The purposes of this study were to explore metaphor development in young, verbally talented learners and to assess the effects of instruction on related tasks. A quasi-experimental design was used, with a sample of 70 second graders in the treatment group and 21 in the comparison group. Treatment classes engaged in a literature-based intervention focused on metaphor structure. Both groups were assessed before and after the intervention period on two instruments measuring metaphor comprehension and interpretation, with student products and teacher assessments collected from treatment classes. Data sources also included classroom observations and scores on the Test of Cognitive Skills (TCS).

Findings around metaphor development supported previous research, demonstrating that verbally talented second graders are developmentally capable of some metaphor-related tasks. Analysis of student products reflected predicted patterns regarding appropriateness, type, and quality of metaphor. Some products exceeded age expectations, supporting predictions that gifted students would surpass age peers. Small significant relationships ($p < .05$) were found between TCS scores and study instrument scores.

Findings around treatment effect were limited. On one instrument, the treatment group outperformed the comparison group but without showing growth. On the other, the treatment group showed growth not attributable to the intervention. Class-level comparisons indicated possible differences in performance related to degree of implementation of the intervention. Teacher assessments demonstrated a significant relationship ($p < .001$) to student performance on one instrument.

The study supported and extended previous research on metaphor development, with results meeting and exceeding age expectations. Intervention results were weaker, and limitations of sample size and instrumentation suggest the need for further investigation. Student products and teacher responses indicated potential appropriateness of the intervention, but further research is necessary to determine effectiveness.