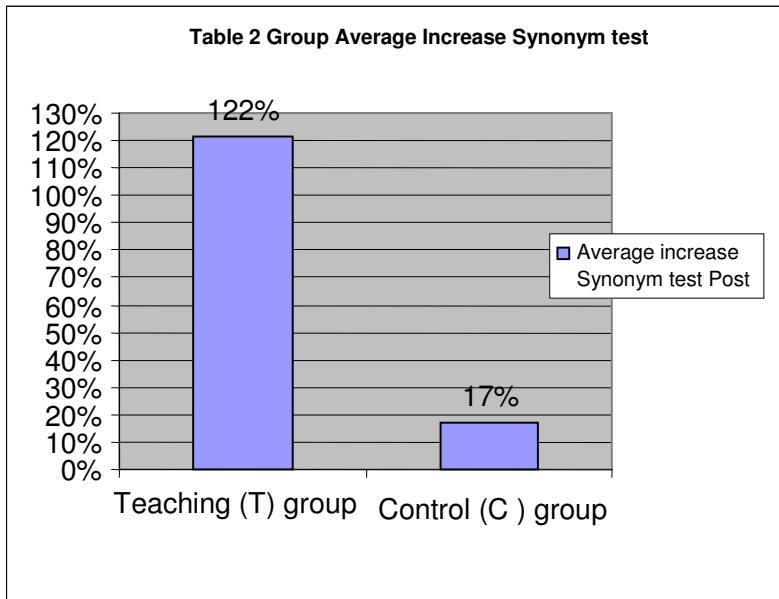
For the third area tested, which was decoding, little difference was noted in either groups with all children possessing a minimum decoding accuracy of 96% upon commencement of the intervention (Excel Table B – Appendices).

Synonyms

Both the teaching and the control group achieved a close average score for the pre test, the teaching group achieving an average of 18, the control group an average of 17.

Post testing of synonyms took place the week of the final session. The results showed the teaching group had far greater gains in synonym knowledge at the conclusion of the intervention period than the control group. The teaching group made average gains of 15 points (table 1) or 122% (table 2) and the control group 3 points or 17% (table 2). However the average standard deviation for the teaching group was four times greater at .8 than the control group at .2.

Table 1: Group synonym test average scores

Synonym scores

	teaching	control
Synonym test Pre Average	18	17
Synonym test Post Average	33	20

Pre and Post testing

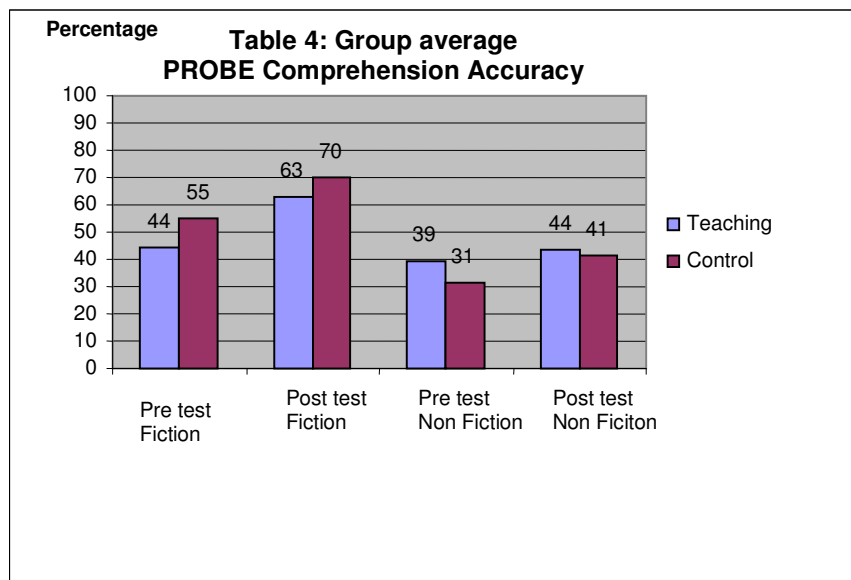**Table 2 Group Average Increase Synonym test**

Reading Accuracy

Little difference in average group reading accuracy scores for PROBE pre testing was evident, with the teaching group scoring slightly higher for both fiction and non fiction categories in the pre test (99% fiction and non fiction) than the control group which scored 96% for fiction and 97% for non fiction (table 3).

Table 3: Group PROBE Reading Accuracy
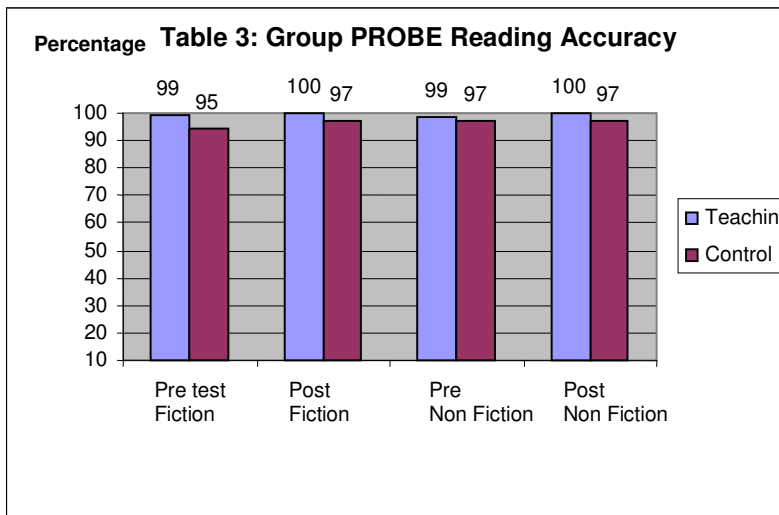
Additionally little change was noted between the groups in post testing with increases of no more 2 %, this was noted in the control group for fiction text.

Comprehension

Both the teaching group and the control group showed improvements in accuracy of responses to the comprehension questions for both the PROBE fiction and non fiction texts between pre testing and post testing periods.

Table 4: Group average PROBE Comprehension Accuracy

Percentage

	Teaching	Control
Pre test Fiction	44	55
Post test Fiction	63	70
Pre test Non Fiction	39	31
Post test Non Ficiton	44	41

The pre test results for comprehension of fiction text show the control group achieving a higher average outcome for correct responses,55% (table 4) than the teaching group, 44% (table 4). Upon post testing the control group still possessed a higher average accuracy 70% (table 4) to the teaching group 63% (table 4). However, greatest average gains in correct responses to comprehension questions for fiction text were achieved by the teaching group (table 5) with an average improvement of 67% whereas the control group achieved an average improvement of 28%, although the average deviation for the teaching group was higher at 1, than the control group at .6.

The pre test results for comprehension of non fiction text, showed the teaching group with higher average results, 39% (table 4) to the control group at 31% (table 4) . However, as with the fiction text, the greatest improvement in comprehension results to non fiction text was demonstrated in the teaching group, achieving an average increase of 53% (table 5) to the control group's average increase of 40% (table 5). There was a slight difference in the average deviation with the teaching group at .4 and the control group at .3.

Table 5: Percentage average increase pre & post test PROBE Comprehension
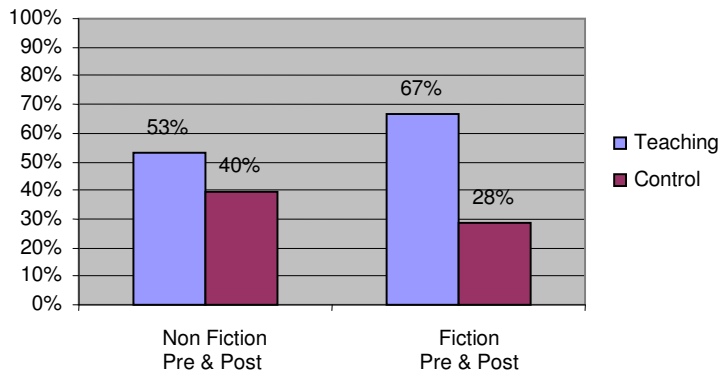
Individual Teaching Group results

Student T1

Table 6: T1 Pre & Post test Average comprehension difference & synonym difference
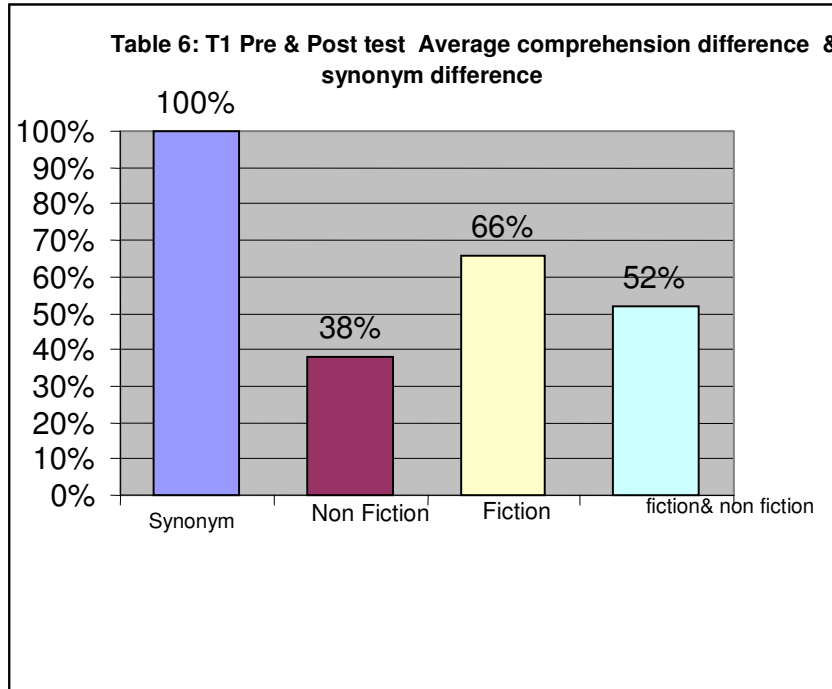
Student T1 (table 6) showed an increase in all areas tested. The student demonstrated a 100% increase in scores for the synonym test. Overall student T1 demonstrated an average 52% increase in correct responses to PROBE comprehension questions for both fiction and non fiction texts, with a 38% increase in correct responses for non fiction text and a 66% increase in correct responses to fiction text.

Student T1's results indicate both an increase in vocabulary along with an increase in comprehension ability thus supporting the hypothesis.

Student T2

Table 7: T2 Pre & Post test average comprehension difference & synonym difference
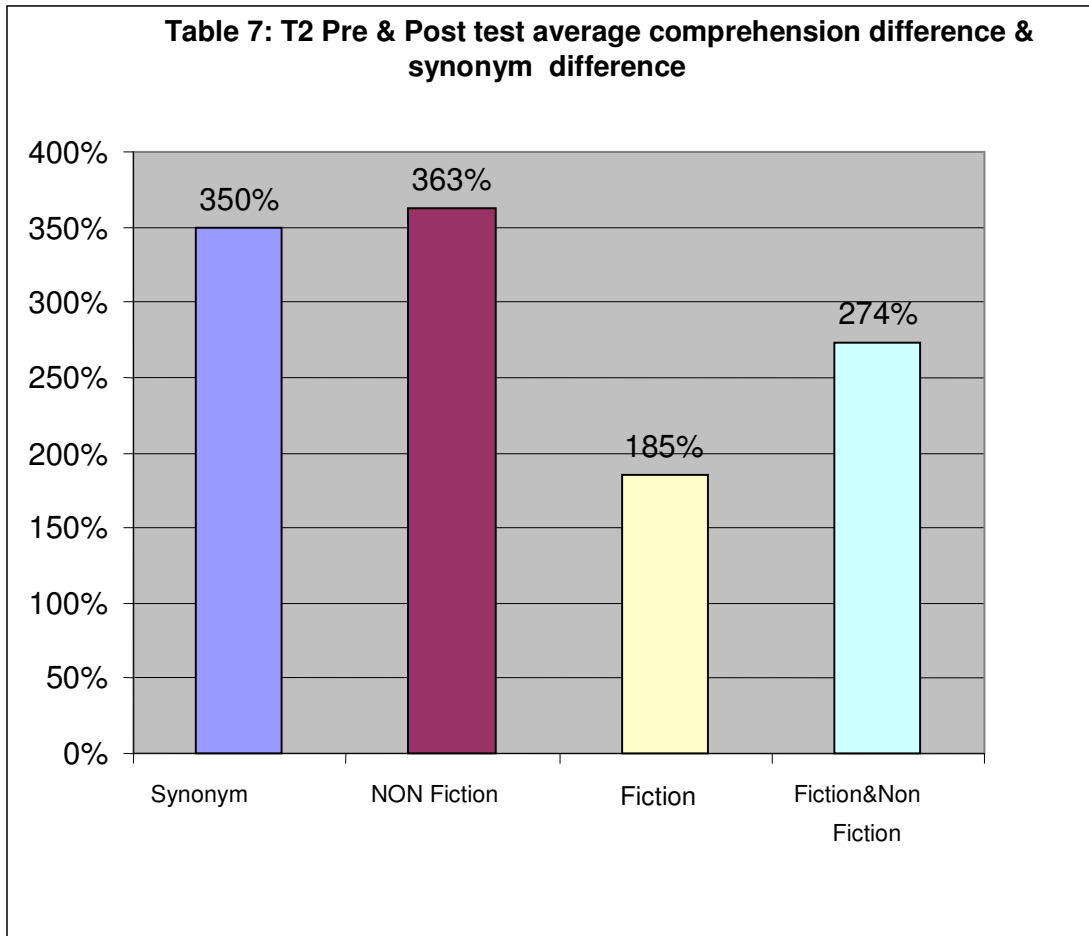
Student T2 like student T1 showed gains in all areas assessed (table 7). Student T2 increased scores for synonym test by 350%. Overall student T2 demonstrated an average 274% increase in correct responses to comprehension questions for both fiction and non fiction texts, with a 363% increase in correct responses for non fiction text and a 185% increase in correct responses to fiction text.

Student T2's results indicate both an increase in vocabulary along with an increase in comprehension ability thus supporting the hypothesis.
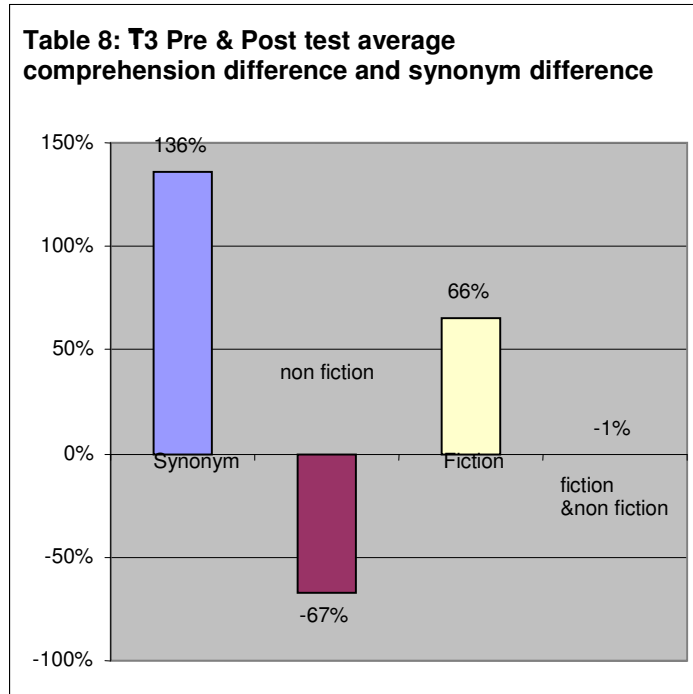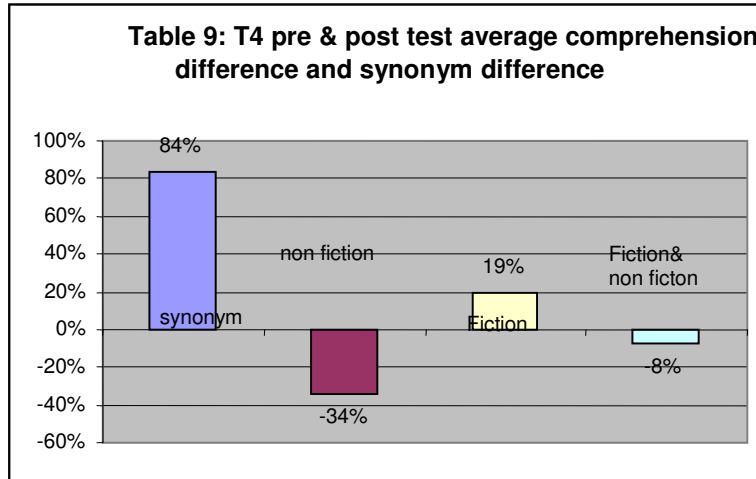
Student T3

Table 8: T3 Pre & Post test average comprehension difference and synonym difference

Student T3 did not show gains in all areas assessed (table 8). Student T3 increased scores for the synonym test by 136%. However, overall student T3 demonstrated an average -1% decrease in correct responses to comprehension questions for both fiction and non fiction texts, with a -67% decrease in correct responses for non fiction text and a 66% increase in correct responses to fiction text.

Student T3's results indicate an increase in vocabulary with mixed comprehension results. Gains in comprehension were made for fiction text but not for non fiction text. Student T3's results do not indicate a strong support for the hypothesis due to the decrease in comprehension of non fiction results.

Student T4

Table 9: T4 pre & post test average comprehension difference and synonym difference

Student T4 did not show gains in all areas assessed (table 9). Student T4 increased scores for the synonym test by 84%. However overall, student T3 demonstrated an average -8% decrease in correct responses to comprehension questions for both fiction and non fiction texts, with a -34% decrease in correct responses for non fiction text and a 19% increase in correct responses to fiction text.

Student T4's results indicate an increase in vocabulary with mixed comprehension results. Gains in comprehension were made for fiction text but not for non fiction text. Student T3's results do not indicate a strong support for the hypothesis due to the decrease in comprehension of non fiction results.
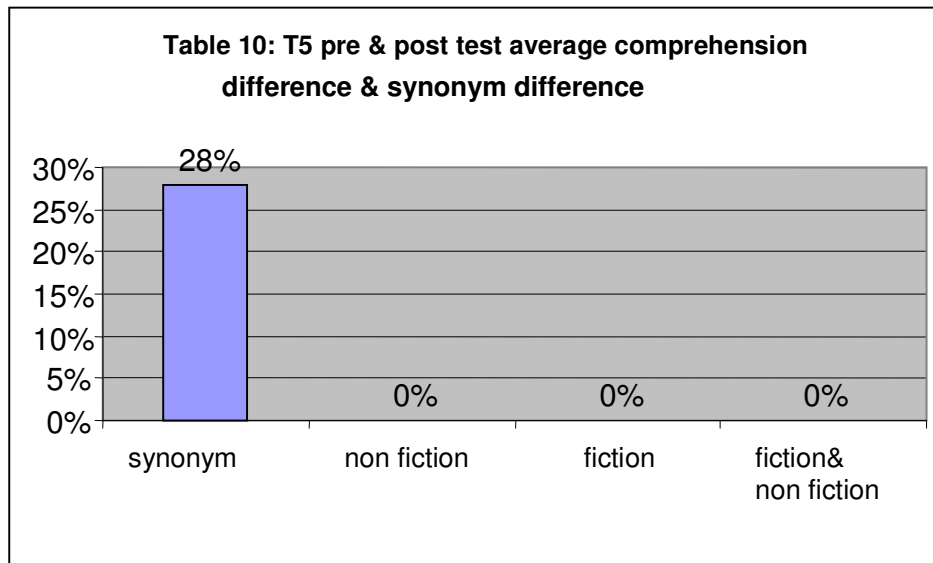
Student T5

Table 10: T5 pre & post test average comprehension difference & synonym difference

Student T5 did not show gains in all areas assessed (table 9). Student T5 increased scores for the synonym test by 28%. However overall, student T3 demonstrated a static result (0%) in responses to comprehension questions for both fiction and non fiction texts.

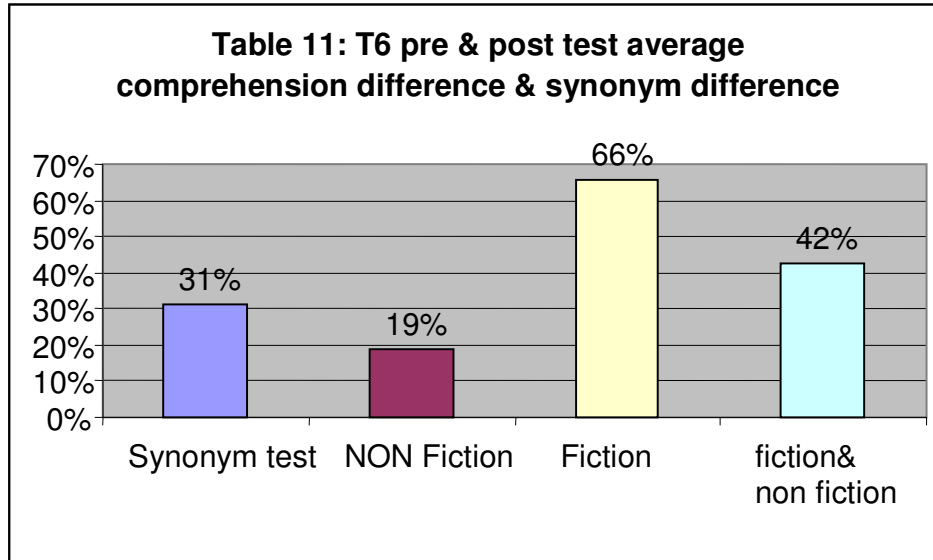Student T5's results do not indicate a strong support for the hypothesis due to neither a decrease or increase in comprehension for either fiction or non fiction texts.

Student T6

Table 11: T6 pre & post test average comprehension difference & synonym difference

Student T6 (table 11) showed an increase in all areas tested. The student T6 demonstrated a 31% increase in scores for the synonym test. Overall student T6 demonstrated an average 42% increase in correct responses to comprehension questions for fiction and non fiction texts, with a 19% increase in correct responses for non fiction text and a 42% increase in correct responses to fiction text.

Student T1's results indicate both an increase in vocabulary along with an increase in comprehension ability thus supporting the hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

Data Interpretation

Results did not provide clear support for the hypothesis that "*teaching grade three and four students who are accurate decoders but poor comprehenders, strategies for determining and deepening meaning of familiar and unfamiliar words by: utilising the context of the text; generating synonyms; and using words expressively, will both improve vocabulary knowledge in breadth and depth and comprehension.*

However there is evidence to support the strategies used for improving vocabulary knowledge as noted by Joshi (2005) Oulette (2006) Rupely and Dee (2005). Post testing of synonyms took place the week of the final session. The results showed the teaching group had far greater gains in synonym knowledge at the conclusion of the intervention period than the control group. The teaching group made an average group gain of 15 points (table 1) or 122% (table 2) the control group made average group gains of 3 points (table 1) or 17% (table 2). Although the average standard deviation for the teaching group was four times greater at .8 than the control group at .2 , four of the six students from the teaching group achieved an increase in synonym scores of more than 50% (Excel Table A – appendices). In comparison, the control group had only one student achieve more than 50% with one student from the control group actually achieving a negative result (Excel Table A – appendices).

In relation to comprehension abilities, again the teaching group achieved overall greater gains than the control but, group results were mixed, so it is difficult to determine what impact if any, increased vocabulary knowledge had on comprehension.

However, results from half of the students in the teaching group (T1, T2 , T6) did show support for the hypothesis.

Student T2 (table 7) who had the greatest increase in synonym scores (350%) also had the greatest increase in correct comprehension responses for both fiction (180%) and non fiction text (363%) (table 6). Student T1 (table 6) showed a similar pattern to Student T2 with an increase in synonym scores of 100% and increases in correct comprehension responses for fiction (38%) and non fiction (66%) text. Student T6 also showed (table 11) increases in synonym scores (31%) and increases in correct comprehension responses to fiction (66%) and non fiction (19%).

However the three remaining students or 50% of the teaching group produced mixed results for comprehension although all made gains in synonym acquisition. Two students T3 (table 8) and T4 (table 9) produced less number of correct

responses to non fiction comprehension questions than for the pre test. T3 (-67%), T4 (-34%) but both made gains for response to fiction comprehension questions T3 (66%) and T4 (19%).

The remaining student T5 (table 10) did not show any movement in accuracy of responses to comprehension questions.

Variables

As a part time Literacy Support Teacher I attend the school 2 days per week and consequently the frequency of my attendance combined with a busy school time table restricted the duration, frequency, regularity and number of lessons.

A total of five sessions comprising ten lessons were conducted over a period of five weeks. However, these sessions were irregularly spaced throughout the intervention period. This may have impacted on some student's ability to transfer the skill of finding meaning of words in context to texts that were not part of the intervention study.

Another issue that may have impacted on the mixed comprehension results could have been the timing of the testing. All students undertook the Synonym Test (Munro 2006) the day after the final session – and all children from the teaching group showed gains in this area.

Additionally, all three children from the teaching group who's results showed evidence of support for the hypothesis were tested the day after the intervention took place, the remaining three student were tested two weeks later.

During the two week lapse between the last session and testing, the classroom teacher had commenced an intervention with the teaching group students to assist them in understanding comprehension questions. Perhaps the classroom teacher's intervention proved confusing for the children, hence producing static or negative results for comprehension improvement.

Implications

Implications for teaching and future research, include:

Sustainability of results, perhaps a more consistent, frequent and numerous application of the intervention study particularly for practicing the skill of determining the meaning of text from context may achieve more favourable results for all students.

Significance of oral language in acquisition of vocabulary and comprehension. It is important to note that originally, expressive use of newly acquired vocabulary was only to be undertaken in written form, however when students were requested to write sentences of their own in the first session (lesson 2) using synonyms, they appeared bewildered, and couldn't commence the task. Subsequently, adjustment was made to the lesson to include construction of oral sentences before the commencement of written sentences. This strategy appeared to promote ease for writing sentences amongst all students.

Significance of picture cues in acquisition of vocabulary and comprehension. It was also evident from the first session that picture cues assisted greatly in helping students understand meaning of words. For some students the meanings of the words that supported the key words were unclear but pictures proved invaluable alongside words to help in understanding definitions. For the first session a Google Image Search was used as a spontaneous solution. Subsequently future sessions, except the final session, incorporated pictures of key words to assist children's comprehension of key words.

Challenging text to increase vocabulary and comprehension : The strategy of increasing the amount and grade difficultly of text worked well – this was done primarily to stretch student's comfort zones and increase confidence as readers to counteract the "Mathew Effect" (Stanovich 1986, Walberg&Tsai 1983; cited in Joshi 2005) where poor readers have a reduced opportunity to improve their reading capacity because they limit their choices to texts with familiar vocabulary in addition to reading fewer books.

However, the final session proved overwhelming for some students possibly because of the amount of text (this was doubled from session 4) and there wasn't time for students to work through all the key words. Additionally, for this session there was not scaffolding of picture cues.

APPENDICES

TABLES

Refer to excel file Results_data_final.xls

SESSION PLANS 1- 5, incorporating lessons 1-10

2 lessons per session:

Session outline:
1. First lesson - 20 minutes focus on determining meaning of words from context
2. Second lesson - 30 minutes focus on generating synonyms and expressive use of vocabulary.

Grade: 3& 4 students
Participant No: 6 students

Session	Texts	Genre	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level
Session 1	STARS Book 1 A and Book 1 B	Fiction	3.5
Session 2	Koala and the Billy Can –	Fiction	4.3
Session 3	The Jaguar: A Great Cat	non fiction	4.9
Session 4	The Jaguar: A Great Cat	non fiction	4.9
Session 5	It's not a rat, it's not a cat, it's a ……	non fiction	5.4

SESSION 1 / 50 minutes

LESSON 1 / 20 minutes / Introduction to finding words in context
Materials: STARS (2006) Part 1, Book A&B / computers with *Microsoft* Thesaurus and Dictionary

Time	Activity	Procedure
5 mins	Finding the meaning of a word in a sentence Ref: pg 72 STARS (2006), Part 1, Book B	1. STUDENTS WRITE MEANING OF the word CROWD 2. SHOW on O/H and READ the sentence 3. STUDENTS WRITE meaning of the word CROWD after hearing the sentence. 4. STUDENTS SHARE what words in the sentence (clues) helped them to figure out the meaning of the word *crowd.*
5 mins	Finding the meaning of a word in a paragraph. <u>Ref</u>: pg 59 STARS (2006), Part 1, Book A	1. SHOW paragraph on O/H 2. STUDENTS READ paragraph together: 3. TELL STUDENTS they are going to figure out what the word *SEEDLING* means from the paragraph. 4. STUDENTS WRITE what they think the word *SEEDLING* means. 5. UNDERLINE the sentence that comes before and after the word *SEEDLING*. 6. STUDENTS PICK out the words/phases they think help determine what the word *SEEDLING* means. 7. STUDENTS SAY what they think the word seedling means after looking at the sentences. 8. STATE that clues (in the form of words) are often found in sentences before and after a new word
10 mins	REPEAT strategy for finding words in a paragraph. Ref: pg 60 STARS (2006) Part 1, Book A	• REPEAT steps 1-7 for finding a word in a paragraph for the word "soar" from new paragraph • DISCUSS children's definitions cuing into the steps they used to find meaning from the text.

SESSION 1

LESSON 2 / 30 minutes/ Introduction to synonyms

TIME	OUTCOME	PROCEDURE
15 mins	Defining synonyms Finding synonyms using *MicroSoft* thesaurus.	1. STATE another way of finding out what words mean is by looking up other words that mean the same thing. 2. STATE we can do this using a Thesaurus which can be located through MS Word or in a book also called a Thesaurus. 3. REVIEW by reading as a group, paragraphs session 1 (pg 59 &60) and the meaning of the words "crowd" and "soar" determined from the context. 4. DEMONSTATE using the words "crowd" and "soar" how to look up other words using *Mircosoft* Thesaurus. 5. STUDENTS WRITE other words listed in the Thesaurus for both words and circle the word/ words they think are the most like the words used in the sentences. 6. STUDENTS REPLACE the words "crowd" and "soar" with words they have chosen from *Microsoft* Thesaurus. 7. Each STUDENT READS out their new sentences and discuss the appropriateness of the word chosen.
	Expressive vocabulary - Composing sentences from synonyms	8. Each STUDENT CREATES one or more sentences of their own using synonyms for the words "crowd" and "soar" 9. Each STUDENT SHARES one sentence they have created using synonyms from the word "crowd" or "soar"

SESSION 2

LESSON 3/ 20 minutes

Materials
Text: Koala & the Billycan: (pg2) Esta de Flossard /
Magazine pictures for key words / Key word cards / computers with *Microsoft* Thesaurus and Dictionary

Time	Activity	Procedure
(1-3) 10 mins	Finding the meaning of a word in context. Text: Koala & the Billycan: (pg2) Esta de Flossard	1. DISTRIBUTE copy of text to students: 2. READ (shared reading) paragraph with group. Ask children to underline any words they are not sure of. 3. REVIEW how to find the meaning of a word from the text – WRITE steps up on whiteboard
(4-5) 5 mins		4. CHOOSE one word that most children don't know/unsure of and go through procedure for finding meaning in text. ASK children to IDENTIFY any word/phrases that they think might help and EXPLAIN why. 5. CHECK proposed meaning but using *Microsoft* Thesaurus.
(6) 5 mins		6. STUDENTS SELECT another word they don't know/unsure of and follow procedure outlined.

SESSION 2/ LESSON 4/ 30 minutes

Time	Activity	Procedure
15 mins	Generating synonyms	1. TEACHER PROVIDES cards of synonyms and magazine picture prompts for key words from text 2. STUDENTS SORT synonyms under correct headings referring to *Microsoft* Thesaurus or *Microsoft* Dictionary if necessary. 3. Once words have been selected and checked by teacher – CHILDREN REPLACE a synonym with one key word from the text and read sentence to group.
15 minutes	Expressive vocabulary – composing sentences from synonyms	1. STUDENTS SELECT a synonym for each key word from the text and select a relevant picture. 2. STUDENTS ORALLY COMPOSE a sentence for each word then writes the sentence down.

Beautiful

gorgeous

good looking

striking

Snooze

Special

sleep   doze   nap

particular

get to

unusual

extraordinary

contact

Reach

achieve

SESSION 3 Date: 31/4/07

LESSON 5 / 20 minutes

<u>Materials:</u>
Text: The Jaguar: A great Cat: John Munroe (2005?)
Predict and Check Chart (the reading activity handbook) Sheena Cameron, 2004
Magazine pictures related to key words / Key word cards
Computers with *Microsoft* Thesaurus and Dictionary

Time	Activity	Procedure
(1) 2 mins (2) 5 mins (3)- (6) 13 mins	Review – how to find the meaning of a word in context.	1. REVIEW how to find the meaning of a word from the text using sequence from cut outs (children, as a class go through and order sequence with teacher support). DISPLAY sequence on whiteboard. 2. GROUP SHARED READING first four paragraphs from text. STUDENTS to underline any words they are not sure of. 3. INTRODUCE use of <u>Predict and Check Chart</u>. 4. CHOOSE ONE word that most children don't know/unsure of and go through procedure for finding meaning in context using <u>Predict and Check Chart</u>. 5. STUDENTS CHECK their proposed meaning by using a *Microsoft* dictionary and record meaning if different from meaning gained in context. 6. STUDENTS FIND synonyms for the word and record on the chart and discuss which are best to replace the current word in the text.

SESSION 3 / LESSON 6 / 30 MINUTES

Time	Outcome	Procedure
(1)– (4) 15 mins (5) 15 mins	Students find their own meanings and generate synonyms. Expressive vocabulary - composing sentences with synonyms	1. TEACHER PROVIDES cards for key words from text and magazine picture prompts– STUDENTS put their meaning down then look up *Microsoft* dictionary to confirm meaning and select appropriate magazine picture. 2. STUDENTS SEARCH their own synonyms using *Microsoft* Thesaurus. 3. Once words have been completed and checked by teacher STUDENTS SELECT the best fit synonym and replace within the text. 4. EACH reads adjusted sentence to the class. 5. EACH STUDENT chooses one or two synonyms and composes a sentence orally to say to the group then writes the sentence down. Students may use magazine pictures as prompts.

Big

Around

Family

Includes

Great

Like

Similarities

Stocky

13

Predict and check Chart

Name: Title and Author:

Word	Para/ Page no:	Your definition	Expert Definition	Synonyms

SESSION 4 / LESSON 7

Text: The Jaguar: A great Cat: Author John Munro
Predict and Check Chart / Key word cards / Magazine picture prompts related to key words
Computers with *Microsoft* Thesaurus and Dictionary

Time	Outcome	Procedure
20 mins	Review - Finding the meaning of a word in context.	1. STUDENTS RECAP main points of first four paragraphs . 2. STUDENTS PARTICIPATE in SHARED READING of last four paragraphs. 3. STUDENTS UNDERLINE any words they are not sure of. 4. STUDENTS IDENTIFY a word they are unsure of/don't know – record words on whiteboard. 5. TEACHER SELECTS one word - STUDENTS REVIEW how to find the meaning of a word from the text using the text itself for an unknown word (refer to chart for sequence after STUDENTS have RECALLED steps). 6. TEACHER REVIEWS use of Predict and Check Chart. 7. STUDENTS IDENTIFY word/phrases they think might assist to determine unknown words and record their meaning on chart, STUDENTS CONFIRM with *Microsoft* Dictionary.

SESSION 4 / LESSON 8

Time	Activity	Procedure
30 mins	generate synonyms. Expressive use of synonyms Consolidation	1. STUDENTS FIND synonyms for their selected words and record on <u>predict and check chart</u>. 2. TEACHER PROVIDES cards and magazine pictures for key words from text – STUDENTS determine their meaning, check with *Microsoft* Dictionary then find synonyms using *Microsoft* Thesaurus or MS Word and record on chart. 3. Once words have been completed and checked by teacher STUDENTS SELECT the best fit synonym and replace within the text. 4. EACH STUDENT replaces one word in text with another synonym and reads adjusted sentence to the class. 5. In pairs STUDENTS COMPOSE sentences orally using synonyms using picture prompts if required 6. STUDENTS WRITE oral sentences down.

ENEMY

Strong

Natural

WILD

shrink

Bony

dense

scattered

THROUGHOUT

SESSON 5 / LESSON 9

Text: It's not a rat, it's not a cat, it's a………: John Munro (2005)
Predict and Check Chart/ computers with *Microsoft* Thesaurus and Dictionary

Time	Outcome	Procedure
20 mins	Review - Finding the meaning of a word in context.	1. STUDENTS PARTICIPATE in shared reading of text. 2. STUDENTS underline words they are not sure of. 3. ASK STUDENTS for a word they are unsure of/don't know and ask STUDENT to model how to find the meaning of a word from the text using the text itself to determine the unknown word (refer to chart for sequence after STUDENT has told you what steps to take if required). 4. STUDENTS REVIEW how to use Predict and Check Chart. 5. STUDENTS state other words they don't know/ are unsure of. 6. TEACHER SELECTS another word that most children don't know/unsure of and go through procedure for finding meaning in text using the Predict and Check Chart. 7. STUDENTS identify word/phrases that they think might help to explain the unknown word and record their best guess of meaning on predict and check chart. 8. STUDENTS check meaning of word using *MicroSoft* Dictionary. 9. STUDENTS independently select another word they don't know/unsure of and follow procedure.

Time	Activity	Procedure
30 mins	Generate synonyms. Expressive use of synonyms Consolidation	1. TEACHER highlights some key words from text– 2. STUDENTS determine meaning, confirm with *Microsoft* dictionary, then, using their own knowledge and *Microsoft* Thesaurus determine at least two synonyms for the key word and write down in their predict and check chart. 3. STUDENTS continue to generate synonyms for key words the teacher has selected by referring to their chart and/ or (if the word hasn't been previously recorded on their chart) looking up synonyms using Microsoft Thesaurus and record on chart. 4. STUDENTS select the best fit synonym and replace within the text (they write the synonym into the text above the original word). 5. Each student reads one sentence each that has a word replaced. 6. In pairs STUDENTS COMPOSE oral sentences using synonyms. Independently, students write up sentences composed orally. 7. RECAP sequence for finding a word in context.

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