

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a green chalkboard. Two pieces of pink chalk are lying on the board, one standing upright and the other lying horizontally. There are several faint, white chalk markings on the board, including a large 'A' shape and some curved lines. The lighting is soft, creating a slight shadow for the chalk pieces.

Teaching and Assessing Oral Language


Archdiocese of Hartford
Primary Education

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What is oral language



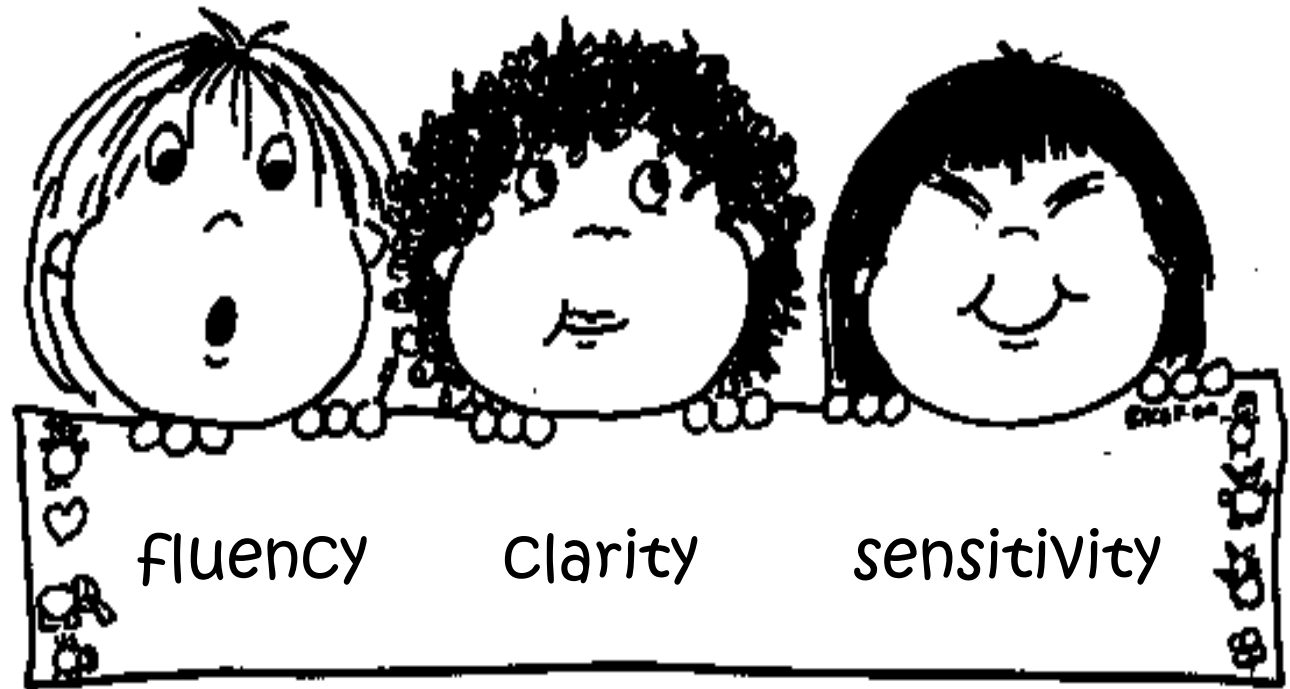
- At the most basic level, oral language means communicating with other people.
- Oral language development across the curriculum does not mean teaching children to speak as much as we mean *improving their ability to talk or communicate more effectively.*
- To speak in more effective ways requires particular attention and constant practice.



“The development of language, upon which all learning is built, plays a critical role in students’ ability to acquire strong literacy skills, which include reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting. Explicit instruction in oral language development provides students with the foundation for comprehending text and communicating effectively. Thus, teachers serve an essential role in developing students’ reading and writing skills.”

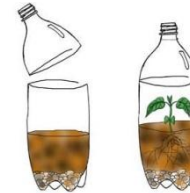
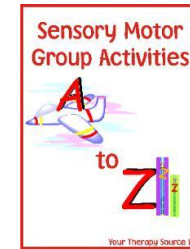
3 Criteria for Oral Language Competence:

Holbrook (1983) sets out three criteria for oral language competence:.



In what contexts do we teach oral language?

- Numeracy
- Social Interaction
- Literacy
- Sensory Motor
- Developmental Play Centers
- Show and Share
- Inquiry Based Activities
- Language Experiences
- Content of ALL Learning Areas



Language and Literacy

- Oral language development provides the foundation for **literacy development**
- Literacy acquisition is dependent on oral language abilities and skills (Maurano)
- Children need to use oral language to develop their powers of reasoning and observation, prediction, sequencing and other skills connected with reading. (FS Exploratory Phase 1997)



Oral Language is an Integral Part of All Learning Experiences



- Oral language is not “taught” as a separate component of a literacy program
- It is an imbedded component in all content areas
- Oral language standards, objectives, and enabling outcomes (learning outcomes) are part of the language arts curriculum from grade 1-8

(See Archdiocese of Hartford Language Arts Curriculum Standards, 2008)



**You teach oral language
everyday**

**Collect evidence of
learning
along the way**

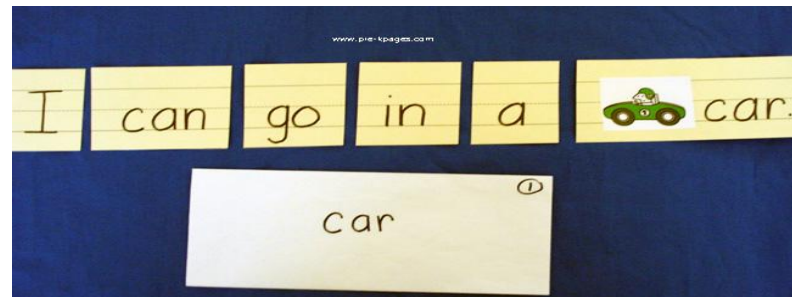


Here's how...



Assessment

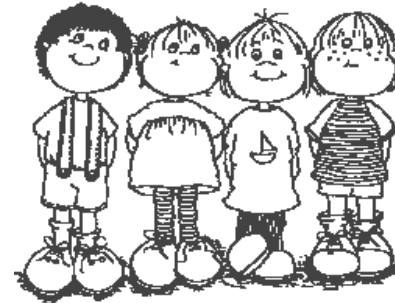
- In the primary grades, a child's oral language ability is the basis for beginning literacy instruction
- Initial formal assessments, ongoing formative assessments during the year, as well as summative assessments will provide information regarding a child's oral language skills



Evaluating Oral Language Skills: (Rog, 2001)

Behaviors:

- *Uses appropriate volume and tone of voice*
- *Knows how to take turns when speaking*
- *Stays on topic*
- *Asks questions*
- *Seems to pay attention when another person is speaking*



Vocabulary:

- *Can name colors, numbers, and familiar objects*
- *Uses vocabulary appropriately for purpose and audience*
- *Is able to retell parts or all of a story read aloud*
- *Understands and uses prepositions such as over, under, in, out, beside, etc*
- *Understands directions*



Language Structures:

- *Can use connectors such as: and, so, because, if*
- *Often speaks in complete sentences*
- *Generally speaks with grammatical correctness*

Speech Sounds:

- *Articulates speech sounds correctly*
- *Speaks clearly and fluently*



Activities to Assess Oral Language

➤ *Language of Social Interaction*



- Activity based sharing: informal, structured, formal
- Discussion: partner, small group, informal debate, whole class
- Social Conventions: communication, problem solving, contexts for speaking and listening courtesies

➤ *Language and Literacy*

- Newstelling
- Formal presentations
- Assembly performances
- Narrative: modelled stories, character interviews, role play, story reconstruction, circle stories
- Description: barrier games, description activities



➤ *Language and Thinking*



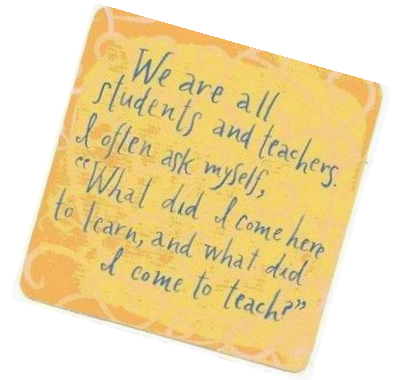
- Partner work: collaborative learner / adoption of roles
- Inquiry: questioning, interviewing, creative inquiry
- Classification: comparing and grouping, brainstorming and building knowledge

➤ *Speech Development*

- Observe and record on checklists
- Track developmental progress
- Monitor children at risk
- Call on speech therapists, special needs teachers for opinions/support



How to Assess



- Focused observations: individual or small group
- Assess products created *during process of learning* not only final products that are a result of learning.
- Select oral samples for a portfolio



Suggested Oral Language Descriptors by Age:

- 3-4 Years:

- *Listens attentively for short time periods (e.g., stories, poems, music, rhymes, etc.).*
- *Follows directions during daily/classroom routines.*
- *Focuses on own needs when listening.*
- *Talks about daily experiences.*
- *May/May not use complete sentences.*
- *Communicates nonverbally.*
- *Asks what unfamiliar words mean*



- 4-5 Years:

- *Responds to stories, poems, rhymes, music, action songs.*
- *Follows 2-3 step directions.*
- *Responds to questions.*
- *Listens attentively for increasing periods.*
- *Connects information and events to life experiences.*
- *Knows that print is read in stories.*
- *Retells stories or events in chronological order.*
- *Pays attention to repetitive sounds/patterns.*
- *Uses new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech.*
- *Demonstrates literal comprehension of stories by asking questions and making comments.*
- *Uses more complex sentences.*
- *Seeks/Shares information and appreciation during social interactions.*

• 5-6 Years:

- Follows directions that have a series of steps.
- Expresses the main point of a conversation.
- Adjusts language and syntax to different situations.
- Adjusts rate and volume to situation.
- Uses talk to clarify ideas or experiences.
- Tracks print when listening to a familiar text being read or when rereading own writing.



• Ages 6-7 Years:

- Expresses personal ideas, feelings, information, and experiences.
- Summarizes what has been said.
- Makes predictions.
- Asks speaker to repeat what has been said for understanding and clarity.
- Communicates effectively for variety of purposes and audiences.
- Uses words to convey meaning, entertain, or share information.
- Evidences expanding language repertoire (e.g., standard language usage, informal conversation, dialogue, etc.).



Sources:

- North Carolina English Language Arts Standard Course of Study. (December, 1999). Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
- Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., and Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children. Washington, D.C.: National Academic Press.
- Staab, Claire. (1992). Oral Language for Today's Classroom. Pippin Publishing Limited.
- Teachers' Choices. (November, yearly). Primary Level Books. The Reading Teacher. International Reading Association.

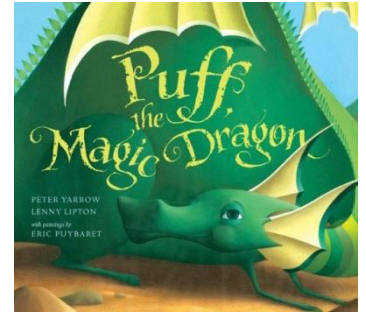
Book Talks: An oral book report that provides an opportunity to measure growth in a formal presentation of a particular type of information

1. Students select the books set by the teacher by genre
2. Students are evaluated based on information they provide and deliver
3. Criteria might include (adapted as appropriate by grade level): title + author, character descriptions or illustrations, setting, plot or retelling of the story, recommendation – Did they like the book? Why? Would they recommend it to others?

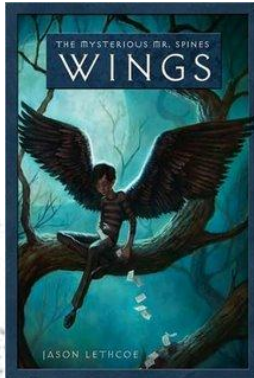


Book Talk Assessments for Oral Language:

- Maintains eye contact with audience
- Demonstrates good posture
- Uses appropriate language for a formal presentation
- Uses appropriate voice level



*Criteria becomes more elaborate
as grade level increases*





Group Discussions: Assessment approach for extending students' communicative ability to a peer-to-peer situation where students must analyze and persuade others in an interactive setting

1. Students are shown a brief film/video or are read a story that leaves the ending unresolved
2. Students then participate in a group discussion to resolve the ending
3. Teacher observes students' use of language in a negotiation activity
4. Teacher then asks students to take a vote on the best solution
5. Discussion can be tape recorded for later evaluation

Group Discussion Assessment for Oral Language

- Quality and quantity of information contributed during each discussion turn
- Effectiveness in communicating and articulating information
- Ease and flow of student's speech



Sample Rubric for First Descriptor: Quality and Quantity

Rating	Descriptor: <i>Quality and Quantity of Information</i>
4	Very elaborate comments, opinions, solutions, with greater elaboration of reason, solution (e.g. weighting the alternatives, pros/cons)
3	Elaborate comments, opinions, solutions – Opinions with reasons, solutions with detail, generalization with reasons, comments with details
2	Simple comments, opinions, solutions or replies; not necessarily a complete sentence
1	Irrelevant comments having nothing or little to do with discussion or introduced into the discussion without context or explanation; may be complete or incomplete sentences or one or two words



Resources: Oral Language Activities

- As with any rubric, students should be aware of evaluation criteria ahead of time so they will understand what they are being asked to do and why.
- For more oral language activities for primary grades, try these sites:
- www.literacyconnections.com/OralLanguage.php
- http://primary-school-curriculum.suite101.com/article.cfm/developing_oral_language_in_primary_classrooms
- <http://www.earlyliterature.ecsd.net/oral.htm>

