The hypothesis of this intervention is that teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to a small group of year seven students with reading comprehension difficulties enhances their comprehension of fictional text.

Paraphrasing: Lesson One

Introduce the Strategy:

Today we are going to learn a new strategy which will assist you with your reading comprehension. It should help you gain a clearer understanding of texts you read and help you remember the main ideas. It is a useful strategy for reading many different types of texts in different subject areas.

The strategy is called Paraphrasing. When you paraphrase, you read a sentence or group of sentences then tell yourself what you have read, using different words. You change as many words from the original text as you can while keeping the meaning the same.

Teacher models paraphrasing:

A sentence is written on the board from the text to be paraphrased.

“He saved only Nimuk, his great devoted husky.”

Teacher cues students in identifying and underlining key words. Ask the students to suggest other words for these e.g. saved-rescued..., great-large-remarkable... devoted-loyal-dedicated... husky-dog-canine...

Explain that these are synonyms and model their incorporation into a paraphrase of the original sentence:

“The sole thing rescued was his wonderful loyal dog.”

Also model changing word order while retaining meaning:

“His wonderful loyal dog was the sole thing rescued”

Cue students to complete a paraphrase as a group:

Write another sentence on the board. Read it together. Cue students to Read, Ask questions about the main idea and details. Assist students to identify key words and suggest synonyms. Invite students to Put it in their own words. The teacher records response/s on the board. Compare the paraphrases with the original. Ask students if meaning has been retained. Suggest modifications to the paraphrase if necessary.

Repeat this process for another few sentences.
**Teacher reviews the action:** So to paraphrase, you read the sentence, asked yourself what the main ideas and details are, then you said it in your own way, changing as many words as you could.

**Introduce the acronym RAP-** Read, Ask questions, Put it in your own words

Explain that this acronym is a useful cue they can use to remind themselves what to do when they read a text.

**Students now paraphrase some sentences individually in written form and share with the group. Teacher monitors and provides feedback**

**Students articulate what they have learned to do:**

Possible student response: *We have learned to paraphrase. First you read a sentence, and you ask yourself what it says. Then you put it into your own words. You need to change as many words as you can.*

**and when they can use the new strategy:**

*You can use paraphrasing to help you when you are trying to understand a sentence or paragraph.*

**Reflection:** Students are invited to comment on the new strategy they have learned and explore when they might use it:

Possible response: *I have learned to paraphrase to help me understand what I read. The word RAP reminds me to Read, Ask questions and Put it in my own words. I could paraphrase when I am reading from the newspaper or when I’m having trouble understanding my history book.*

**Lesson Two**

The teacher explains what synonyms are and writes some examples on the board. Students are asked to provide synonyms for some common words e.g sad- unhappy, miserable depressed etc.

Students work in pairs on a worksheet, drawing a line to match key words which will appear in this session’s text with a jumbled list of synonyms. Correct this as a group.

The acronym RAP is written on the board, students are **cued to articulate** what they will do when they read today’s text. Students read this session’s passage. Teacher cues one or two students to **paraphrase aloud** after reading each sentence in the text. Teacher monitors and provides feedback.

Students write paraphrases of selected sentences (using synonyms from beginning of session as well as dictionary or thesaurus where needed)
A selection of student paraphrases are written on the board and students compare these to each other and the original text. Teacher feedback is provided on accuracy of meaning and grammar of the students paraphrases. 10-12 min

Students are cued to reflect on what they have learned this lesson and when they will use this strategy again. 3 min

**Lessons 3-8 follow this strategy**

**Text Retelling:**

Students recall synonyms to match key words from last session. They are written on the board. 3 min

They then retell what they recall of passage from previous session. 3 min

**Text Rereading:** Students and teacher reread passage from previous session with students cued to RAP. They then read then say each sentence in their own words, changing as many words as they can while retaining meaning 5-8 min

**Synonyms:** Key content words from this lesson’s text are targeted for synonyms. Students complete synonym activities: matching, brainstorming, searching thesaurus. 6 min

**Shared reading of the new passage.**

Students articulate the paraphrasing strategy before beginning to read: *After I read each sentence I will ask myself questions about the main ideas and details. Next I will say put those ideas into my own words by changing as many words in the sentence as I am able to.* Individual students are called on to paraphrase after each sentence is read. 8-10 min

**Written paraphrase**

Students write a paraphrase of selected sentences from this lesson’s text. They are read out. Some are recorded on the board for group discussion/comparison. 15 min

**Reflection/Transfer of strategy**

Students say what they have learned this lesson and how it might help them in other reading situations. 4 min
Two Were Left

A) On the third night of hunger, Noni thought of the dog.

B) Nothing of flesh and blood lived upon the floating ice except those two.

c) In the break up, Noni had lost his sled, his food, his furs, even his knife.

D) He saved only Nimuk, his great devoted husky.

E) And now the two, marooned on the ice, eyed each other warily, each keeping his distance.

F) Noni’s love for Nimuk was real, very real – as real as hunger and cold nights and the gnawing pain of his injured leg.

G) But the men of his village killed their dogs when food was scarce, didn’t they?
Synonyms- Key Vocabulary from *Two Were Left*

completed  finished

task  job

thumbed  felt

glare  shine

momentarily  briefly

stabbed  pierced

steeled  strengthened

suspiciously  suspecting

gaze  stare