Explicitly teaching the use of synonyms and paraphrasing to year two students who are below average readers will improve their comprehension.

**TEACHING OUTLINES**

These sessions are designed to improve the use of synonyms to improve word level understanding and the use of paraphrasing strategies while reading to enhance sentence level comprehension. The sessions were taught to a group of seven year 2 students, as a teaching group within their own classroom.

**Session 1**

Teacher dialogue is shown in italics.

Display photo and sentence.”A sleepy lion is napping on a fallen log”.

**Introduce the strategy:** I am going to teach you something that you can do that will help you to remember what you read. It is called paraphrasing. This is what you do. After you have read each sentence, you say it in your own words.

We will begin doing this a word at a time and then with sentences and finally with paragraphs.

The first sentence we will read is about a lion. Let us read the first sentence aloud. I will read it aloud first and then I will ask someone else to take a turn at reading it.

After the sentence has been read twice, cover the word napping and ask the children for other words for it.

What word could we use that means the same and makes sense in the sentence?
Write these on a card and put them on the sentence to show the children that the sentence meaning has not changed. If the children say words that do not make sense, add these as well and ask the children if this makes sense. Does the sentence still have the same meaning?
Cover the word **log**. Repeat above procedure.

**Teacher reviews the action:** Let us look at what we have done. We read the sentence and then said some words in other ways. See how it helped you understand the sentence?

Do you have any questions?

Cover the word **sleepy** and ask the children to come up with some words in pairs that would fit.

**With the person beside you, try to think of as many words as you can that mean the same as sleepy.**

Make a list of these words together as a group. Say these words in the sentence to make sure they make sense.

**Now that we have had a go at changing some of the words in the sentence, who would like to have a go at saying the sentence using some of the different words we have come up with?**

Write a paraphrase of the sentence.

**Tell me what you know about paraphrasing and what steps you should follow.**

Write up on a display card:-

1. Read a sentence
2. Change as many words as you can, but keep the same meaning.
3. Say the sentence again in your own words.

**Ongoing booklet:** We will make a “Another word for..” booklet which we will add to each session. Each page will have a list of words that are synonyms. These words will be the ones we have discussed during the session.
Session 2

During this session, the students again apply the paraphrasing strategy, concentrating on a word at a time. Supplying synonyms for specific words. The students review the steps involved and the teacher gives additional practice interactively and then in pairs. The teacher actively monitors the students' work, giving appropriate feedback both individually and through group discussion.

Teacher reviews what students remember about paraphrasing from Session 1.

*What do you do when you paraphrase a sentence?*
*How does paraphrasing help you?*

Have the students paraphrase the sentence from session 1, with no prompts.

Introduce a new sentence, The big brown bear opened his mouth wide and growled.
Repeat the set of teaching procedures used for Session 1. Regularly remind students of the nature of the task and have them review the action. Add words to booklet.
Session 3

On the last two sessions we were practicing paraphrasing a word at a time. Now we are going to read one sentence and paraphrase it.

Let’s look at what actions we do when we paraphrase. Students say what they do.

Introduce them to the sentence, This tiny bird is taking a piggyback ride on the zebra. The teacher reads the sentence. A child reads the sentence.

I will read it and I want you to read it to yourself with me. Then I will try saying it another way. Then I will ask you to try. I will write down what I say and what you say.

Read sentence and paraphrase, A minute budgie is getting a fun lift on an African animal.

Ask the children for other ways of saying the same thing. Record these responses. Write synonyms in our booklet.

Let us look at what we did here. We read a sentence and then said it in other ways. See how it helped you to understand the sentence.

Do you have any questions?

In pairs, the children write a joint paraphrase of the sentence.

Discuss how paraphrasing helps them to comprehend what they read.
Session 4

Teacher reviews what students remember about paraphrasing.
What do you do when you paraphrase one sentence at a time?
How does paraphrasing help you?

Introduce the sentence, This baby calf is peeking out from under its mother.

In pairs the children paraphrase this sentence.
Repeat the set of teaching procedures used for session 3. Regularly remind the students of the nature of the task and have them review the action.

Session 5

Display sentences, Mother grizzly bear led her cubs across the log and through the forest. And, The lioness carries her baby to her cave.

Remind students of the strategy: You have been learning to do something that will help you to remember what you read. We call it paraphrasing. What you do is this. After you have read a sentence or a group of sentences, you say it in your own words.

So far we have been doing it with one sentence. Now we are going to do it with two sentences.

These sentences are about animal mothers. I will read them out aloud first and then I will ask a child to take a turn.

Have students take turns to read aloud twice. Then in pairs, have students read each sentence, paraphrase it and write their paraphrase. Then ask the pairs to read out their paraphrases of each sentence.

Teacher reviews the action: Let us look at what we did here. We read each sentence and then said it in other ways. See how it helped you to understand what the sentences said. Do you have any questions? Correct students' responses.

Fill synonyms into the booklet
Session 6
Use sentences, The honeybee reaches deep down into the daisy to get the sweet nectar. The spider can spin a web to catch its lunch.

List key words and suggest synonyms for these, or matching meaningful phrases. Students say the links between each pair. Add synonyms to booklet.

During this session, the students read aloud two sentences, paraphrase sentence by sentence in the group activity and then each student individually writes a paraphrase of one sentence.

Teacher reviews what students remember about paraphrasing:

* What do you do when you paraphrase a sentence?
  * How does paraphrasing help you?

Session 7
Use paragraph, Snails have a soft body and carry a hard shell. They do not have any legs. Some snails live in water but in this book we will be looking at snails that live in gardens and woods.

Write each of the key words down and ask students to suggest synonyms or matching meaningful phrases. Have students say again the links between each pair. Add words to the booklet.

During this session, the students read silently each sentence. Once they have done this at least once, students in the group activity paraphrase the sentences. In pairs write a paraphrase of each sentence.

Teacher reviews what the students remember about paraphrasing:

* What do you do when you paraphrase a sentence?
  * How does paraphrasing help you?
Session 8

Use paragraph. Snails come in different sizes and have shells of different colours. Some snails are very small. Some are very big. This is a Giant African land snail. It can grow to be longer than your foot!

List key words and ask students to suggest synonyms or matching meaningful phrases. Have students say the links between each pair.

*What do you do to paraphrase a sentence?*
*When you paraphrase a paragraph, you can combine sentences to paraphrase, but still keep all the same meaning.*

Read silently each sentence. Paraphrase sentence by sentence in a group activity and each student writes a paraphrase of each sentence.

Teacher reviews what students remember about paraphrasing:

- *What do you do when you paraphrase sentences?*
- *How does paraphrasing sentences help you?*
Session 9

Use paragraph, Snails have a thick, soft foot that they can pull into their hard shell. Each ring on the shell is called a whorl. The soft foot usually feels damp and slimy.

Review the key words and synonyms listed in previous sessions. Have students say again the links between each pair.

Ask students: What do you do to paraphrase sentences?

During this session, the students read silently each sentence. Once they have done this at least once, students individually write a paraphrase of each sentence. Then each student shares this with the group.

After reading these list key words from the sentences and teach synonyms for these. Add these to the booklet.

Teacher reviews what students remember about paraphrasing:

- What do you do when you paraphrase sentences?
- How does paraphrasing sentences help you?
Session 10

Use paragraph. Snails have a mouth under their head and a breathing hole under their shell. The short feelers are for touch and smell. The long ones have two tiny eyes at the end.

Review the key words and synonyms listed in previous sessions. Have students say again the links between each pair.

Ask students: What do you do to paraphrase sentences?

During this session, the students read silently each sentence. Once they have done this at least once, students individually write a paraphrase of each sentence. Then each student shares this with the group.

After reading these, list key words from the sentences and teach synonyms for these. Add these to the booklet.

Teacher reviews what students remember about paraphrasing:

- What do you do when you paraphrase sentences?
- How does paraphrasing sentences help you?
The following are the texts used during the sessions.

Session 1
“A sleepy lion is napping on a fallen log”.

Session 2
The big brown bear opened his mouth wide and growled.

Session 3
This tiny bird is taking a piggyback ride on the zebra.

Session 4
This baby calf is peeking out from under its mother.

Session 5
Mother grizzly bear led her cubs across the log and through the forest. The lioness carries her baby to her cave.

Session 6
The honeybee reaches deep down into the daisy to get the sweet nectar. The spider can spin a web to catch its lunch.

Session 7
Snails have a soft body and carry a hard shell. They do not have any legs. Some snails live in water but in this book we will be looking at snails that live in gardens and woods.

Session 8
Snails come in different sizes and have shells of different colours. Some snails are very small. Some are very big. This is a Giant African land snail. It can grow to be longer than your foot!

Session 9
Snails have a thick, soft foot that they can pull into their hard shell. Each ring on the shell is called a whorl. The soft foot usually feels damp and slimy.

Session 10
Snails have a mouth under their head and a breathing hole under their shell. The short feelers are for touch and smell. The long ones have two tiny eyes at the end.