Explicitly teaching Year Two children to paraphrase will lead to improvement in comprehension.
ABSTRACT

Many readers across all ages read with word accuracy that far exceeds their comprehension accuracy. Current and past research supports the view that explicit teaching of comprehension strategies assists readers to improve their comprehension ability.

This study focuses on the hypothesis that “Explicitly teaching Year Two children to paraphrase will improve comprehension.”

The study used an OXO design, withdrawing three students from the classroom and implementing an intervention program to teach synonym use and paraphrasing strategies. Lessons were audiotaped and notes taken immediately afterwards. Three students were involved, two females and one male all aged between 7.5 – 8 yrs.

The findings indicated improvement in comprehension for two students indicating support for the hypothesis. The third did not show improvement in the post-test but confounding factors are discussed in this paper.

Research studied for this paper indicate that explicit teaching of strategies for comprehending is a vital factor for assisting students to become competent comprehenders as well as word decoders. Competent reading necessarily involves understanding the text being read.
INTRODUCTION

Many young readers with high word-decoding and fluency skills do not score as highly in tests relating to comprehension skills. It is generally assumed that children with high-level decoding skills are similarly competent in the area of comprehension, but this isn’t necessarily the case. Observational and testing records in the school where this study took place show there are several students at the senior level with high decoding/low comprehension skills. When the children in the junior years (P-2) were tested and/or observed early this year (2006), similar situations appeared. This could simply be that phonological and accuracy skills develop more quickly than comprehension skills in the early years. However, comprehension skills should be taught and developed from the beginning of formal education in literacy. As Snowball (2006) points out, reading and comprehension are necessarily connected for effective reading. She notes “If a student can read words but doesn't comprehend their meaning, is he or she really reading? The answer is no. Therefore, teaching and learning about comprehension is of paramount importance, from the very beginning of reading instruction and right through all years of school, in all curriculum areas”. Harris and Sipay, (1990) (as cited by Fisk and Hurst 2003) note that “Being able to restate another’s thoughts clearly and unambiguously is a crucial test of whether the thoughts were understood.” “The criterion for success of a literacy program is surely that children become independent readers who choose to read for many different purposes throughout their lives.) Hornsby (2000) Independent readers need not only phonological skills but accurate comprehending strategies in order to obtain meaning from print.

A study by Nation and Norbury (2005), (as cited in Woolley 2005), in the United Kingdom showed that poor comprehenders generally had good reading fluency, accuracy, and phonological skills. This indicates that they focus more on word decoding and less on the meaning of the text. (Cain and Norbury 1999; Nation et al, 2004, as cited in Woolley 2005) Some 78% of the poor comprehenders tested by Nation and Norbury at ages 8-9 still had difficulties with comprehension when tested again at ages 13-14,(cited in Woolley 2005) This confirms the notion that readers with high levels of accuracy don’t automatically develop high level comprehension skills at a similar rate. Therefore the teaching of comprehension strategies from the early stages of literacy learning is vital.

J.Munro (2004) states that to comprehend written text is “To convert written information to knowledge.” (J.Munro 2004,p.835)

Research has shown that it is the actual meaning of a written text that is retained during comprehension, rather than the “linguistic stimulus itself.” (Kintsch, 1988, as cited in Munro, 2004).

The importance of teaching readers how to read, and how to use the strategies necessary for reading is noted by Munro (course notes 2005).

“It is useful to identify two types of strategies students need to learn to use when reading: how to comprehend the text they read and how to manage their reading activity.” 1. Comprehending strategies involve methods of manipulation and linking ideas at each level, such as inferring, summarizing. “These are part of a readers’ literacy knowledge, their knowledge of how to make sense of written text.” 2. “Actions readers use to manage and direct the use of the comprehending strategies, e.g. decide when and why to use each action.” These actions are used manage and direct reading activity.
Katims and Harris (1997) state that “Learning strategies are techniques, principles or routines that enable students to learn to solve problems and complete tasks independently.” In the same paper, they cite Freire (1985) in noting that reading is recognized by teachers and researchers as a “strategic process that requires students to actively construct meaning from text.” Furthermore, they note that “The paraphrasing strategy has been demonstrated to significantly increase the reading comprehension of students with and without learning disabilities.”

It is noted by Munro (2002) that paraphrasing at the sentence level allows readers to learn new ways of discussing the ideas in the topic, connect these with what they know already, and to retain this information in their short-term memory. By retelling and talking about the sentence, the reader consolidates the new information with known concepts.

Based on the research to date one would assume that those readers with high word decoding, accuracy and fluency, along with low comprehending skills, are focusing on the text at word level but have not acquired the strategies required for comprehending.

Present Study This present study aims to build on current research and to examine the value of explicitly teaching Year Two children with high-level word decoding skills and lower comprehension skills the strategy of paraphrasing. When paraphrasing, readers retell sentences, replacing as many words as possible with their own words. “Their task is to generate a literal representation of a sentence read by substituting as many of the words and phrases in it” (J.Munro, 2004). Teaching the strategy of paraphrasing will necessarily involve the teaching of synonyms to improve the student’s ability to retell sentences and stories in their own words. The strategy of paraphrasing was selected for this study as it focuses on reading at the sentence level, thus requiring literal comprehension of what is read. Keeping the focus and comprehension strategy as simple as possible is desirable for the age group being targeted. According to Munro (2004), it could be assumed that paraphrasing might be acquired earlier than strategies requiring existing knowledge, inferring, integration of ideas, etc. Therefore it would be a suitable strategy for younger students. The students selected are familiar, within the class context, with retelling stories, and this will be extended during the intervention.

Prediction
Explicitly teaching Year Two children to paraphrase will lead to improvement in comprehension.
METHOD

Design
The study uses an OXO design. The intervention lessons were designed to explicitly teach paraphrasing skills to students showing high word-decoding accuracy combined with lower comprehension ability. The gain in comprehension accuracy will be monitored over the course of these intervention lessons. Pre-testing and post-testing consisted of Synonym Knowledge (made by the author) and PROBE reading assessment. Informal assessment of paraphrasing took place during last two lessons.

Participants
The three Grade Two students involved in this project were selected by their class teacher on the basis of their word-reading skills being considerably higher than their comprehension skills. This was determined by formal testing at the start of the school year, and the teacher’s own observational records. The class teacher believes that improved comprehension will prove to be the factor which allows them to achieve at a much higher level. All students are generally working at average or slightly above average in most areas of the curriculum. The students attend a primary school in a moderate socioeconomic area on the urban fringe.

Reading levels and comprehension ages at the beginning and the end of the intervention are shown along with pre-test and post-test results in Appendix 1

Student 1: Female, D.O.B 27/10/98 AGE 7yrs 6mths
Middle child in family of three. Entered school with a high level of decoding, lower comprehension. This has continued, with student reading confidently, fluently and with expression, with word accuracy rate at a much higher level than that of comprehension. Parents are both education professionals.

Reading at Reading Recovery Level 28 (Class Text Sets)

Student 2: Male, D.O.B. 26/7.98 Age: 7yrs 9mths
Youngest of two boys. Diagnosed with ADHD two years ago, taking the medication Ritalin.

Excellent oral skills Changed classes due to social issues just prior to this study starting. Is now maturing socially and is enjoying writing action/adventure stories in class.

Little back-up at home with reading - mother says it causes many disagreements. Home life is unsettled and at present has some impact on education.

Is very active at home in preference to quiet reading or academic pursuits. Likes to go motorbike riding with father who is a competitive shooter.

Reading at Reading Recovery Level 20 (class text Sets)

Student 3: D.O.B: 7/4/98 AGE 8 YRS
Female, third child of five.

Excellent oral skills. High achiever in maths

Reading at Reading Recovery Level 28 (Class Text Sets)

None of the students has taken part in Reading Recovery or other intervention programs.
Materials

Materials used included the following:

- PROBE Comprehension Testing Kit (for pre- and post-test)
- Synonym tests (made by the author) pre-test and post test (see appendices)
- Posters (of clowns) for picture chats
- Word and sentence cards (see appendices)
- Narrative texts *Little Brother’s Haircut (Reading Recovery Level 20)
- *Monster for Hire (Level 26)
- *Nobody’s Bunny (level 26)
- Blackboard/whiteboard and chalk or markers
- Texta markers

Procedure

Ten intervention lessons were planned but only nine took place due to unexpected time constraints towards the end of intervention period. Two pre-test sessions and one post-test took place.

All three children were withdrawn together, from their classroom, for 30-40 minute sessions during their normal literacy time. This usually took place at 9.30 or 10 a.m. Intervention lessons were held in the music room, or the meeting room depending on availability. Lessons took place at a rate of three or four a week over a three week period, so the work was intensive for the students.

The first session consisted of a picture chat based on two large, colourful posters of clowns. As the use of synonyms is an integral part of the paraphrasing strategy, it necessarily became part of each intervention lesson. After discussing students’ existing knowledge of clowns, sentences were constructed and written on board. A list of adjectives relating to clowns was made, and the sentences and words were later transferred to flashcards / sentence-strips. Synonyms were discussed and produced for the adjectives, and used as a revision activity.

Lessons 2-9 were based on J. Munro’s outline for teaching paraphrasing (Appendix 3b, Literacy Intervention Strategies 16/08/05) with adaptations where appropriate. These sessions involved 6-8 components covering: *Text re-telling and revising synonyms (from previous session), *shared reading of previous text and cued re-tell; *teaching new synonyms; *shared reading of new text; *teacher Modeling of paraphrasing technique; *students stating the strategy then reading and retelling new text; *revision of synonyms (usually with a game) *discussing what had been learned. Lesson plans are detailed in the attached Appendices.
RESULTS

Observations of the group
Trends for the group indicate that all students improved, in varying degrees, in their ability both to use synonyms and to retell, in their own words, the content of a fictional text.

Students 1 and 3 made noticeable improvement in terms of their reading age according to the PROBE reading assessment.
S1 (aged 7 yrs 6mths) achieved 97% accuracy and 62% comprehension at reading age 7.5-8.5 yrs, at first pre-test, and 99% accuracy and 75% comprehension score at reading age 7-8 yrs. at second pre-test.
Post-test 75% comprehension at reading age 8-9 years

S2 Pre-test achieved 97% word accuracy and 50% comprehension at reading age 6-7 yrs. A second pre-test done at 5.5 – 6.5 yrs showed 98% word accuracy and 100% comprehension, indicating his true reading age.
Post-test achieved 92% word accuracy and 28% comprehension at reading age of 6.5-7.5 yrs.

S3 Pre-test achieved 95% accuracy and 37% comprehension at reading age 7.5-8.5 yrs. Second pre-test showed 97% accuracy and 70% comprehension at reading age 7-8 yrs.
Post-test showed 96% accuracy and 87.5% comprehension at reading age 8-9 years post-test.

In the case of Student 2, some confounding variables make it impossible to give a true indication of his improvement for the purposes of this study. His behaviour became unpredictable, both in the intervention lessons and in his classroom, over the period of the last three days of this study. Possible reasons for this include failure to take his medication (normally taken regularly for treatment of ADHD, and some upheavals in his home/family life). He indicated willingness to continue with the lessons and the testing, but was restless and agitated after short periods of concentration.
However all indications from observations of his work in the lessons and in the classroom are that he has excellent oral skills and good oral comprehension combined with a high accuracy rate when asked to produce synonyms. He achieved very high scores on the Synonym pre-test and post-test and showed improvement in paraphrasing during the intervention lessons.
Overall, the trends, although showing small improvements, are positive and encouraging, as the intervention took place over a short period. Therefore it can be said that the prediction is supported by the findings. For a more substantial improvement in ability levels, one would need to implement a program over a much longer period, with regular follow-up to ensure the achievements are sustained.
Chart 1: Results of synonyms test

Chart 2: Results of PROBE test
DISCUSSION

The results obtained from this intervention support the hypothesis that teaching the paraphrasing strategy to Yr. two students will improve their comprehension. Teaching the use of synonyms constitutes good teaching practice when focusing on paraphrasing. As a consequence, the students also improved in their use of synonyms and short phrases when retelling a text in their own words; this is confirmed by the results of the Synonym pre- and post-tests.

Students 1 and 3 displayed an improvement not only in comprehension but also in their reading-age levels. This confirms that the teaching of strategies for comprehension, as stated by Munro (2005), Snowball (2006), and Freire (1985) as cited in Katims and Harris (1997), is a necessary part of literacy learning. Strategies such as paraphrasing, visualizing, predicting etc. need to be taught explicitly if we are to assist young learners to become competent readers and comprehenders.

In this present study, there is an unexpected result in the post-test for Student 2. His score on the post-test was considerably lower than expected; in fact it was lower than his pre-test score. As mentioned in the discussion of results in the previous section, some factors are likely to have affected his outcome, namely, several days with irregular use of a necessary medication, and disruption in his home life. As a result he was restless and not in a fit state to respond adequately to lessons and testing situations.

Other variables which may have affected all students in the intervention group are:
1) not having a consistent environment. We had to use whichever room was available at the time, either the music room or the interview room.
2) I am not their class teacher. The students are known to me in the school environment, but I have not taught them previously. Therefore time was needed to build a rapport with them.

Implications for future teaching practice suggested by this study focus firstly on getting to know the students as well as possible, in terms of their abilities. Testing needs to be appropriate to the developmental level of the students and observational records used in conjunction with the tests. Secondly, a structured, developmentally sound approach is necessary to teach strategies which will assist readers to become competent in both accuracy and comprehension. It is vital to look at all aspects of reading from the earliest stages in order to ensure that students acquire all the necessary skills. A third factor to be considered is the explicit teaching of strategies. This is confirmed by the results of students 1 and 3. The view held some 20 years ago that children surrounded by language will absorb it does not stand alone – many facets of literacy learning must be explicitly taught to ensure that readers master each skill.
REFERENCES / BIBLIOGRAPHY


Munro J (2005) Course Notes (p.90)


PROBE reading assessment, second edition, TRiUNE 2002

Snowball, D (2006). Teaching Pre-K – 8, Norwalk, vol.36, iss. 8, p.62


• noun 1 the action of understanding. 2 the ability to understand; range of understanding: mysteries beyond human comprehension.
LESSON PLANS

Lessons were based on J. Munro’s Comprehension-Paraphrasing plans (Literacy Intervention Strategies, appendix 3b, 2005), with adjustments where necessary.

Some knowledge of Synonyms is necessary in order to paraphrase. Therefore it was necessary to devote the first lesson entirely to this area, given the students ages and, in the case of two children, relatively low ability to produce synonyms for commonly used words in the synonym test. All lessons have a high oral content.

Most lessons were audiotaped and data/notes taken immediately after each lesson.

LESSON 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Task description and approx. time</th>
<th>Student Responses/ data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picture Chat (stimulus)</td>
<td>*Two colourful posters of clowns used for discussion, including as many ideas as possible. *Focus on description, feelings, knowledge. *List words on board. (8-10 mins)</td>
<td>All students very quick to suggest adjectives and ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synonyms</td>
<td>*Teacher to explain meaning of the word “synonym” “It’s a word which has the same meaning as another word” *Model some possibilities e.g. “bright – colourful” *Students suggest synonyms for words already given on board. List these. (8-10 mins)</td>
<td>S1: Found it difficult to initiate words/ synonyms. Relied on others for ideas. S2: Also needed a start from other’s suggestions S.3: High ability to quickly name synonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write Individual Sentences and Shared Reading</td>
<td>*Ask students to choose a key word and visualise (make a picture in your mind). Make a sentence about the clowns, write on board. *Read to group. Does it make sense? Are we able to say this another way? (5-8 mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Memory Game: “Add-a-word” e.g. 1. The clown has a nose. 2. The clown has a red nose. 3. The clown has a fake red nose.</td>
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*S1 = student 1  S2= student 2  S3= student 3

Students all keen to participate.

S3 had lowest reading accuracy and comprehension on PROBE yet proved most able to provide varied adjectives & synonyms.
**LESSON 2**
Text level is Instructional level 21 - lower level with simple ideas chosen for *introduction to paraphrasing.*

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Student Responses and data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revise yesterday’s Clown picture chat.</td>
<td>Words and synonyms on cards. Find words listed and replace with synonym cards. Sentence cards – replace key words with synonyms. Do they still make sense? (10 mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduce Text (Shared Reading)</td>
<td><em>Synonyms</em> Using familiar test from class set “Little brother’s haircut” pp.2-5 *Teacher to select key words. List on board &amp; ask chn. to suggest synonyms. Replace key words with synonyms and check for meaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduce “Paraphrasing”</td>
<td><em>Explain paraphrasing:</em> “Paraphrasing is saying in your own words what you have just read. You tell yourself what you have read, changing as many words as you can. You need to keep the same meaning.” <em>Model paraphrasing:</em> Read sentence and then paraphrase. Ask children to try, orally. (Some sentences only can be paraphrased by replacing key words with synonyms). (12 mins)</td>
<td>All students had difficulty putting sentences in own words and relied on language in text for retelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Memory Game using synonym cards (5 mins)</td>
<td>S2 extremely quick and able to match 100% of words with synonyms S1 &amp; S3 matched 55% and 50% respectively</td>
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**LESSON 3**

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<tr>
<th>Text Retell</th>
<th><em>What do we remember of the story from yesterday? Students retell the story so far in their own words (3min)</em></th>
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</table>
| Reread the text with cued paraphrase. | *Shared rereading of the story to p.5  
*Remind the chn. of the meaning of paraphrasing.  
*Ask chn to paraphrase each sentence as we read. (5min) | S1 and S3 read with greater accuracy and fluency. S2 read with lower fluency rate but very accurate with synonyms used. |
| Synonyms | List key words from text read yesterday: Ask students to suggest suitable synonyms. (Cued synonyms are listed in brackets) | Mum –mother, mummy barber – hair-dresser good – fantastic, excellent quiet – silent small – tiny, little terrible – disgrace (awful) okay – good (alright) seat - couch, (sofa) chair, stool looked - (saw, watched) ‘after a while” (then, later) |
| New Text – shared reading | Read further pages: shared reading |  |
| Paraphrasing – new text | Cued retelling at the end of selected sentences on pp6, 7, 8,9. |  |
| Game | “Speeding synonyms” in turn students aim for quick response in saying a synonym for words listed earlier in lesson. | S2 showed higher accuracy rate and speed in selecting synonyms |

Review: Students seemed to grasp more of the concept of paraphrasing today. They became a little restless towards the end of the lesson, indicating that they perhaps are ready to move on to more complex text.
LESSON 4
For today’s text, some shorter sentences will need to be grouped in twos or threes for effective paraphrasing. New text introduced: Monster For Hire” Instructional level 26

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Retell.</strong> (follow-up last lesson)</td>
<td>*Students retell in own words what happened in the story completed in last lesson. 5 mins</td>
<td>*Student 2 absent. *Students 1 &amp; 3 told with high degree of accuracy the content of the story. •Language used drew heavily on language recalled from text, indicating synonym and paraphrasing skills still need considerable practice. *Last idea of text recalled inaccurately by both students, requiring rereading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synonyms</strong> from previous text</td>
<td>*Revise synonyms used in two previous lessons. (5 mins)</td>
<td>*Students 1 &amp; 3 recalled most synonyms used for Little Brother's Haircut and used these in their retelling of the main ideas of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared reading (last two pages of text)</strong></td>
<td>*Shared reading – individual reading others to follow. *Teacher modelling of paraphrasing *Cued paraphrasing (5mins)</td>
<td>*Students 1 &amp; 3 read accurately. Both students relied on sentence structure of text for paraphrasing, using synonyms to replace individual words rather than putting ideas into own words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key words from new text</td>
<td>Students looked at text first, reading to themselves. Teacher read aloud key words from first four pages. Students orally gave suggestions for synonyms, then attempted to find suitable synonyms from word cards on table.</td>
<td>Student 1 less confident in suggesting synonyms – 75% words attempted and correct. Often had trouble finding words, saying “I don’t know”. Very quick response if given cues. Student 3 suggested suitable words, or pairs of words, for 90% of those written on word cards.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Shared reading: new text</th>
<th>Shared Reading of new text “Monster For Hire” pp. 4-9. Teacher modelling of paraphrasing: say the strategy “I will read a sentence, then try to say it in my own words. I will change as many words as I can.” Model strategy for three sentences on p.5. Students paraphrase one sentence at a time, first saying strategy, then telling sentence in own words. (Students replacing key words with synonyms rather than retelling meaning of sentence in own words.)</th>
<th>Students replacing key words with synonyms rather than retelling meaning of sentence in own words.</th>
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| Review/revise | Game: Synonym Grab Teacher reads key text word. Students take turns to give synonym – if successful, keep card. Student with most word cards wins. (5 mins) | Student 3 won 20, student 1 won 14. |

| N.B. Student 2 absent for this lesson. | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|


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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retell text</td>
<td>Retell what happened in text in previous session (5 mins)</td>
<td>Students 1 &amp; 3 retold the story so far including majority of main points.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revise Synonyms</td>
<td>Use Word Cards to play “Speedy Synonyms’, to revise key words from previous text.</td>
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<td>(5mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-read with cued para-phrasing</td>
<td>Shared reading of text. Teacher to model paraphrasing, and cue students paraphrasing</td>
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<td>(5 mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key words with synonyms from new text.</td>
<td>Students have a few minutes to look at new section of text. Synonyms (for key words in new text) written on word cards are placed on table. Students give alternate words for these (orally) (10 mins)</td>
<td>Student 1 took longer think of synonyms: often said “I don’t know.” Students 2 &amp; 3 showed ability to respond quickly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared reading of new text, with paraphrasing.</td>
<td>Shared reading of p.11 (Monster For Hire). Teacher modeling of paraphrasing a sentence. Students to say strategy before paraphrasing. (“I will say the sentence in my own words,…etc) Read a sentence and paraphrase.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revise: Game</td>
<td>Informal testing of accuracy rate with synonyms</td>
<td>Very enthusiastic participation by all students!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Play a game with word cards: students take turns to name a synonym for a word within 10 seconds. If correct, keep card. Winner has most cards. All tested on same words</td>
<td>Accuracy rate: St. 1  8 correct, 2 incorrect 2 not attempted 66% St 2  9 correct,1 incorrect 2 not attempted 75% St 3:  11 correct, 1 incorrect 91%</td>
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### LESSON 6

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Student Response and data</th>
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<tr>
<td>Text Retell</td>
<td>Students retell the story so far in own words. (5-8 mins)</td>
<td>Student 2 recounted some of main events. Student 1 began by working backwards with order of events. Self-corrected order. Most of main ideas included. Also predicted next event. Student 3 said “They’ve said all I wanted to say”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise synonyms from previous pages</td>
<td>Students choose all synonyms that they know from word cards and use them appropriately in sentences from text. Read sentences from text then replace words with synonyms. (5 mins)</td>
<td>All three students were responsive and enthusiastic, using words appropriately and reading sentences correctly. Student 1 used 2 synonyms. Student 2 used 6 synonyms. Student 3 used 8 synonyms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-read previous text.</td>
<td>Re-read text studied yesterday (shared reading), then read using cued paraphrasing. Students say strategy before starting. (5 mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key words and phrases from new part of text</td>
<td>Look at synonyms to be used with new section of text. Discuss meaning of words and how they might be used. Also look at phrases or groups of 2 or 3 words which might replace a word or phrase (e.g was very, very angry” may replace “flew into a terrible rage” (5 Min)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared reading of new section of text and teacher-modeling of paraphrasing.</td>
<td>As in previous lessons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cued paraphrasing</td>
<td>Students verbalise the paraphrasing strategy. At the end of each sentence, or at the end of 2-3 sentences, students retell in own words. Teacher provides cues such as: “What happened in that sentence?”</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Retell yesterday’s text</td>
<td>Students retell, in own words, yesterday’s section of the text. (5mins)</td>
<td>Students 1 and 2 successfully retold the story in own words, including most of the main ideas so far. Student 3 paraphrased only the page covered in yesterday’s lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared reading of next page.</td>
<td>After shared reading, discuss content and ask chn, to suggest possible synonyms for key words in text. Write these on word cards for use later in lesson. (15 mins)</td>
<td>The language in this section of text was more complex and students found this harder than previous sections of the story. S1 suggested a couple of (a few) protected (safe) Excellent (very good indeed) S2 suggested white (pale) S3 suggested bits (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>Students state what they will do when paraphrasing. Read 1-3 sentences &amp; paraphrase. (10 mins)</td>
<td>S1 “I forgot you were keeping my gold safe. Excellent! Step to the side while I open the door.” (Goodness gracious! I forgot about you!” he gasped. Very good indeed. My gold is safe while you’re here. Now step back while I unlock the door.”) S2 His face went white and he looked again. (His face pale, the king did a double take.) S3 Unable to paraphrase at all at this stage as he had forgotten to take medication (for ADHD) and was very restless and agitated. Terminated the lesson at this point as S1&amp;2 were very distracted by S3 and there were only a few minutes left before recess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game</td>
<td>Memory (use word cards to find matching synonyms)</td>
<td>Not carried out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LESSONS 8 & 9**

I followed the same format with new text “Nobody’s Bunny” (Instructional level 26)

Observational notes from these last two lessons showed a marked increase in Student 3’s ability to retell, in her own words, the text read during the previous day.

Student 1 showed moderate improvement, but tended to use the language of the text rather than her own words.

Student 2 showed marked improvement in the earlier stages of the intervention but during the last three session was very restless.

**Informal testing of retelling of the text read on previous day at lesson 9**

**Student 1** retold the text using 100% of the main ideas, using the language of the text rather than her own words.

**Student 2** retold the first half of the story in his own words, including all main ideas in that section. Could not continue due to restlessness and agitation, (It is presumed this was due to lack of his usual medication and difficulties at home).

**Student 3** retold the text using 100% of the main ideas in her own words.
### APPENDIX 1

**Pre-test results**

Test used were *Synonyms Knowledge (made by the author) (see Appendix 2)*

*PROBE reading assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STUDENT 1</th>
<th>STUDENT 2</th>
<th>STUDENT 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td>7 yrs 6mths</td>
<td>7 yrs. 9 mths</td>
<td>8 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTIONAL READING LEVEL</strong></td>
<td>Level 28</td>
<td>Level 20</td>
<td>Level 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SYNONYM KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT</strong></td>
<td>21/29 words known 72%</td>
<td>26/29 words known 89%</td>
<td>15/29 words known 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROBE READING ASSESSMENT</strong></td>
<td>Reading accuracy: 7.5 – 8.5 yrs Comprehension 7-8 yrs.</td>
<td>Reading accuracy 6-7 yrs Comprehension: 5.5-6.5</td>
<td>Reading accuracy 7-8 yrs Comprehension 6-7 yrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2a

Pre-test for Synonym Knowledge

Words were selected from the Edwards 800 Most Used Words List, on display in the students’ classroom, and from the text to be used in the first two-three intervention lessons.

barber
quick
good
terrible
glad
quiet
seat
angry
wash
shout
crash
kid
scream
aeroplane
bad
bang
beautiful
boat
lady
mother
pony
puppy
sad
break
building
children
dad
fast
flower
large
APPENDIX 2b

Post-test for Synonym Knowledge
Words taken from Edwards 800 Most Used Words (combination of words used in pre-test, plus new words), and words used in texts during intervention lessons.

bunny
snacks
grab
hopped
monster
pantry
guard
pretty
children
large
mother
funny
laugh
small
building
sign
enough
scared
fast
huge
hang
wagon
seat
wash
watch
want
silly
colourful
fake
silent