Action Research

Prediction Hypothesis:

"Cued use of the R.I.D.E.R. strategy improves the spontaneous oral retell for a year two student. Cueing includes the explicit instruction by the teacher."

Abstract

One of the reasons children have difficulty with comprehending text is due to their inability to use the strategy of visualization. It appears that having difficulty organizing visual images into spoken language at the conceptual level may limit spontaneous oral retell ability and comprehension. Students often lack strategies to self manage and monitor their reading. They have difficulty recalling information read despite being able to decode words accurately. The aim of this research is to describe the trialling of the R.I.D.E.R strategy (Clark, Deshler, Schumaker, Alley& Warner 1984) on a Year Two student, proficient in decoding text, yet experiencing comprehension difficulties.

The cued use of the R.I.D.E.R strategy with explicit instruction by the teacher prompted the student to follow a sequenced learning strategy while reading text. The student was encouraged to utilize the strategy to following the steps to recall ideas/events from the text. Being taught the strategy with controlled materials and prompt cards allowed the student to recall an increasing number of ideas/events. It improved her oral language comprehension and reading comprehension. Overall the explicit intervention/teaching led to a 185% increase in spontaneous oral ability retell of events/ideas in the texts from baseline. This research aims to demonstrate how the cued use of the R.I.D.E.R strategy improved the student's spontaneous oral retell enhancing her comprehension ability. It also makes recommendations for the inclusion of use of graphic organizers to further enhance reading comprehension outcomes.

Introduction

A problem that many students have is that they do not utilize the metacognitive strategy of visualization to assist them to comprehend texts. Visualization refers to the metacognitive process of forming mental pictures or images of the text, to assist understanding or comprehension. Some children are less proficient at this strategy. Research in explicit training in visual imagery strategies (Clark, Deshler, Schumaker, Alley & Warner, 1984;Chan, Cole & Morris, 1990; Borduin, Borduin & Manley, 1994) has indicated that imagery training, through planned explicit instruction, can improve reading comprehension.

The research by Clark, Deshler, Schumaker, Alley& Warner, (1984) incorporated the use of a visual imagery into a strategy known as R.I.D.E.R strategy. The R.I.D.E.R. strategy required students to form of mental pictures about the text read, which were modified as the reader read on. The building of modified mental pictures was similar to making a "movie" in the student's memory. They noted that the images formed were more readily recalled from short-term memory. Verbalization of the images by the underachieving student led to an improvement in comprehension of the text.

The research suggested that reading underachievers benefited from imaging mental pictures of the text as they read by up to 30%. The R.I.D.E.R. strategy was trialled with a self-questioning learning strategy. The students had to formulate questions about the text whilst reading it using question prompts (who, what, why, where, when). It was noted that the effectiveness of the visualization strategy was dependent upon the ways in which students could self manage the learning strategies. Alley & Deshler (1979) suggest that "Learning strategies are techniques that will facilitate the acquisition, manipulation, integration, storage and retrieval of information across situations and settings"(p. 13).

Similar research by Chan, Cole & Morris, (1990), documented visualization instruction as one part component of their intervention research. Their research highlighted the need for students to be aware of strategies that would help them to "initiate, regulate and monitor" their use of appropriate cognitive strategies. Chan, Cole & Morris (1990) documents: "In attempting to generate and use visual images, the reader is constantly interacting with the text and monitoring textual propositions" (p. 2, 3).

Explicit instruction in visual imagery, with the additional support from pictorial display for the text, was most effective. Chan, Cole & Morris (1990) stated: "that the benefits of the strategy instruction were dependent upon the training method employed and the amount of support provided to induce strategy use" (p. 9). Central to this is the importance of explicit instruction and interaction by the teacher to cue students to utilize and the learning strategies. It was noted that the gradual fading of support to enable transfer from the intervention phase to classroom/independence stage was crucial.

In a more recent research by Borduin, Borduin & Manley, (1994), the focus was upon the influences of imagery training upon reading comprehension in younger children. Reading comprehension included memory for detail and the ability of the students to make logical inferences. It indicated that the teacher instruction focussed on imagery training enhanced the reading comprehension of second graders. Findings were consistent with studies of older children who had used visualization strategies for processing texts by Scevak & Moore (1997)

In general research suggests the importance of the explicit planned training in the strategy by the instructor. The strategy of visualization is only beneficial if it can be transferred and sustained by the student into his or her own self-management or self-teaching practice.

The present study examines the explicit instruction of the visual imagery training strategy known as R.I.D.E.R. developed by Clark, Deshler, Schumaker, Alley & Warner (1984)

R.I.D.E.R., an acronym for "Read, Image, Describe, Evaluate, Repeat", is a metacognitive strategy designed to enable students to become strategic learners. Strategic learning is related to metacognition. As Wilson and Wing Jan (1993) explains:

> Metacognitive thinkers are aware of their thinking and are able to
> control their thinking strategies. Their learning is empowered by their
> reflective, creative and critical thinking skills. (p.7)

The R.I.D.E.R. visual imagery strategy is designed to improve the student's acquisition, storage and recall of prose material. It requires the student to image parts of written language, recall and relate these images, then reorganize and verbalize the concepts imaged. This develops both comprehension and critical thinking skills.

One student in Year Two who had comprehension difficulties was identified and exposed to the explicit teaching of the R.I.D.E.R. The intervention incorporated the use of R.I.D.E.R. Prompt Cards that pictorially depicted the stages of the strategy to assist the student. Following reading the text using the R.I.D.E.R., Question Retell Cards where used, to prompt the student for ideas/events during the spontaneous oral retell. This resulted in a 185% increase in spontaneous oral retell of ideas and events in text over the course of the intervention from baseline testing to post testing.

The implications of teaching R.I.D.E.R. are discussed as an action research paper. They further validate the earlier research discussed, by examining the relationship

between visualization and reading comprehension through the explicit teaching of the R.I.D.E.R strategy using visual prompts and teacher cueing. The independent variable throughout, was the practising of the R.I.D.E.R strategy during explicit intervention/teaching sessions. The dependent variable was the increased proficiency at spontaneous oral retells.

Prediction
 "Cued use of the R.I.D.E.R. strategy improves the spontaneous oral retell for a year two student. Cueing includes the explicit instruction by the teacher."

Method
This study used an A.T.A design. The student was assessed to establish a baseline entry level of competency in oral reading and spontaneous oral retell using the narrative text style of fables. The student was then taught through an intervention program, the explicit use of the R.I.D.E.R. strategy. The teacher facilitated the explicit instruction throughout the intervention, modeling and cueing the student in the effective use of the strategy. Throughout the intervention phase, the teacher worked dynamically with the student to guide and scaffold the student's learning. Finally the student's acquisition and proficiency in the use of the strategy was assessed in post testing directly compared against the original baseline result.

Participant
The participant was a female Year Two student aged 7 years, 4months. She was identified as an accurate and fluent reader for her grade level. Based on Reading Recovery levels, she was able to read level 28+ at an easy level of instruction (mid way in Year Two). Level 28+ is the level benchmark for end of Year Two. Despite high proficiency in decoding text she was experiencing difficulties in comprehending the text. This may have been due to poor concept imagery. During baseline assessment she was able to recall an average of 18.8% of the events/ideas in the text, when required to spontaneously orally retell the text after reading. The student was informed that she was chosen because she was a "good reader" and could decode most of the words that she read. She was also told that the research lessons would show her how to use a strategy to learn how to understand what she was reading, when reading. This built her self-efficacy from the beginning of the research and she was very keen to participate in the study. Her self-efficacy was further enhanced, when told that once she had learned how to use the strategy, she would help model to it with a small group of her peers in the classroom. Having a purpose and goal such as this in mind motivated the student.

Materials
Materials used include the following:
Texts
Nine narrative texts were chosen in the text type of fables. These were from a children's book of fables (Source Unknown) Three were used for pre-intervention baseline assessment, four for teaching/intervention purposes and two for post intervention assessment.
Each text comprised of approx. 200 to 250 words and was graded on the Edward Fry's Readability Scale (Fry 1977). Due to the short length of the texts, in this case the readability was calculated on the first 100 words. Seven of the nine texts measured mid Year Two level, whilst two texts measured early Year Three. The text format was

consistent in overall appearance and included a title and pictorial content limited to one black and white illustration. (Appendix 1)

Spontaneous Oral Retell Checklists
Checklists were devised for each text to record the ideas/events retold spontaneously. Each checklist included analysis of literal and inferential ideas. The checklists allowed for the recording of approx. 8 to 15 ideas/events depending on the title. Overall scores were converted to percentages then to averages for pre intervention (baseline), intervention/teaching and post intervention stages. (Appendix 2)

Running Records
Marie Clay's Running Record analysis sheet was used for the first baseline assessment text (The Council Of Mice) and the last post intervention assessment text (The Young Rooster). It was used to ascertain text level entry and to observe reading behaviour and the use of cueing systems. (Appendix 3)

R.I.D.E.R. Prompt Cards
A set of five pictorial prompt cards for the steps of R.I.D.E.R were devised for intervention and post intervention use (Appendix 4)

Retell Question Prompt Cards
Five cards containing words "who, what, where, when, why" for prompting during spontaneous oral retell (Appendix 5)

Dictaphone
A Dictaphone was used to record spontaneous oral retell after each text

Running Sheet of Teaching Procedure /Plan
A running sheet with points for instruction and teaching was devised to assist the teacher control confounding teaching variables. (Appendix 6)

Procedure
The research was administered over nine sessions in a withdrawal situation. The sessions were of approx. 20 to 30 minutes duration and were carried out during the literacy block over a three week duration. The lessons were in a quiet area to avoid interruptions and distractions. Three baseline assessments were administered during the first week and three intervention/teaching sessions during the second week One intervention/teaching session followed by two post intervention assessment sessions were undertaken in the third week.

Brief of the Procedure
The instructional procedures used to teach R.I.D.E.R were adapted from those used in earlier research (Clark et al., 1984) they included:
1. Initial discussion and creation of a non-threatening environment with student
2. Testing the child's current baseline level of functioning for spontaneous oral retell and a running record was taken on the first baseline text to assess reading behaviour.
3. Describing the steps of the strategy and providing the student with a rationale for each step of the strategy using R.I.D.E.R prompt cards and Question cards.
4. Teacher modeling of the R.I.D.E.R strategy so the student can observe and formulate an understanding of the sequence of steps in the strategy using R.I.D.E.R Prompt Cards and Retell Question Cards.

The stages of R.I.D.E.R. are:
Read ~ Read a sentence

Image ~ Imagine a picture of this in your mind
Describe ~ Describe the image of what you have read with your partner
Evaluate ~ Evaluate the image against your partners image and check against the text for correctness
Repeat ~ Repeat the process again by reading the next sentence.

5. Verbal rehearsal of the sequence of steps in the strategy by the student.
6. Practice with controlled materials, graded and matched for suitability to the student's current text and grade level reading ability according to Edward Fry's Readability Scale.
7. Ongoing positive and corrective feedback from the teacher, reflecting on progress and gains being made.
8. Gradual reduction of teacher prompting and guidance through the sequence of stages. This included encouraging self-management strategies by the student to articulate what she was going to do next, at each stage of the strategy and why. The intention was to get her to become a more strategic learner.
9. Post testing of the student. During post testing the student had both R.I.D.E.R prompt cards and Question cards. The teacher's role was reduced to indicating where to read to and stop, so the student could begin imaging. Scores were based upon the number of ideas/events spontaneously retold in two post intervention tests. These were averaged to provide a measure to compare progress between pre and post testing. During the last post test the child read the text and a running record was taken, then was instructed to re –read the text using the both R.I.D.E.R strategy

Results
The spontaneous oral retells of the Year Two student were calculated by comparing the average percentage of the three baseline, pre intervention tests with the averages of the post testing tests. The data shows that practice of the visual imagery known as R.I.D.E.R significantly improved the student's spontaneous oral retell ability. They also supported the prediction that cued use of the R.I.D.E.R strategy with explicit instruction by the teacher would increase spontaneous oral retell of ideas and events in text
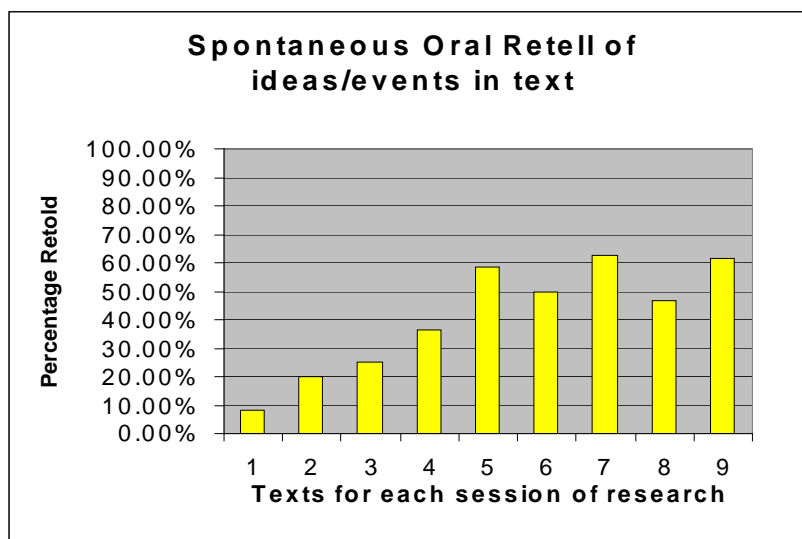

Figure 1

Figure 1. Indicates the results of spontaneous oral retell of ideas/events for each text during the pre intervention baseline collection stage (texts 1,2,3), intervention/teaching (texts 4,5,6,7) and post intervention testing (texts 8,9), for the Year Two student. Data recorded illustrates a gradual increase in the percentage of ideas/events told from first baseline text 1, until post intervention test of text 9.

Spontaneous Oral Retell of ideas/events in Text

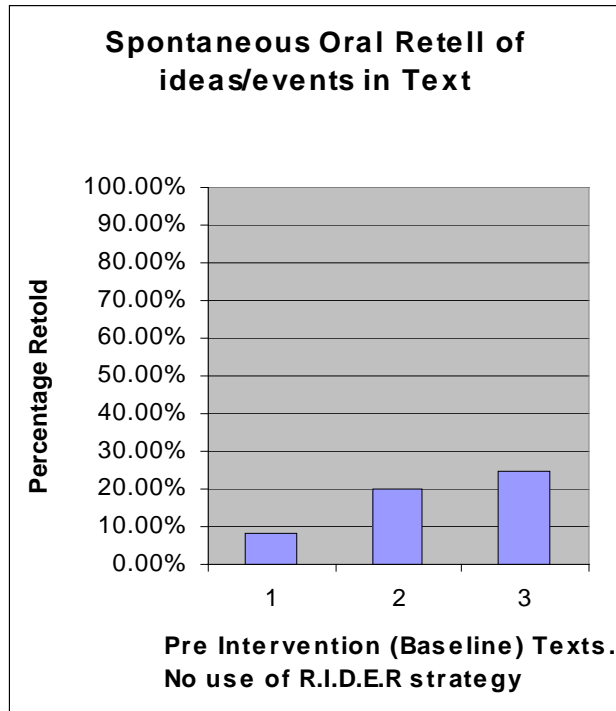Pre Intervention (Baseline) Texts. No use of R.I.D.E.R strategy

Figure 2

Figure 2. Indicates results of baseline intervention testing. Retell Question cards (who, what, where, when, why) were provided as the only visual prompts to recall ideas/events. When asked to retell everything about the text the student recalled 8.3% of the ideas/events in text 1, 20% in text 2 and 25% in text 3. This averaged to recalling 18.8% of ideas/events in spontaneous oral retell of text during pre intervention over the three texts.

Spontaneous Oral Retell of ideas/events in Text

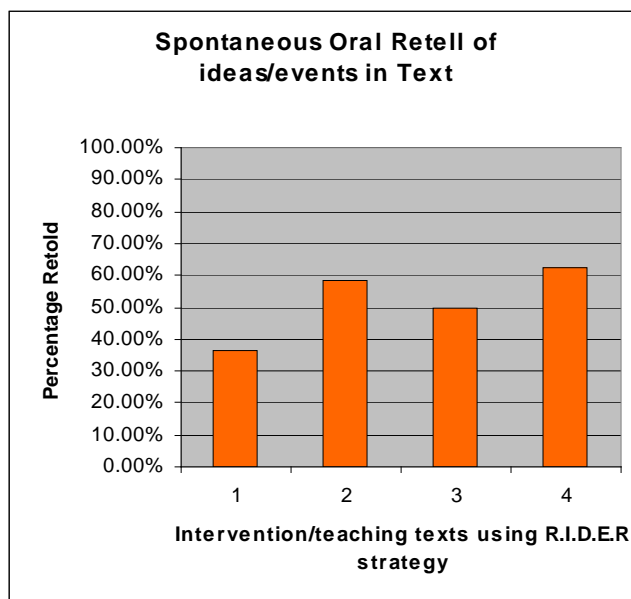Intervention/teaching texts using R.I.D.E.R strategy

Figure 3

Figure 3. Refers to the results of spontaneous oral retell of ideas/events of the four intervention/ teaching texts using cued use of the R.I.D.E.R. strategy with explicit instruction by the teacher. The student recalled 36.4% for text 1, 58.3% for text 2, 50% for text 3 and 62.5% for text 4. The average of these results equated to recalling 51.1% of ideas/events in the text during intervention/teaching.

Spontaneous Oral Retell of ideas/ events in Text

Percentage Retold

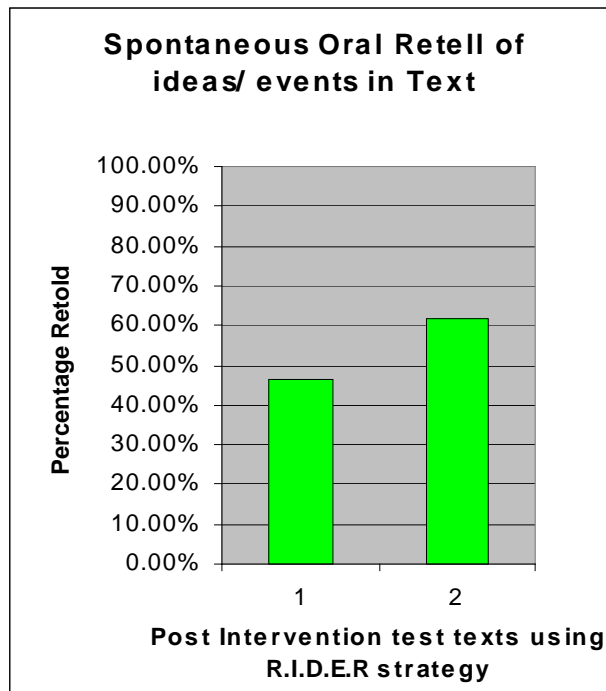Post Intervention test texts using R.I.D.E.R strategy

Figure 4

Figure 4 indicates post intervention testing results. For text 1, the student recalled 46.7% and text 2, 61.5%. This averaged to recalling 53% of post intervention texts using the R.I.D.E.R. strategy. The post tests result of 53% compared to the baseline test average of 18.8%, reveals an overall improvement in the ability to recall ideas/events by the student of 185%. The independent variable contributing to this increase in scores was the cued use and application of the R.I.D.E.R. strategy while reading text.

Table 1 refers to the summary of ideas/events in each text and breaks that into literal and inferential ideas/events. Although there were many more literal ideas/events listed in the teacher checklists than inferential, it was relevant to note whether the student was able to access higher order thinking through the cued use of R.I.D.E.R. Even though this was not the major emphasis of this research, it was interesting to note the improvement in recall of inferential ideas/events in relation to the cued use of R.I.D.E.R. An increase may have been closely linked to a growing efficiency at the "describe" and "evaluate" stages of the strategy.

Summary of ideas and events in each text			
Text Title	**Total number of ideas/ events**	**Score for Literal ideas /events retold**	**Score for Inferential ideas /events retold**
The Council of Mice (baseline text)	12	1/10	0/2
The Fox and the Stork (baseline text)	10	2/9	0/1
The Two Friends and the Bear (baseline text)	12	3/10	0/2
The Hare and the Tortoise (intervention/teaching text)	11	4/9	0/2
The Fox that Ate Too Much (intervention/teaching text)	12	7/11	0/1
The Elephant and His Son (intervention/teaching text)	13	6. 5/11	0/2
The Fox and the Raven (intervention/teaching text)	8	4/6	1/2
The Art of Reading (post test text)	15	6/13	1/2
The Young Rooster (post test text)	13	7/9	1/4

Table 1

Table 1 illustrates that the student was more proficient in recalling literal ideas/events than inferential however there were less inferential ideas/events. It also shows that by the last intervention/teaching session and post testing sessions the student was beginning to remember at least one inferential idea/event from the texts read.

Running Records on Year 2 Graded Texts	Summary of Behaviours observed
Pre test(Baseline) The Council of Mice	99.5% accuracy making this an easy text. Relied on distinctive visual features e.g. agreements for arguments for the few errors made. Neglected meaning or syntax to self correct errors. Rapid word naming, fluent accurate decoding but rarely pausing or monitoring own reading for meaning.
Post Test The Young Rooster	98% accuracy, making this an easy text Relied on distinctive visual features e.g. beside for bedside, failu for failure for the few errors made. Rapid word naming, fluent accurate decoding. Neglected meaning or syntax to self correct errors. Did read slightly slower. May not have had the experiential knowledge to understand the word "honored"

Table 2

Table 2 refers to summary findings and observations from the running records taken on Pre and Post tests. The post test running record was taken from the initial reading of the text. A second reading using the R.I.D.E.R. Rapid word naming, fluent accurate decoding strategy followed this

Discussion
During the initial stages of research anecdotal notes by the teacher recorded that the student remarked that "Good readers can read all the words…" but added, "Sometimes when I read I don't remember the stories". It appeared that the student had already an awareness that she was experiencing difficulties with her comprehension of text.
Running records of the initial pre test and last post test indicated she decoded text at 98.5 and 99% accuracy. The analysis of the few errors indicated the use of visual cues rather than the use of meaning or grammar. The student appeared to be focussed on decoding for word accuracy. She was not self monitoring her own reading by using self talk or questioning to make sense and gain meaning from what she was reading. She rarely paused and didn't re-read during the running records however she appeared to read at a slightly slower pace in the post test running record. This may have been due to the student's awareness that the R.I.D.E.R strategy activity was to follow. Although proficient at symbol imagery, whereby she could easily decode and encode letter symbols, she lacked concept imagery to convert written language into mental images and then transform the images back into expressive language.
It appeared that the student had difficulty at the concept level, retaining the concepts of the sentences read and maintaining this in her short-term memory. When discussing

the verbal working memory and sentence comprehension in students with poor comprehension it can be explained that:

> …these individuals have a functionally smaller storage capacity. Thus, by the time a listener reaches the end of a sentence, the representation (typically a thematic/semantic one) he/she constructed earlier in a sentence may be forgotten (i.e., the representation no longer receives sufficient activation to remain in an active state). (Montgomery, 2000, p. 293)

Positive changes in reading behaviour began to occur in the intervention/ teaching stage with the use of the R.I.D.E.R. Prompt Cards and the Question Retell Cards. When using the R.I.D.E.R strategy and visual prompt cards during the intervention/ teaching stage, she began to pause and if unable to form an image instantly would re-read sections of the text. Often she would need to read a sentence 2 to 3 times before she could retain enough information to form an image. She initially would verbalize "Can I read it again?" then later in the intervention and with growing confidence, "I'll read it again". Re-reading sentences in the text helped her to build up and to clarify mental images. It also enabled the student time to process the information and retain the mental image long enough in working memory so it could be retrieved at the end of the text in her spontaneous oral retell. During the intervention the student was orally paraphrasing some parts of the text to match what was read. This combined with using self-talk and self-questioning helped the student monitor her own progress. These were strategies she had not previously used. She was cued by the teacher to articulate her image by saying, "In my picture I see…" every time she described her image during the "describe" stage. Providing this introductory statement scaffolded the student to clearly focus and verbalize her images. It also gave her the support to both begin and continue the description, using a more correct grammatical structure. Comparing and sharing images in the "describe" and "evaluate" stages of R.I.D.E.R. between the teacher and the student enabled the student more success at summarizing and paraphrasing the information. This also contributed to her remembering more details about the text.
Utilizing the R.I.D.E.R strategy improved the child's ability to organize the written language used into images and oral language. The teacher was able to scaffold the learner through cueing responses. This reference to scaffolding draws upon the work of Vygotskian theorists.

> Knowing when and how to intervene is what scaffolding is all about. It is about the teacher making an informed and active role in guiding students' learning as they come to term with new ideas and concepts. (Hammond, 2001, p. 48)

Thinking aloud and verbalizing the stages of the R.I.D.E.R. strategy repeatedly increased the student's ability to monitor her own verbal description given and evaluate against the teacher's response. This resulted in the student either modifying or consolidating images formed. The student consistently displayed an increasing confidence in her progress, which was evident in her body language and reflective talk. An example of her improved self-efficacy was noted was her eagerness to retell the ideas/ events in the text from the previous lesson.
During this research the child had greater success in recalling literal ideas/events than inferential. However the student began to score inferential ideas/events in the final three texts (refer to table 1). Explicit teaching of the text structure of fables through dynamic intervention assisted the student to understand the structure of the fables. The

coda or morals of the fables were discussed in each intervention lesson. Even though the teacher reminded the student each lesson that every fable has a coda as part of its text structure the student did not retell it in any lesson. This may have reflected a misunderstanding of cause and effect relationships or a misinterpretation of the actions or intentions of others at the analysis level of higher order thinking skills. Often she would refer to the characters in the text as the pronoun "he". This did confuse her, to be able clearly articulate which character she was discussing or imaging. The teacher needed to question her and get her to clarify in the describe stage about which character was "he". This may have also indicated that her understanding and use of correct grammatical structures were also lacking.

The first post test result indicated a slight digression from the gradual improvement trend with a score of 46.7% of ideas/events retold spontaneously. This may have been due to this text containing the most ideas and events. There were 15 ideas/events to recall in this text compared to less in the other texts. When averaged with the second post test text score, the improvement was 53.6%. With further intervention/teaching in the future, the student could benefit by the teacher explaining more of the key words prior to reading and the use of pronouns. Providing a graphic organizer, semantic map or mind map to draw the images in sequence and label key words could assist the sequencing of the information by the student to recall the images in a more organised way. In reference to the added value of graphic organizers we draw upon related research theories:

> Teaching Students to make images, pictures in their heads of the materials, and
> then redrawing the ideas in mind maps or semantic maps, would seem a helpful
> way of getting them to appreciate the power of imagery. (Scevak & Moore 1997, p 280)

Even though the student's spontaneous oral retell ability improved, her responses were not always retold in sequence. Potentially more ideas/events could have been retold with a visual graphic organizer to assist the student to record her images and support her spontaneous oral retelling in a sequenced way. At times the Retell Question prompt cards appeared to confuse the sequence of the student's spontaneous oral retell. This may have reduced her success rate as she appeared to over focus on the words (who, what, where, when, why) and miss out on recalling some ideas and events which she had described during using R.I.D.E.R. A recommendation for future work with the R.I.D.E.R. strategy would be to include a suitable graphic organizer such as the "R.I.D.E.R. Thinking in Ideas/Events Organizer" (refer to appendix 7). This particular organizer could be used to draw the beginning, middle and final ideas/events and the actions of characters in the text, during the R.I.D.E.R. strategy. Visual support, from pictures drawn of mental images formed during the R.I.D.E.R. strategy, may help the student summarize the ideas/events and retell with increased accuracy.

The cued use of the R.I.D.E.R strategy during this intervention supported the previous research of Clark, Deshler, Schumaker, Alley& Warner (1984). "The student's use of the strategies resulted in greater comprehension scores from pre test in baseline to the post test after training" (p 145). Whitehead (1986) also commented on Clark's research, reporting "that when learning disabled students are prompted to visualize in this way, comprehension improves by more than 30%" (p. 60). The 30% increase was based upon the performance of a group compared to the individual student in this research.

It also supported the research findings of Chan, Cole & Morris, (1990) who concluded:

> The findings of this study have critical implications for remedial instruction for students with reading difficulties. Explicit visualization instruction in conjunction with supported imagery by means of pictorial aids facilitated the comprehension performance of students with reading difficulties. However, adequate time and practice are necessary for mastery of the strategy. In addition appropriate gradual fading of external support is critical to promote internalization and generalization of the strategy. (p. 10)

The 185% increase in the performance in this research relates to the student over doubling her output in spontaneous oral retell. The success of this research was also related to the student's gradual acquisition of the R.I.D.E.R. strategy and the transfer into her self-management/ self-teaching techniques. Once she got the gist of the stages she was able to practice them, she became a more strategic learner knowing what to do and when. The student responded positively to the authentic purpose for learning and was looking forward to modeling R.I.D.E.R. for her peers.

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Selection of fables ~ Author and Source unknown

Appendices

Appendix 1 ~ Example of Narrative text Fable

Appendix 2 ~ Checklists for Spontaneous Oral Retell of ideas/events in the Text

Appendix 3 ~ Running records (Not included)

Appendix 4 ~ R.I.D.E.R. Prompt cards

Appendix 5 ~ Retell Question Cards

Appendix 6 ~ Teaching Procedures/Plan

Appendix 7 ~ R.I.D.E.R. Thinking in Ideas/Events Organizer