

Explicitly teaching synonyms and paraphrasing to grade 2 students improves reading comprehension.

Procedure

All year two students participated in this study, with one group as my teaching group and one as my control group. The control group was pre and post tested on the same day as the teaching group, although in different sessions. The assessments and tasks were administered to the test group in the following order;

1. Students underwent the pre assessments of synonyms, followed by, paraphrasing and the Torch test (Grasshoppers) pre teaching
2. Teaching sessions were conducted on consecutive days over a two week period
3. Each session lasted between 35 and 40 minutes
4. Each session was carried out by me
5. Lessons 1, 5 and 10 were videotaped as a resource for discussion in professional learning team meetings.

Each session began with the teacher modelling tasks, coaching students on the task and supporting students through tasks. Each session students talked about what they were learning, reflected and discuss how they were learning and talked about how this could help them with their learning. Four assessments were used and all were indication of learning, although one in particular was designed specifically so students could see how their knowledge had grown over the ten lessons. This test was one work sheet containing the following three questions which students answered pre and post-test on the same sheet, giving them concrete evidence of their learning. (Appendix 2)

1. What is paraphrasing?
2. What are synonyms?
3. How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?

Materials

The following materials were used:

1. Synonyms Task Group developed by John Munro (2005)
2. Paraphrasing Task Group developed by John Munro (2005)
3. Torch Comprehension Test
4. Self –assessment work sheet (one per student)
 - What is paraphrasing?
 - What are synonyms?
 - How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?
5. Paraphrasing Lessons – 1 – 10 (Appendix 1)

Text 1. 'Emus Ground Birds' (adapted from the Australian National Geographic Web site), 'Echidnas' (adapted from the Australian National Geographic Web site), 'The Australian Red Back Spider' pages 16 – 17 (Feature Article – series Winners – Life Science publisher Macmillan), 'Kangaroos' pages 8 – 17 (Title - You Don't Look Like Your Mama, Magazine Article – series Winners – Life Science publisher Macmillan). These reading materials were developed for a unit the students were doing on Australian animals in the following term. The group X would learn strategies and knowledge about Australian animals so that they could reflect and consolidate their learning through teaching their peers.

6. White board (big and small)
7. Butchers Paper
8. Highlighters
9. Plastic pocket folders for storing their work
10. Worksheets (Appendix 3,4, 5 & 6)

LESSON PLANS

Lesson plans – Goal: Explicitly teach synonyms and paraphrasing to year two students to improve reading comprehension.

L e s s o n s	Collins Model Responsibility of the teacher/student	<h1>Procedure</h1>
1	Evidence for student self reflection during lessons Teacher Models Teacher Coaches Teacher Models Teacher Coaches Teacher Models Teacher Coaches	Self Assessment – Appendix 2 Introduce the Goal for the next ten sessions - PARAPHRASING AND USE OF SYNONYMS WHEN WE READ <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. introducing paraphrasing to students: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Paraphrasing means putting what you have read into your own words. b. Synonym is a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word in the same language c. You paraphrase by reading something, thinking about what it means, and then say again it in your own words. d. Paraphrasing is a useful strategy to check to be sure that you have understood when reading something difficult or something that is important to remember. e. If you cannot paraphrase after reading, it is important to go back and reread to clarify information. 2. Discuss key words – Synonyms, paraphrasing and introduce the acronym RAP. Each student will have a folder in which all work will be stored over these lessons. Coloured posters of RAP and a definition of a synonym and paraphrasing provided for all students and discussed. 3. Play a synonym game (appendix 4) students look for and match like words 4. Introduce text – ‘Emus Ground Birds’ (text adapted from National Geographic – Appendix 3) 5. Talk about the title and discuss what we think the story might be about – create a mind map as the students contribute their ideas. 6. Teacher reads text 7. Read through text together 8. (Think Aloud Teaching Strategy) Teacher models identifying synonyms and key phrases by underlining them in the first and then second paragraph. Teacher explicitly points out the rewording as changing key words and phrases in to her own words. Teacher reads original version and then reworded version. Pointing out to students that by putting the text in her own words, she is better able to understand it and remember it. Teacher also encourage students to make connections to their own world as they read e.g. In ‘Emu’s Ground Birds’ the male emu looks after the eggs and chicks and the mother leaves after laying the eggs – In what ways is this similar or not to our own lives? 9. Teacher and students apply same process to the third and fourth paragraph. (Students suggest which words or phrases the group could reword)

	Student Articulates	8. Review lesson – go over main terms and encourage students to teach someone at home what a synonym is.
2	Teacher Models/ Coaches Student Articulate Teacher Coaches Students Articulate and reflect Teacher Models Teacher Coaches Teacher Models Teacher Coaches Teacher Coaches	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review lesson – Revise a synonym. Students share who and how they taught synonyms to – encouraging students to use their cognitive skills. Students hear they will be teaching another group about the animals they are learning about for next terms inquiry topic on Australian animals. They will teach their groups about identifying key words and using synonyms as well as paraphrasing to understand information about Australian Animals. 2. Play synonym game (appendix 4) this time students are asked to put their left finger on a word and see how quickly their right finger can find the synonym for that word. 3. Review the story – ‘Emus Ground Birds’ students retell paraphrase story with a partner. Discuss how much of the story you could remember and what you think helped you remember. Model making connections between the story and what we know as a group. 4. Introduce text – ‘Echidnas’ (adapted from National Geographic – Appendix 4) Discuss prior knowledge, what are mammals and what connections can we make to our own lives. 5. Talk about the title and first sentence and discuss what we think the story might be about – students discuss briefly with a partner things they know about Echidnas. 6. Teacher reads text 7. Read through text together 8. Teacher models paraphrases the first paragraph using the think aloud-teaching strategy on white board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step one – highlight key words - Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms - Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same - Step four – read paraphrased version 9. Students work through paragraph 3, 4 and 5 with the teacher. Paraphrasing together on to smart board 10. Review lesson – go over main terms and encourage students to teach someone at home what paraphrasing is. Highlight modelled tips to help with paraphrasing - RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense. Students take home folders and are encouraged to use words from synonym game and play with someone at home.
3	Teacher Models/Coaches Students Articulate Teacher Models Teacher Coaches Teacher Models Teacher Coaches	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review last lesson – Revise what a synonym/paraphrasing/RAP. Students share who and how they taught paraphrasing to .Discuss and model tips to help with paraphrasing - RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense. 2. Play synonym memory game (appendix 5) students think of one or more synonyms for bonus points. 3. Talk about the title and first sentence and discuss what we think the story might be about – students discuss briefly with a partner things they know about Echidnas. 4. Discuss prior knowledge – model making connections between our life and the echidnas 5. Teacher reads text 6. Read through text with students 7. Teacher models paraphrases the first paragraph using the think -aloud teaching strategy on white board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step one – highlight key words - Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms - Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same - Step four – read paraphrased version 8. Students work through paragraph 3, 4 and 5 with the teacher. Paraphrasing together on to

	<p>Students Articulate</p> <p>Students Articulate</p>	<p>smart board</p> <p>9. Review the story – ‘Echidnas’ students paraphrase story with a partner. Partners do one paragraph at a time. Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the story maintain the same information using other words - did it make sense when you read the story through - Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense). <p>10. Review lesson – go over main terms and encourage students to teach someone new what paraphrasing and synonyms are. Students take home folders and read their version of echidnas</p>
4	<p>Teacher Coaches Students articulate, reflect and explore</p> <p>Teacher Models</p> <p>Teacher models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds Students articulate</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate and explore</p> <p>students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<p>1. Review last lesson - Go over key words and understandings – synonyms, paraphrasing, RAP, how do you check if the synonym you chose has a similar meaning – discuss how putting text into our own words helps us when we read.</p> <p>2. What can we use to find out more words that have the same meaning?</p> <p>3. Introduce the Thesaurus – model the looking up of words e.g. hot, then students practice looking up some words highlighted from the text</p> <p>4. Discuss homework</p> <p>5. Introduce – ‘The Australian Red Back Spider’</p> <p>6. Discuss prior knowledge – model making connections between our life and the Spiders</p> <p>7. Read through text with students</p> <p>8. Teacher models paraphrases the first paragraph using the think aloud-teaching strategy on white board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step one – highlight key words - Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms - Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same - Step four – read paraphrased version <p>9. Students work through paragraph 2, with the teacher. Paraphrasing together on to smart board</p> <p>10. Students work through paragraph 3 &4, with a partner. Paraphrasing together</p> <p>11. Share</p> <p>12. Review the story –Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the story maintain the same information using other words - did it make sense when you read the story through - Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense). <p>13. Review lesson – Read over posters and put them in to your own words. Discuss how these skills will help us in school</p>
5	<p>Teacher Coaches Students articulate, reflect and explore</p> <p>Teacher models</p> <p>Teacher Coaches scaffolding</p> <p>students articulate</p>	<p>1. Review last lesson - Ask students to go over key words and understandings using flash cards with key words and questions – synonyms, paraphrasing, RAP, how do you check if the synonym you chose has a similar meaning – discuss how putting text into our own words helps us when we read (why and how).</p> <p>2. Review homework</p> <p>3. Thesaurus – (appendix 6 – word in story sheet) students find two interesting words from any of the texts read so far and look for synonyms – share in groups of 3 or 4</p> <p>4. Students read through text ‘The Australian Red Back Spider’</p> <p>5. Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step one – highlight key words - Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms

	<p>and explore</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds Students articulate and explore</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same - Step four – read paraphrased version <p>6. Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the story maintain the same information using other words - did it make sense when you read the story through - Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense). <p>7. Review lesson – questions similar to lesson 4</p> <p>Read over posters and put them in to your own words. Discuss how these skills will help us in school.</p>
<p>6 + 7</p>	<p>Teacher Coaches Students articulate</p> <p>Teacher scaffolding students articulate</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds Students articulate and explore</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate, explore and reflect</p> <p>Teacher scaffolds students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<p>1. Review last lesson -</p> <p>2. Thesaurus – (appendix 6 – word in story sheet) students find two interesting words from any of the texts read so far and look for synonyms – share in groups of 3 or 4</p> <p>3. Students read through text ‘The Australian Red Back Spider’</p> <p>4. Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step one – highlight key words - Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms - Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same - Step four – read paraphrased version <p>5. Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the story maintain the same information using other words - did it make sense when you read the story through - Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense) <p>How can these skills help us read and understand in all classes</p> <p>6. Pose Questions from the text that call for students to have interpreted text. Students answer orally e.g. What is unique about the red colouring of the Australian Red Back Spider?</p> <p>7. Introduce booklet on Kangaroos (Title - You Don’t Look Like Your Mama – series Winners – Life Science publisher MACMILLAN)</p> <p>8. In groups students are asked to read and apply the following to page one of the booklet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step one – highlight key words - Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms - Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same - Step four – read paraphrased version - Reflect – what did you learn? <p>8. Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the story maintain the same information using other words - did it make sense when you read the story through - Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense). <p>9. Review session - skills</p> <p>Discuss how these skills will help us in school</p>
<p>8 + 9</p>	<p>Teacher scaffolds</p> <p>Students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<p>1. Review last lesson</p> <p>2. Booklet on Kangaroos (Title - You Don’t Look Like Your Mama – series Winners – Life Science publisher MACMILLAN) Kangaroo Traits page 10 – 13</p> <p>3. In groups students are asked to read and apply the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step one – highlight key words

	<p>Students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms - Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same - Step four – read paraphrased version - Reflect – what did you learn? <p>9. Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the story maintain the same information using other words - did it make sense when you read the story through - Discuss tips when paraphrasing (RAP, underline key words, change order of information in sentences, put your synonym in the sentences and check if it still makes sense). <p>4. Review session</p> <p>How can we use these skills in all classes – students Think/Pair/share</p>
<p>1 0</p>	<p>Teacher scaffolds where necessary</p> <p>Students articulate, explore and reflect</p> <p>Students articulate, explore and reflect</p>	<p>Read silently the last page of the Kangaroo booklet – ‘Living in a Group’ Paraphrase Read each paragraph silently (When paraphrasing sentences students need to be reminded that it is not a summary. Students should paraphrase the sequence of events.)</p> <p>5. Individually students are asked to read and apply the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step one – highlight key words - Step two – replace key words or phrases with synonyms - Step three – reread sentence to check the meaning is the same - Step four – read paraphrased version - Step five – did your paraphrasing still hold the same message - Reflect – what did you learn? Think/Pair/Share <p>Post test the initial three questions for students to self assess and discuss what they have learnt. Students review what they have learnt and how they can continue to use these skills</p>

Name: _____

Developing Comprehension

Goal – To understand the importance of paraphrasing and synonyms when reading.

Pre Assessment –

Answer the following Questions.

- What is paraphrasing?

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- What are synonyms?

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- How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?

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Post Assessment –

Answer the following Questions.

1. What is paraphrasing?

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2. What are synonyms?

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3. How do paraphrasing and synonyms help you when you read?

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Appendix 3

Name:

R A P		Paraphrase-	Synonym –
R	Read	to reword something using other words, e.g. He held a little rose in his hand' or 'The boy gripped a small flower in his fist	a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word e.g. 'tear' and 'rip'.
A	Ask Questions		
P	Put into your own words		

Synonym Matching Game

home	noisy
frightened	small
laugh	start
begin	house
trap	giggle
little	scared
loud	warm
hot	catch

Synonym Matching game 2

angry	friend
trip	mad
pal	voyage
sugary	rock
stone	stole
toss	sweet
took	throw
enjoy	like
flame	fast
quick	fire

Name:

SYNONYMS

are words with the same meaning.

Words from a thesaurus	Think of as many as you can, remember to keep the same meaning.
Words in stories	Think of as many as you can, remember to keep the same meaning.