



# Oral Language

# First Grade



### **Assignment for Observation**

- Record student and teacher interactions, paying close attention to oral language.
- Record teacher language that scaffolds students' oral language.
- Observe assigned student(s), using Resource OL 1 Oral Language Observations, recording and categorizing specific language.

*(Trainer will need to make extra copies for participants who must observe more than one child.)*

### **Participant Materials**

#### Reading First Notebook

- Arkansas K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, Revised 2003
- Arkansas Reading First Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Map
- Arkansas Reading First Classroom Observation Protocol
- *Put Reading First*

#### Texts

*Oral Language Developmental Continuum*

### **Presenter Materials**

All participant materials

## Oral Language Observations

Observe the targeted child carefully. Record examples of language use that fits the categories described.

<b>Phase 2 Key Indicators</b>	<b>Observations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses own grammar style, an approximation of adult grammar (<i>goed</i> for <i>went</i>).</li> <li>• developing awareness of listener needs and provides feedback</li> <li>• gives simple descriptions of past events</li> <li>• shows an interest in explanations of how and why</li> </ul>	
<b>Phase 3 Key Indicators</b>	<b>Observations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has grasped most grammatical rules, but still may overgeneralize</li> <li>• contributes appropriately to class interactions, showing when something is not understood</li> <li>• adapts language for social control</li> <li>• includes when, who, where, what in recounts</li> <li>• uses language to explain, inquire and compare</li> </ul>	
<b>Other Observations</b>	

## Key Predictors of Reading Success

### Oral Language

Children acquire vocabulary that informs them about the world; they use language to construct relationships and categories, to figure things out, and to solve problems. They also use language to express ideas and participate in social contexts.

### Phonological Awareness

Children demonstrate sensitivity to, manipulation of, and use of sounds in words.

### Print Knowledge

Children demonstrate knowledge of the units of print (letters, words) and ability to translate print to sound and sound to print (letter-to-sound) and understanding of book and print concepts.

### Three Key Predictors of Reading Success

- **Oral Language**  
Children acquire vocabulary that informs them about the world; they use language to construct relationships and categories, to figure things out, and to solve problems. They also use language to express ideas and participate in social contexts.
- **Phonological Awareness**  
Children demonstrate sensitivity to, manipulation of, and use of sounds in words.
- **Print Knowledge**  
Children demonstrate knowledge of the units of print (letters, words) and ability to translate print to sound and sound to print (letter-to-sound) and understanding of book and print concepts.

Discuss the predictors of reading success and how these areas correlate with the five essential elements of reading.

Examples:

Vocabulary = oral language

Phonological Awareness = phonological awareness

Phonics = print knowledge

Fluency = all of the above

Comprehension = all of the above

Read *Put Reading First (PRF)* p. 34. Note the four types of vocabulary:

- listening vocabulary
- speaking vocabulary
- reading vocabulary
- writing vocabulary

## Meaningful Differences

There is a huge difference in the language development of children in professional, working-class and welfare families.

### Meaningful Differences

Meaningful Differences (Hart and Risley, 1995), a landmark study of toddlers and preschoolers in professional, working-class and welfare families, revealed that there are huge differences in children's language development, a fact of which teachers of young children are well aware.

#### Discuss:

- Why are we seeing such wide gaps between children's oral language skills upon entering school?
- What are the implications for Kindergarten and First Grade classroom?

Discuss **Resource OL 2 Meaningful Differences in Everyday Experience of Young American Children**. This highlights the key points from the Hart and Risley studies.

## **Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young Children** By Todd Risley

In our first book Betty Hart and I reported what parents actually do in American homes. We had collected data-with reliable and repeated samples of daily life-on sufficient numbers of families who were sufficiently representative to estimate average amounts of parent talk received by American infants and toddlers from their parents.

### **We found:**

- 1. How much talk actually goes on between parent and child in everyday life.**  
When they are awake and with their parents, 1 and 2 year old American children hear an average of:
  - 340 Utterances per hour,
  - 1440 Words per hour,
  - 90 Questions per hour,
  - 17 Affirmations per hour, and
  - 7 Prohibitions per hour addressed to them by their parents
- 2. There are large differences between families.**  
The amount of parent talk differs greatly between families: Some parents address fewer than 500 words to their child in an hour of family life, while others address over 3,000 words. Some parents express approval and encouragement more than 40 times in an hour of family life and other parents less than 4 times an hour.
- 3. Those differences mount up.**  
For each family, the amount a parent talks to their children is consistent across time. If we extrapolate the parent talk we observed across the waking hours of a child's life we estimate that by the time they are four years old some children have heard over 50 million words addressed to them by their parents, while others have heard only 10 million words. And some four-year-old children have heard over 800 thousand affirmative statements from their parents while others have heard less than 80 thousand.
- 4. Extra talk is more complex and positive.**  
Both talkative and taciturn parents use similar numbers of initiations, imperatives, and prohibitions per hour to govern their children. While taciturn parents say little else, the talkative parents' 'extra' talk is mostly conversation about other things. The extra talk of talkative parents contains more of the varied vocabulary, complex ideas, subtle guidance, and positive reinforcement thought to be important to intellectual development.
- 5. Amount of family talk is a characteristic of low and high social class.**  
The amount that parents talk to their infants and toddlers is generally correlated with the parents' social and economic status, with welfare parents being taciturn and professionals being talkative, while working-class parents vary greatly from the most talkative to the most taciturn.
- 6. The amount of family talk accounts for child outcomes.**  
The amount of parent talk that infants and toddlers receive – particularly the amount of 'extra' talk above and beyond that needed to govern their behavior – is powerfully related to their later vocabulary size and to other measures of their later verbal sophistication. Parent talkativeness accounts for all the correlation between SES (and/or race) and the verbal intellectual accomplishments of these young children. The relationship is so strong that, presumably, shared biological temperament as well as cultural factors contribute to talkativeness.

In our second book “The Social World of Children Learning to Talk,” we described how children actually began to talk in their daily lives and how the pattern of interaction – the social dance between parent and child – changed as the child learned to talk.

**We found:**

- 7. Children’s talkativeness stops growing when it matches the level of their parents.** Parents talk to their infants at the frequency per hour that is typical of their family. As they begin talking, children’s utterances containing recognizable words accelerate until the frequency of their utterances match their parent’s frequency of talking to them. At this point children’s growth in talking levels off, and a child’s frequency of talking stabilizes at whatever level is typical within his or her family.
- 8. Expressive language experience is linked to receptive language experience.** At three, children of average families express themselves in language about 400 times an hour, children of the most talkative families express themselves over 600 times an hour, while children of the most taciturn families express themselves in language less than 200 times an hour.
- 9. Before school and reading age there are already vast differences between American children in language experience.** If we combine the expressive and receptive language experience we observed, and extrapolate across the waking hours of the child’s life, we estimate that by the time they are four years old average American children will have accumulated 45 million words of receptive and expressive language experience. Children of the most talkative families will have accumulated over 70 million words, while children of the most taciturn families will have accumulated fewer than 18 million words of receptive and expressive language experience.
- 10. From these findings we hypothesize:**
  - I. The accumulation of language experience is the major determiner of vocabulary growth and verbal intellectual development.
  - II. The amount of social language interaction between parents and children in the first years of life is the primary source of early language experience and a major determiner of later language experience.
  - III. The amount of social language interaction between parents and children in the first years of life, although influenced by shared biological temperament, is largely a function of the children’s accommodation to the family micro-culture set by the parents’ own childhood experience. A family micro-culture can be changed.

Hart, B. & Risley T.R. (1995) *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Company. (800, 638-3775)

Hart, B. & Risley T.R. (1999) *The Social World of Children Learning to Talk*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Company. (Fax 410, 337-8539)

IRA, 2003

## Purposeful Talk

---

---

Talk should underpin all language activities.

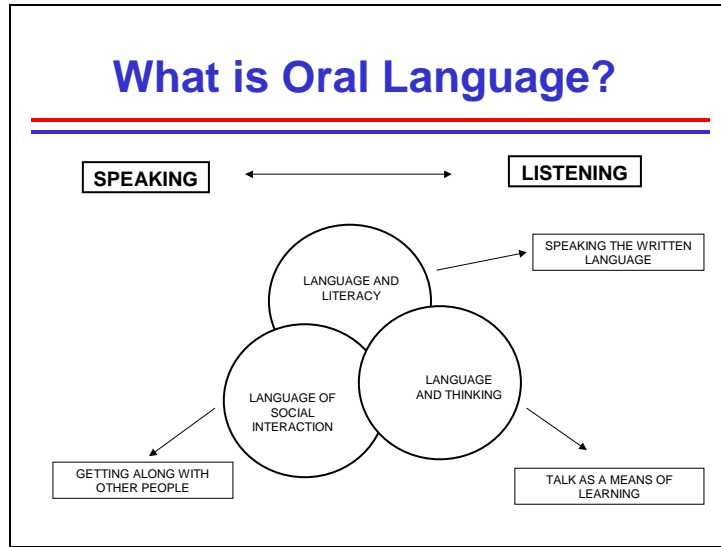
- Reading
- Writing
- Sharing

### **Purposeful Talk**

To help to compensate for these differences, educator's **MUST** make oral language purposeful.

Refer participants to ***Oral Language Developmental Continuum (OLDC)*, p. 14, Effective Communication**. This will guide the discussion of oral language.

To develop the oral language of children, teachers must provide a language-centered classroom. An environment can be created in which children connect their lives and their interest with language and text. Language is developed through interaction. One cannot script it, nor can one buy a program for it. Purchased language programs are not personalized to the teachable moments that occur in every classroom every day. When teachers use only purchased oral language programs, the learning of language becomes routine rather than responsive. Oral language must be a natural development; however, "natural" does not mean unplanned. Time for oral language development must be a planned part classrooms in which children are demonstrating low oral language development. This is especially important for language delayed and ELL students.



### What is Oral Language?

The structures and vocabulary children control when talking and listening make up their **oral language**. Oral language involves both **speaking** and **listening**. It is developed and acquired through interaction. Children seem born not just to speak, but also to interact socially. Even before they use words, they use cries and gestures to convey meaning; they often understand meanings that others convey. The point of learning language and interacting socially, then, is not to master rules, but to make connections with other people and to make sense of experiences. (Wells, 1986) Language is CAUGHT more than it is TAUGHT.

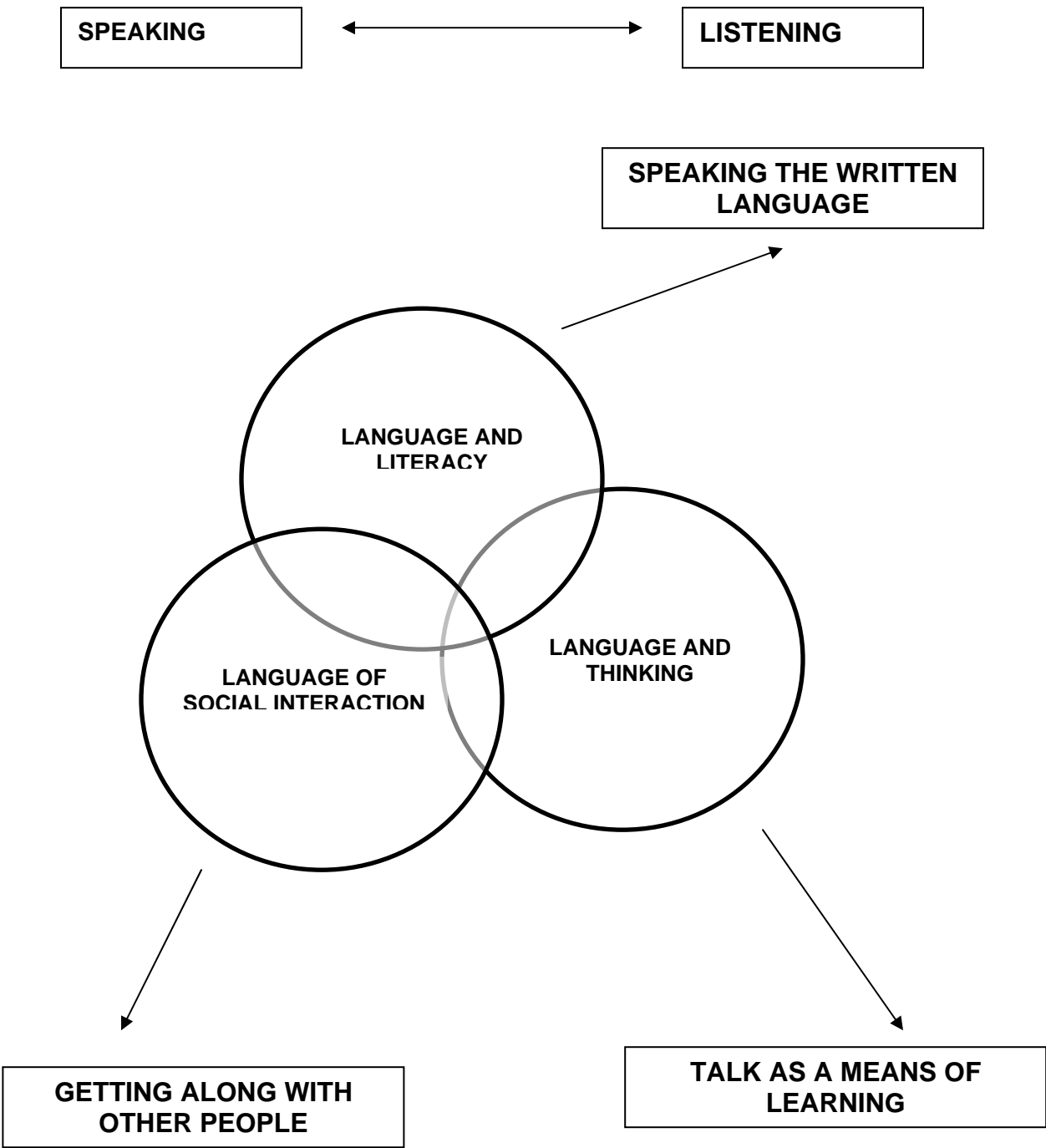
Children must be able to use language for a range of audiences and purposes. These three areas of language are interrelated and complement each other. Each area recognizes that speaking, listening, reading and writing have a role in communication and that development in one area is linked to development in the others.

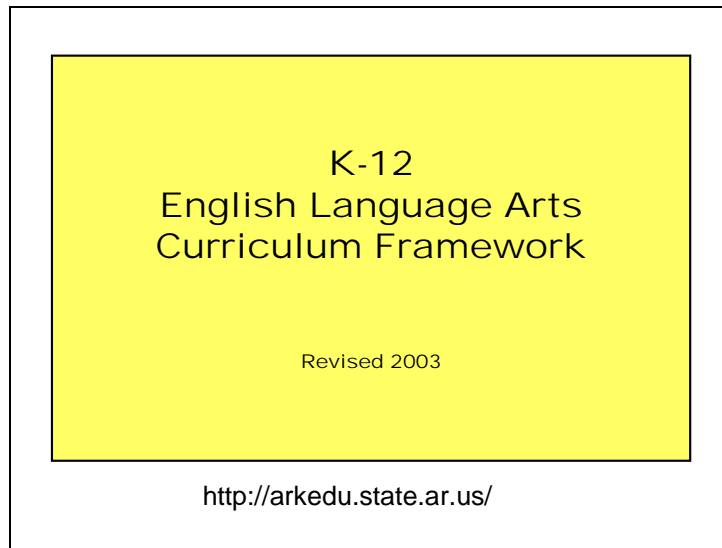
The three kinds of talk addressed in **OLDC** are:

- Language of Social Interaction
- Language of Literacy
- Language of Thinking

Students have to **hear it** and **say it** before they can **read it** or **write it**. Language development is inseparable from becoming literate. To expect children to become literate before they have a basis of language understanding is an exercise in futility. They may learn to sound out words but if they do not have a concept of what the meaning of the word is, they will not be able to use it for meaning (Healy, 1999).

# What is Oral Language?





**Arkansas K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Framework**

Refer participants to the **Arkansas K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, Revised 2003**, pp. 1-3 (Speaking) and pp. 4-5 (Listening).

Read the Student Learner Expectations for Standards 1 and 2. These are the State's expectations for every student in Arkansas.

**Strand: Oral and Visual Communication**

**Standard 1: Speaking.**

Students shall demonstrate effective oral communication skills to express ideas and to present information.

**Student Learner Expectations:** All under **Speaking**

**Strand: Oral and Visual Communication**

**Standard 2: Listening**

Students shall demonstrate effective listening skills in formal and informal settings to facilitate communication.

**Student Learner Expectations:** All under **Listening**

## The Teacher's Role

---

---

- Be aware of which strategies they are selecting, why, and how these actions will impact on the children's understanding of what counts as literacy.
- Relate decision making to the specific skills, attitudes and knowledge children bring to the classroom.

### The Teacher's Role

On **OLDC**, p. 4, highlight paragraphs 4 and 5.

*. . . teachers are aware of which strategies they are selecting, why, and how these actions will impact on the children's understanding of what counts as literacy.*

*When decision making is related to recognition of the specific skills, attitudes and knowledge children bring to the classroom, it enables children to feel confident in their own abilities. It is important to recognize, value, consolidate and extend the diversity of children's competence through classroom practice.*

On **OLDC**, p. 5, discuss and clarify effective teaching strategies for children for whom English is a second language and children whose language of home differs from that of the teacher.

- Modeling
- Sharing
- Joint Construction of Meaning
- The provision of Scaffolds or Frameworks
- Involvement of children in self-monitoring of their achievements
- Open Questions

## Using the Oral Language Developmental Continuum

- Predict
- Collect Data
- Involve Parents and Children
- Link Assessment with Teaching
- Monitor Progress

### **Using the Oral Language Developmental Continuum**

Before discussing the bullets on the slide, highlight the following:

Read **OLDC, p. 15**. Discuss and highlight:

*Experience has shown, however, that if children are to achieve success at school, they need to control the specialized "language of school." School language is not better or worse than any other language, but it may often seem to be very different and alien to children who are not used to it.*

*In this current version of the Continuum, the decision was made to focus on behaviours pertaining to school-based language that would be evident in the classroom.*

On **OLDC, p. 16**, read and highlight the bullets:

- Predict
- Collect Data
- Involve Parents and Children
- Link Assessment with Teaching by Referring to the Major Teaching Emphases
- Monitor Progress

Read and discuss each of the bullets as outlined on **pp. 16-17**. Ask different participants to discuss each bullet.

Discuss **pp. 18-19** concerning oral language assessment of ELL students in schools. These pages refer to the fact that ELL students are NOT the same as low language learners.



## Phases of Oral Language Development

### **Phases of Oral Language Development**

Ask participants to open both fold outs in the back of the book. The two foldouts are a composite of the information included in all chapters. Each chapter will include the information on the two foldouts.

On the fold out **Indicators for Oral Language Development Continuum**, have participants notice that each phase includes indicators describing children's behaviors. Key indicators are marked with a diamond and written in bold print.

Refer participants to the fold out **Overview of Oral Language Development Continuum** and point out that:

- samples of children's language showing specific indicators
- key indicators
- major teaching emphases

As participants look at the key indicators, have them think of the children they have in their assigned group. According to the observation notes, in what phase are the students?

Before going to the next slide, have participants read **OLDC p. 21**. The information will guide the participants through the features and items included in each chapter.

## Phase 1 – Beginning Language

---

---

Children are motivated by a basic need to communicate; to understand and be understood. Language development is influenced by the children's interaction with other language users, by the opportunities they are given to hear and use language and by their immersion in a stimulating, language-rich environment.

### Phase 1 – Beginning Language

Highlight **OLDC p. 22**:

*All children move through similar stages of development when they are learning their first language. Development is continuous, although the age at which children display language behaviours varies considerably.*

Phase 1 is the only phase that will not include all features from **p. 21**. (This is “baby language”.) Are there students in the group being observed who are in Phase 1? Are there students in participants' schools in Phase 1?

## Phase 2 – Early Language

Children’s use of language becomes more refined and extended. It is used to satisfy simple social needs and to gain control of objects, people and knowledge in the environment.

### Phase 2- Early Language

**NOTE:** Phase 2 will be examined explicitly. Other phases are addressed in less depth, but they may be studied in a similar way independently by participants or during further staff development on this topic.

Refer to **OLDC, p. 26**, Early Language Indicators. Remind the participants of the slide, **What is Oral Language?** The four areas that are on p. 26 are included on this slide. Each chapter will be divided into these areas of language.

Indicators for each area are included on the fold out in the back. The bold indicators are the key indicators. This allows teachers to look at the key indicators to determine each student’s language phase.

Lead a discussion on where we are encountering these indicators in the schools.

- Where in the Literacy Block is each addressed?
- Are there children in this phase in Kindergarten? First Grade? Second Grade? Third Grade?

Have participants read **OLDC, p. 27**, and highlight the main ideas. Lead a discussion of the main points. Sample main points:

- Children attending...schooling.
- In the classroom,...particular ways.
- In the phase, children...situations.
- Teachers should...understandings.
- Information gained should...learning.

Refer to **OLDC, pp. 27-28** Major Teaching Emphases. On **p. 28**, highlight bullets under “At all phases:”

Please note the footnote: **Entries in bold are considered critical to the children’s further development.**

**OLDC, p. 29**, highlight the first sentence and the last sentence in the introduction then do the following activity.

**ACTIVITY: Establishing an Environment for Speaking and Listening**

Have participants read **OLDC, pp. 29-30** and do the following:

- Mark any activities observed in the classrooms. Discuss.
- Mark in another color activities that they do in their own classrooms.
- Lead discussion with participants to determine how to begin to implement additional oral language activities.

If time allows, have participants do the same activity for each:

- p. 31 Speech development
- p. 32 Language of Social Interaction
- p. 33 Language and Literacy
- pp. 34-35 Language and Thinking

Remind participants that there is a note for parents at the end of each phase.

**MODEL** at least one of the oral language activities for this stage. Suggested activity: **OLDC, p. 34** second column, 5th bullet “Plan classroom activities or excursions together.”

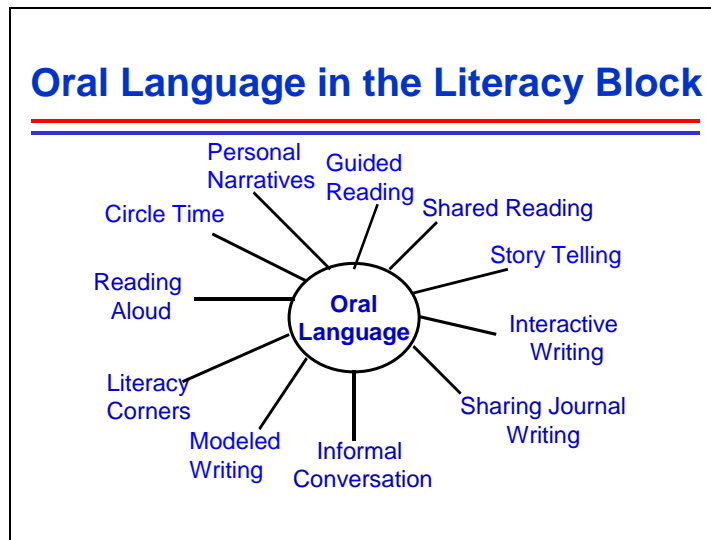
### Phase 3 – Exploratory Language

Children already know a great deal about language. They use language competently and include most grammatical patterns. They know that language can be used to express meaning and share experiences with others.

**Phase 3 – Exploratory Language**

Note the headings, **OLDC, pp. 37 – 49**. On **p. 38** read and highlight the key indicators.

Model **OLDC, p. 48**, first column, 2nd bullet. “Classification. Make classification...”



## Oral Language in the Literacy Block

### ACTIVITY: Oral Language in the Literacy Block

Discuss and chart how participants currently support oral language development within the Literacy Block. After brainstorming, pair participants up, assigning each a component of the Literacy Block. Each pair will discuss and record how the component can be used to develop oral language. Refer to **OLDC**. Have each pair share with the whole group. Chart responses. See sample chart above. Use the following if needed to help participants expand their thinking:

#### Circle Time

Circle Time should be used to encourage students to talk and play with language. This is a good time for finger plays and oral recitation. Circle Time is an optimum time for conversations. Personal narratives may be shared during Circle Time.

#### Modeled/Assisted Writing

Teachers can begin Modeled Writing by asking individual students a question such as "What did you do last night?" After the child answers, ask questions that will allow the child to elaborate. Model writing a sentence using the child's answer. After writing, give other students in the class an opportunity to ask the child questions.

#### Guided Reading

The book introduction to guided reading text is an optimum time to build oral language through vocabulary instruction and building background knowledge. The book introduction should be conducted in a focused conversational manner.

#### Read Aloud and Shared Reading

Reading and rereading books help children to develop their oral language. The more they hear the language, the more they will start using the language in their own talking and writing.

## Interventions

---

---

- Identify and modify language to be used in specific activities.
- Be consistent.
- Use repetition.
- Check for understanding.

### **Interventions**

Use *Oral Language Developmental Continuum* to choose a major teaching emphasis that would be appropriate for your group of assigned children.