

# The Impact of Oral Language on Student Learning

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# YEC Students

- ◆ All students have missed a significant amount of schooling
- ◆ 85 % of students are Aboriginal
- ◆ Most students have missed out on foundational skills that are crucial to becoming literate
- ◆ Approximately 50% of students have a speech or language difficulties
- ◆ 52% students have a verified disability, 47% have learning difficulties and 1% are at or near age appropriate

# What Research Tells Us

‘If students are unable to read, most of what they learn is through hearing other people talk’

**Resnick and Snow (2009)**

‘Speaking and listening are academic, social and life skills that are valued in school and the world and academically people are judged in part, by what they say and how they say it’

**Resnick and Snow ( 2009)**

‘High Quality classroom talk is a key factor in improving pupil engagement and outcomes’

**Babayigit (2012)**

# Goals of Implementing Oral Language Assessment

- ◆ To improve student participation
- ◆ To improve student talk using academic language
- ◆ Increase academic vocabulary
- ◆ Develop an ability to code switch and know when it's appropriate
- ◆ Develop an awareness of the link between Oral language, reading and writing
- ◆ To better equip students to become more literate and successful in everyday life
- ◆ Help teachers plan for instruction

# Oral Language Assessment

*Crevola and Vineis (2004)*

- ◆ The Oral Language Assessment provides a quick and easy way to determine what structures of oral English students understand and control.
- ◆ The series of sentences in this assessment reflect *some* of the structures of adult English language that are common to school and classroom settings. This assessment measures a student's *receptive* language.
- ◆ The language structures in this assessment are vital for students to understand if they are to understand classroom instructions and discussions.

# Oral Language Assessment Sample

ORAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT	
Name: _____	Age: _____
Date: _____	Grade: _____
Set 1	
TYPE	
1	<i>The puppy's tail is curly.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	<i>Mummy is making a cake.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	<i>The teacher told them a story.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	<i>There are the children.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	<i>She's eating her lunch slowly.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
Sub total <input type="text"/>	
Set 2	
TYPE	
1	<i>That red bike over there used to be my uncle's.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	<i>The girl in the car is waving her hand.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	<i>Over the weekend Jade brought us some biscuits.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	<i>Here are the machines that dig the big holes.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	<i>The bird built a nest up in the tree.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
Sub total <input type="text"/>	
Set 3	
TYPE	
1	<i>Be ready to come inside when the bell rings.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	<i>The car and the truck were carrying some large boxes.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	<i>The brave fireman showed our class the big red truck.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	<i>There are the men who clean the playground at our school.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	<i>My friend likes to sleep at my house in the Christmas holidays.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
Sub total <input type="text"/>	
TOTAL SCORE <input type="text"/>	

Crevola, C. and Vineis, M. (2004). Assessment and instructional pacing. New York: Mondo Publishing. 1.

# Social Language

- ◆ The language used amongst friends
- ◆ The language of text messages
- ◆ The language of daily conversations

## **How to spot social language**

- ◆ Simple sentences using simple words
- ◆ Repeated words
- ◆ Sentences with 'and' or 'but'
- ◆ Use of slang

# Academic Language

- ◆ The language used in the classroom
- ◆ The language of tests and assessments
- ◆ The language of academic success
- ◆ The language of power

## **How to find academic language**

- ◆ Employs a variety of sophisticated words
- ◆ Sentences start with transition words such as 'however' or 'moreover'
- ◆ Proper grammar



# YEC Implementation To Improve Literacy Levels

- ◆ Oral Language Assessment - Crevola and Vineis (2004)
- ◆ Shorter classroom instructions based on data from Oral Language Assessment
- ◆ Analysing data to identify where language is breaking down
- ◆ Moving from casual register to formal register also referring to it a 'code switching'
- ◆ Making oral language the common thread in all curriculum areas
- ◆ Oral language activities and scaffolding language
- ◆ Changing the audience from the teacher to student
- ◆ Looking at the links to reading achievement (Resnick & Snow 2003)
- ◆ Implementing Fountas and Pinelle Benchmark Assessment System 1 & 2 (Reception to yr. 8)
- ◆ Reading text on appropriate level based on F&P level so they can apply comprehension strategies and talk about the text
- ◆ Explicit teaching of skills during English and Literacy lessons
- ◆ 1:1 Literacy support with a *skilled teacher* around reading process

# Trends So Far

- ◆ Students Oral language scores correlate close to their reading level
- ◆ Students are able to recognise when to code switch by using more academic language
- ◆ During their stay, oral language scores improve, as does their reading
- ◆ Students are more active and vocal during lessons
- ◆ Listening comprehension has improved especially when asked to complete a task
- ◆ Student vocabulary is expanding and this is evident during purposeful classroom talk
- ◆ Increased output of writing
- ◆ Teachers are consistently putting a press on language during lessons

# References

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- Crevola and Vineis (2005). *'Let's Talk About It'* Mondo Publishing
- Resnick and Snow (2009). *'Speaking and Listening for Preschool Through Third Grade* (rev. ed.)