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ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION

TO INCREASE ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS AND ITS

CONNECTION TO READING ACHIEVEMENT

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education:

Reading/Language Arts

_____

by

Nancee Marlene Simpson

June 2006

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Approved by:

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Diane Brantley, First Reader   Date

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Barbara Flores, Second Reader

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if specific oral language instruction could improve oral language skills in students who demonstrate low oral language development, and as oral language skills increase, would this affect reading achievement. The intervention used in this study is outlined in *The Oracy Instructional Guide,* by Lance Gentile (2003b). Five first grade students were selected to participate in this six-week study. The interventions included modeled and repeated sentences, narration of a story from pictures, narration during picture drawing, and discussion of expository information. The students' oral language skills were assessed prior to and at the conclusion of the study using the *Oral Language Acquisition Inventory* (Gentile, 2003a). The data indicates that the complexity of sentence structures and volume of language increased significantly following the intervention. Students' reading levels increased by three to five levels as determined by pre- and post-trimester reading inventories administered by classroom teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

To J.R., Jay, Lesley, Tony, The Twins, and my mom, who inspired me to finish this endeavor so I could spend more time with them.

To Hester Turpin, my friend and mentor.

To Rochelle Baker, my friend and partner in the Master's program.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

I believe it was the French philosopher, Descartes, who said, "I think, therefore I am." I think a variation of this saying could be, "I speak, therefore I read." In my experience as a Reading Recovery (RR) teacher, I have found that a good vocabulary and oral language skills give students a tremendous advantage in overcoming other reading difficulties. The National Research Council's findings were that children with average or above-average oral language skills acquired reading skills with relative ease and predictability (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Conversely, a study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that children who struggle to achieve reading proficiency seem to lack exposure to language and literacy based interactions in their early years (as cited in Wolfe & Nevills, 2004, p.7). From these two pieces of information, it would seem to follow that students with low oral language skills will develop reading proficiency at a slower rate than students with more advanced oral language skills.

I taught Reading Recovery for seven years. While I believe that RR is a good program that helps struggling readers, I don't believe that it, or other accelerated reading programs in general, are the right solution for every struggling reader. The students who test the very lowest in the first grade are the students who receive RR instruction, with the expectation that they will be reading with the average of their class within 20 weeks (Swartz & Klein, 1997). It has been my experience that approximately one third of the students selected make the expected progress within 20 weeks. Another third of the students make the expected progress, but it takes much longer. The other third of the students never make the expected progress and leave the program at the end of first grade still very far behind the average of their class. My finding match up with those of Center, Freeman, NcNaught, Outhred, and Wheldall (1995) who found that about 30% of students do not successfully complete the RR program.

One salient characteristic that I have noticed about many of the students who do not succeed in the RR program is that their oral language seems underdeveloped. They may have a very low vocabulary, give one-word responses, and be confused about language structure and syntax which,

according to Roth, Speece, and Cooper (2002), are among the domains of oral language that contribute to reading ability. The oral language problem is recognized in New Zealand, where RR was developed. Children's levels of oral language development are assessed when they enter school, and if a child demonstrates low oral language skills, that student's first year of school is rich in literacy-based activities that promote oral language development (Gentile, 1997). I understand this to mean that, in New Zealand, oral language development is considered of major importance, and if students demonstrate low oral language skills, the problem is addressed in kindergarten.

In California, there is no uniform assessment of oral language with the exception of the California English Language Development Test, but this is only given to English language learners. Across the United States, the way oral language development is addressed varies widely. Added to that is the fact that the United States and California are very diverse and have a great spectrum of socioeconomic levels (Gentile, 1997). Because of these differences, RR teachers in the United States need to consider assessing the oral language skills of some students we work with before we attempt to accelerate their reading. I believe that a period of instruction in

oral language development might be helpful to students who struggle with reading and demonstrate low oral language skills before they begin instruction in a program like RR. By putting students in a program that they are not ready for, we are setting them up to fail, and setting ourselves up to feel like we've failed as teachers.

Statement of the Problem

The problem I see with what we are doing as RR teachers is that we are trying to make proficient readers out of students who have not had opportunities to develop the oral language skills and structures needed for the task. Children need to have strong oral language skills to be able to read and write effectively (Dickinson, McCabe, & Sprague, 2003). It is a basic assumption that good oral language skills lead to reading proficiency; however, it cannot be assumed that all students are proficient in their oral language skills.

Many of the students I tutored in RR struggled with reading and demonstrated that their oral language skills were not developed. If these students were able to respond at all, their responses were limited to one or two words and occasional simple sentences. Students who fall behind in oral language and literacy development are less likely

to be successful readers (Strickland, 2004). By giving these students some specific instruction and practice in oral language development, they might get the boost they need to be successful readers. With increased oral language skills, the students will be better able to participate in classroom reading instruction or in an accelerated reading program like Reading Recovery.

In this study, I investigated the effectiveness of components of *The Oracy Instructional Guide,* developed by Lance Gentile, to see if specific oral language instruction could improve oral language skills and consequently make learning to read less of a struggle for these students. This instruction consisted of oral recitation, reading and retelling, drawing and storytelling, and information processing and critical dialogue (Gentile, 2003b). Five first-grade students were selected to be the subjects of this study. The selection criterion and interventions are discussed in greater detail in chapter three. I believe a student's reading proficiency can improve as oral language skills improve even without specific reading instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to see if instruction and practice in oral language can significantly improve a student's oral language skills. This study is significant for two reasons. First, in searching the literature, I found longitudinal studies that measured oral language skills over time, but I could not find a study that applied intervention to increase oral language skills and measured the results. In a longitudinal study (Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002) that followed a group of students from kindergarten to third grade, the researchers measured structural skills and narrative discourse among other things. They concluded that the oral language-reading connection needed to be studied in a more organized and systematic way to bring more clarity to the relationship between speaking and reading, and this may help in early identification of children at risk of reading problems.

A second reason this study is significant is because generally when students struggle with reading, it is assumed that they need more reading instruction. They become more frustrated because they have difficulty interacting with text-centered instruction (Gentile, 2003b, p. 1). A better command of oral language would make reading less of a struggle for these students. The present

study supports studies that assert that oral language is a necessary for reading. In their book entitled *Building the Reading Brain,* Patricia Wolfe and Pamela Nevills (2004, p. 8, 153) state several times that language is a necessary precursor for reading, and students who have average or above average oral language have little difficulty learning to read. In a study by NICHD Early Childcare Research Network (2005), the researchers point out that currently when we think of oral language, we focus narrowly on phonemic awareness and vocabulary development and that there is a need for interventions and assessments with a broader focus.

This study differs from previous studies in that studies on oral language usually focus on and measure aspects of language and its connection to reading without offering or studying the effects of any oral language interventions. This study attempts to measure oral language skills using the Oral Language Acquisition Inventory (OLAI) (Gentile, 2003a) prior to and following a period of interventions discussed in detail in chapter three. Lance Gentile's (2003b) oral language development program and the corresponding assessment is relatively new and this study expands our knowledge of his methods and

determines if they are effective and viable within the
school time constraints.

Theoretical Bases and Organization

Not only does language provide a foundation for
learning to read, it provides the foundation for learning
to learn. Children need to understand the language of any
subject they might study. Children need to understand the
language of books, they need to understand the language to
learn math or science, and they need to be able to
communicate to the teacher when they have questions or
don't understand (NICHD, 2005).

In talking about the language/reading connection,
Goodman (1973) says,

> The learner of reading has a highly developed
> language competence, which is his greatest
> resource in learning to read. In fact, the key
> to successful reading instruction is as it has
> always been, in the learner. With a new respect
> for the learner, we can make learning to read
> and write an extension of the natural language
> learning the child has already accomplished
> without professional assistance. (p. 115)

Some students have not developed language competence. These students should be identified and given some expert coaching with the specific goal of increasing oral language skills without the expectations and demands that accompany other schoolwork. According to Goodman (1989),

> Success or lack of success in acquiring literacy is broadly related to how schools treat different learners and whether schools are willing and able to accept all learners and provide appropriate curricula to support their learning. (p. 340)

Because it is assumed that oral language skills come naturally, students with low oral language are not identified and supported appropriately.

In this study, I am attempting to identify students with special oral language needs that may be interfering with them acquiring literacy and give them the appropriate instruction. According to Frank Smith (1999) children learn to read when the conditions are right, but he says that these conditions include a good relationship with books and with teachers and others who help them read. With this in mind, oral language development for students who struggle in this area would be a step in the right

direction for creating the right conditions for these
students to acquire literacy.

Specific Goals and Program Design

Backward design is the terminology used by Wiggins
and McTighe (1998, pp. 8-9) in discussing their theory of
curriculum as opposed to traditional views. Backward
design for calls identifying the desired goals, deciding
what acceptable evidence or assessment would be for
reaching those goals, and planning the instruction and
learning experiences last. I identified the desired
results of increased oral language proficiency and then
set about finding a way to achieve this goal. In looking
at Lance Gentile's (2003a) program, I found that it
provided an assessment tool for providing acceptable
evidence of proficiency in the use of simple to more
complex language and structures of language. The learning
and instruction that is outlined his *Oracy Instructional
Guide* follows the assessment closely. I do not know if he
designed the assessment with the program in mind or vice
versa, but in using the program, I have found that the
learning and teaching activities are always clearly
focused on the goals, with an assessment that is aligned
with those same goals and will measure whether or not
those goals are met.

Expert Coaching

There may be a number of reasons why students comes to school with low oral language proficiency. Regardless of how it happens, I propose that with expert coaching, their oral language skills can improve. Working in what Vygotsky calls the zone of proximal development, the expert coach takes the child from what the child can do without assistance, to what the child can do with the assistance of a more skilled coach. Gibbons (2002) says, "Successful coordination with a partner---or assisted performance---leads learners to reach beyond what they are able to achieve alone, to participate in new situations and to tackle new tasks" (p. 8). By taking the language structures that the child already uses, and coaching the child to expand upon them by modeling and repetition, the student will begin to take on those new language structures and begin using them independently. For example, a student comes into the program using one or two word responses. The coaching would consist of expanding those responses to a simple sentence. As the child begins to respond in simple sentences independently, the coach would then model and ask the student to add prepositional phrases and so on.

Limitations of the Study

It should be noted that factors other than oral language could be the cause for delayed reading achievement. Children's functioning intelligence level (IQ), socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, and the literacy environment in the home could all be contributing factors for delayed reading. Children may also have learning disabilities or disabilities in areas of language development. These are all factors that should be looked at when considering a particular intervention for struggling students, however, many of the problems listed above could also account for low oral language skills.

For the purpose of this study, I wanted to look at students with low oral language skills, not students who were learning English as a second language. English was the first language of all of the students that were selected to participate in the study; however, because the school's population is 88% Hispanic, it was impossible to find students who were not exposed to some Spanish outside of the school day. This could have accounted for some of the language difficulty the students were having, even though they were not designated as English language learners by the school district standards and they were

not receiving any special instruction as English language learners.

The five students selected had attended all of kindergarten and part of first grade at the subject school, and it was my hope that this would insure that these students were stable and would not be moving during the six weeks of instruction. I took this precaution because student mobility in the area of the school is high. Even taking this into account, two out of five students moved before the designated six weeks of instruction was completed. One student moved two weeks into the instruction and could not be included in the final analysis of this study. The second student moved four weeks into the instruction. I was given enough advance notice to be able to administer the OLAI on him before he left, so I have some incomplete data on him that I did include in the final analysis of this study.

Attendance was another issue. The three remaining students who completed the entire six weeks of study had good school attendance. However, various school and classroom activities often took precedence over coming to the tutoring session. There was the occasional school assembly or field trip but the biggest impediment to regular daily lessons was the school's testing schedule

and practices. Understandably, the teachers had to keep these students in the classroom to adhere the required testing schedule.

This study was primarily trying to measure improved oral language development with an underlying question as to whether or not increased oral language skills has an impact on reading achievement. This study was limited to tutoring in oral language skills with an informal assessment, the OLAI, being administered before and after the tutoring to measure improvement. No other measures of oral language were used other than the classroom teacher's observations.

No pre or post assessments were done to measure reading levels; however, at the end of each quarter the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) (Beaver, 1997) was administered by the classroom teacher. That data was considered from the end of the first trimester for pre-tutoring reading levels and at the end of the second trimester for post-tutoring reading levels for each of the tutored students and to make a comparison between the average progress of the class and the tutored students. It was difficult to ascertain how much of the oral language growth was attributed to the specialized instruction the

students were receiving or if they may have made a similar amount of growth in the normal classroom environment.

Finally, the students were not all from the same classroom; so some differences could be attributed to different teaching styles of the classroom teachers. Also, one of the teachers went on maternity leave during the tutoring period. The data is incomplete for the student from her class because she was not present to administer the DRA to her class at the end of the second trimester.

Definition of Terms

CELDT – California English Language Development Test

DRA – Direct Reading Assessment

Morphology – Patterns of word formation in a language.

NCLB – No Child Left Behind

OLAI – Oral Language Acquisition Inventory

PI School – Program Improvement School under NCLB.

RR – Reading Recovery

Syntax – The pattern or structure of word order in a phrase or sentence.

TROLL – Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Students who test the very lowest in the first grade are candidates to receive Reading Recovery instruction, with the expectation that they will be reading with the average of their class within 20 weeks (Swartz & Klein, 1997). While approximately two-thirds of the students placed in the program make the expected progress, many students (approximately 30 percent) never make the expected progress and leave the program at the end of first grade still very far behind the average of their class. A commonality that I have noticed, with many of the students that I have tutored who do not make the expected progress, is that they have low, or poorly developed oral language skills. They may have a very low vocabulary, give one-word responses, and be confused about language structure and syntax. Oral language development may happen during a lesson, but it does not fall within the scope of a regular RR lesson. The next few pages will establish a connection between low oral language skills and students who are unsuccessful in the Reading Recovery program.

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery (RR) is an accelerated reading
program that is designed to take struggling readers from
the bottom 20% of first grade students and bring them up
to the average of their class within a 20-week time
period. The program was developed by Marie Clay in New
Zealand and was widely implemented there, as well as in
parts of the United States, Canada, the U.K., and parts of
Australia. The students are individually tutored by a
highly trained teacher through a series of activities that
are usually always done in the same order. A typical RR
lesson would start with the re-reading of some familiar
books and would be followed with the student reading and
being assessed with a running record on a new book from
the previous day. Next would follow some letter
identification or word activities. Then the student would
compose, write, and reassemble a story after it had been
cut-up. Finally, a new book would be introduced and the
student would attempt to read the new book (Center,
Freeman, McNaught, Outhred, & Wheldall, 1995). Because the
program has been so widely implemented, many people are
studying RR to see just how successful it really is.

Considerable research has been done on one-to-one
reading programs, such as Reading Recovery, where highly

trained professionals tutor students at risk of reading-failure. Sixteen studies of first grade interventions were studied, and it was found that the overall effect size was .51 standard deviation units, which suggests that tutored students made substantial gains over untutored students (Baker, Gersten, & Keating, 2000). While data shows that RR is successful, another study showed that approximately 35% of students placed in RR did not meet expected reading levels by the end of their program (Hicks & Villaume, 2001). The 35% failure rate corresponds with my findings in seven years of teaching RR. Reading Recovery is usually funded out of Title I, and some Title I studies have shown that, although these students made progress, their test scores remained below the level of their peers, and they remained the neediest students making the least progress (Jaeger, 1996).

I did not find any quantitative or qualitative studies in my literature search on the 30 to 35% of students who were not successful in RR. I did find a comparison study of one student who was successful in RR and one who was not, and a case study of a student who continued to struggle after RR intervention was concluded.

Hicks and Villaume (2001) did a comparison study on two RR students. One was successful and one was not. They noted that the student who did not make the expected progress took a passive stance during the word analysis activities of a Reading Recovery lesson. They felt that the challenges of these word analysis activities were too great for him and actually may have had a negative effect on his motivation to engage in literacy activities. They suggested that proceeding with instruction with students that behave passively might undermine their confidence and further entrench these students into the passive stances during instruction.

A case study of a student called Sammy presented some further evidence to support the assertion that low performing students behave passively in literacy activities. Sammy was repeating first grade, but he was still ranked among the lowest students in his class. The study focused on collaborative learning activities and Sammy's interactions with his peers. Even in this setting, Sammy displayed a passive stance toward literacy activities. When peers rejected his ideas, he did not respond, and when other students offered unsolicited help, he did not reject their help. A RR teacher came into the classroom several times a week and worked with him, and

Sammy attended an after-school reading club as well. In spite of all of this intervention, Sammy finished ranking number 12 out of 15 students in his class (Kesner & Matthews, 2000). It seems that students who are not successful in RR display similar characteristics, and for this reason, I believe that a closer look should be taken at the 30 to 35 percent of students who leave the program unsuccessfully.

One of the big common threads that I see in my lowest achieving RR students, as well as the students that were cited in the previous studies is that they don't talk much. The unsuccessful student in the comparison study was described by his classroom teacher as being passive during classroom reading instruction and other literacy activities (Hicks & Villaume, 2001). Sammy's mother described him as extremely shy, and during group activities, he was generally passive and let the other students do the talking (Kesner & Matthews, 2000). It seems possible that these students, like some of the students I tutor, do not have the language development to fully participate in classroom literacy activities. With that said, the next few pages will focus on how language develops from a linguistic point of view.

Stages of Oral Language Development

There are two stages of language acquisition, pre-linguistic and linguistic. Pre-linguistic is the period of time when a baby cries involuntarily in response to hunger or some other discomfort or stimuli. Around the age of six months, babies begin to enter the linguistic stages as they begin to babble and make speech like sounds. Next, children go through the holophrastic stage where one word equals one sentence. For example, a baby might say "down" meaning "I want to get down." The one word stage is followed by the two-word stage and then the telegraphic stage where the child begins to string words together in longer and longer sentences. These stages are the same no matter what language children are learning, and while they are passing through these stages, they are acquiring other oral language skills (Fromkin & Rodman, 1998, pp. 319-325).

As children are going through the previously mentioned stages, they are developing phonemic awareness, they are learning about the rules of morphology, they are learning syntax, or how words go together, and they are learning the meaning of words, also known as vocabulary (Fromkin & Rodman, 1998, pp. 333-338). From a linguistic point of view, this is how oral language develops, and

these are the elements of oral language. There is some evidence that there is a critical age at which children can pass through these stages and acquire language without any special teaching. After the critical age passes, children who have not acquired language, for whatever reason, have a very difficult time and often never fully achieve language proficiency. Such was the case of a child called Genie who was isolated in a small room from the age of eighteen months to the age of thirteen. When she was re-introduced to society, she acquired some language but was never able to put it all together correctly (Fromkin & Rodman, 1998, pp. 342-343). Since the focus of my investigation is improving oral language development with the idea that improved oral language skills will lead to more proficient reading, I wonder how well Genie learned to read? I wonder if some children who struggle with reading are at some lower stage of language development and this is why reading is more difficult for them. With an understanding of the stages of oral language development, the next topic will establish its importance in learning to read.

Oral Language and Reading

There is little disagreement that oral language
development and reading compliment each other. Goodman
says, "Anyone who can learn oral language can learn to
read and write" (1976, p. 135). May stated, "Reading, like
speech, is a social act that requires thinking. And
without emerging, evolving speech use – from communicating
to thinking and back to better communicating – children
would not be able to read with real understanding" (1994,
p. 43). Cambourne (1993, p. 33) stated that if we study
how children learn to speak, we would be able to figure
out the conditions that support literacy.

An article by Strickland (2004), a distinguished
educator, stated that oral language development is the
foundation for learning to read. She goes on to say that
there are three things that educators of young children
should realize. First, children do better in school if the
family environment is rich in language than in homes where
children encounter fewer different words in their everyday
conversation. Second, exposure to more rare and different
words facilitates directly to children's vocabulary
development, and finally, vocabulary development leads to
reading achievement. Marie Clay (1993, p. 1) alluded to
the fact that a good pre-school experience would provide

children with the ability to "converse with others about the world and how they understand it" and that this is a good and essential step toward success in reading and writing. Prominent reading theorists and educators agree that good oral language skills relate positively to reading success. Now that the connection between oral language skills and reading success has been established, it might be helpful to look at what type of oral language development activities are taking place in today's preschools and elementary classrooms.

Current Trends in Oral Language Instruction

Oral language in preschools. In their study of the importance of oral language development in early years, Dockrell, Stuart, and King (2004) state that many children in preschools and daycare were not speaking, nor did they understand language at their own age level, and their oral language skills were about two years behind what was expected. The group included English language learners as well as English only speakers that attended inter-city preschools. The study suggests that there is evidence that preschools are not "sensitive language environments." The majority of the language that takes place in preschool is teacher dominated, "overly directive and unresponsive." I have witnessed this phenomenon first hand. For several

years, I had to share my kindergarten classroom with a state-run preschool. They came in at 3:00 right after my kindergarten class had gone home, so I was there for the first hour or so of their session doing prep for the next day. I would have to agree that the language from the teachers was overwhelmingly directive and the children were often ignored when they tried to communicate with the teachers.

Dockrell et al. (2004) introduced the inner-city preschool staff to a program they developed called Talking Time. Talking Time activities included drama activities, open-ended questioning and narrative skills using sets of pictures. The narrative skills portion of the Talking Time program closely resembles the story telling portion of the intervention that is the focus of my study. Dockrell's et al. (2004) study compared a small group of students who received instruction with Talking Time activities, and a small group that just had storybook reading. The study is ongoing but early results are promising. The findings so far are that the Talking Time students have made significantly more gains in receptive and expressive vocabulary, and they were able to repeat and produce significantly longer sentences than the control group.

<u>Oral Language Instruction in Elementary Schools.</u>
According to Frank Smith (1999), conditions for learning must be left up to the teacher who is present and not some distant expert, or researcher or legislator. He contends that teaching conditions are rarely perfect but pre-designed programs cannot replace teachers even when the programs are taught by teachers. Because of NCLB, pre-designed programs are exactly what we are stuck with in my school and in schools throughout California who are designated Program Improvement (PI) schools under the NCLB rules.

The state adopted programs that we must use have a narrow focus on what oral language development is: phonics and vocabulary development. The claim is that the programs are research based; however, much recent reading research has focused on phonics at the expense of other reading processes. Nation and Snowling (2004) state that it is generally accepted that children who test well for phonemic awareness are better readers, and that most current reading theorists point to phonics skills as fundamental to learning to read. The NICHD (2005) study states that phonological awareness is the most researched association to reading performance, however that there is emerging knowledge that reading relates significantly to

other interrelated processes such as semantics, syntax, and narrative skills. The studies that follow over the next few pages reinforce the importance of the interrelated processes, and particularly oral language, in reading.

Oral Language/Reading Studies

In her discussion on literacy research, Lesley Morrow (1999) stated that literacy development begins in the context of home and community long before children come to school. She discussed the importance of a balanced literacy approach in school, where the teaching of reading, writing, and oral language, are taught in an integrated way. She discussed each of these components at length in her article. However, my focus is on oral language; so I will focus on what she had to say about that. She stated that a child with strong oral language development is better able to predict, anticipate, and verify written words in their context. She also stated much research was done on the relationship between oral language and reading in the 1960s, however not much research has been done recently. She also called for additional research to be done in all the different areas of language development.

A similar sentiment was echoed by Dickinson, McCabe, and Sprague (2003) in their study testing the effectiveness of an assessment tool called the Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (Troll). I will discuss the assessment tool in another section because I want to focus here on what they said about the connection between oral language and reading. They state that there is much attention given to assessing early reading, writing and phonological abilities, and they recognize that these are important components of early literacy. However, there are lesser-known oral language skills that include using vocabulary in variety of ways, and being able to narrate a story that also need to be recognized and developed if children are going to be successful at reading and writing. This ties in with story reconstruction in the Oracy Instructional Guide. Gentile (2003b, p. 13) states that teaching children to talk about and reconstruct stories develops children's language and comprehension and that this lays the groundwork for future reading of stories and expository text.

In their longitudinal study Roth, Speece, and Cooper (2002) discuss the connection between oral language and early reading. They described oral language as a multidimensional task with many different skills being

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used during the process. These skills can include phonological awareness, semantics and syntax or vocabulary development. They go on to say that researchers generally focused on only one or two aspects of language when studying its connection to reading and that it is likely that different oral language skills contribute in different ways to reading at different times in the early stages of learning to read. Their study followed a group of students from kindergarten to second grade, and examined three domains of oral language development; structural language, metalinguistics, and narrative discourse. The following is a summary of their findings.

Some major findings of the study were that semantic knowledge and print awareness in kindergarten was a potent predictor of reading achievement in first and second grade, and the two semantic skills that related most to reading comprehension were oral definitions and word retrieval. On the flip side, phonemic awareness was a strong predictor of the ability to read words or pseudowords, but did not relate to reading comprehension. The findings on narrative discourse were less conclusive. The study concluded that reading at the end of second grade might still be primarily a decoding task, however narrative discourse may become more important as children

develop into more skilled readers. They also noted that further study needed to be done to explore the connection between narrative discourse and reading, that the oral language-reading connection needed to be studied in a more organized and systematic way to bring more clarity to the relationship between speaking and reading, and this may help in early identification of children at risk of reading problems (Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002).

In a recent article Gambrell (2004) cited the above-mentioned study. After looking at the study, she concluded that in early grades phonological awareness was a good predictor of early reading success, but in later grades phonological awareness did not predict reading comprehension. In her final thoughts, Gambrell (2004) stated that while phonological awareness may be significant in early reading development, all aspects of oral language should be considered of equal importance for early reading development. A more recent study came to similar conclusions.

In their study, Nation and Snowling (2004) looked at phonological awareness and different aspects of oral language and how each influenced reading skills. Their hypothesis was that oral language skills influence word recognition independent of phonological skills, and if

oral language ability were important to reading development, then difference in language skill would predict differences in reading ability. They tested seventy-two children's phonological skills, oral language skills, and reading skills at age 8.5 and again at age 13. In analyzing the data from the first and second test, Nation and Snowling (2004) found that oral language skills highly correlate to the development of sight vocabulary and reading comprehension.

In their conclusion, Nation and Snowling (2004) stated that many previous studies had pointed to phonological awareness as being an important predictor of reading success, however, their results in this study demonstrated that both language skills and phonological skills influence the progress children made in learning to read. They further stated that strengths and weaknesses in overall language skills were predictors in "determining the ease with which children learn to read...and culminating in the final balance of division of labor seen in adulthood."

In a study conducted by NICHD Early Childhood Development Network (2005), the researchers looked at many previous studies on the role of oral language and reading and concluded from these studies that there is growing

evidence that oral language skills have a strong relation to reading comprehension. In their study, the researchers were attempting to answer the question as to whether or not pre-school oral language skills related to early elementary school reading performance. They used a number of assessments to measure word recognition and reading comprehension in an attempt to know specifically which types of reading are more closely tied to oral language. The study looked at a large normative sample of children from age 3 to third grade thus permitting the measurement of the role of oral language to take place over a longer time period than previous studies. An impressive finding of this study was that oral language competence at age 5 had a strong relation to first grade word recognition and third grade reading comprehension for children is both high and low socio-economic groups. They further note that previous studies have underestimated the importance of the role of oral language in pre-school as it relates to early reading.

The results of the NICHD (2005) research calls for a more broad-based way of looking at oral language and its connection to reading. In doing this, we could make more educated choices on the types of interventions and assessments we use to prepare children for early reading

instruction. Interventions and assessments that focus
narrowly on phonemic awareness and vocabulary development
will not support later academic achievement. Current
models of assessment put in place by NCLB legislation take
a narrow view of the importance of oral language skills in
that for Head Start children, reading-readiness is
assessed by letter naming and vocabulary. The research of
NICHD (2005) suggests that a more comprehensive measure of
oral language skills would be in order, and over the next
few pages, I will look at assessments that attempt to
measure oral language.

Oral Language Assessment Tools

In a study on language disorders, Camarata and Nelson
(2002) define oral language as phonology or speech sounds,
semantics or word meanings, and morphology, which include
affixes and suffixes and function words. Further, the rule
for arranging the words was called syntax, and when syntax
and morphology were combined, the name changed to grammar.
Finally, the social setting in which the language occurs
was called pragmatics. They asserted that what gets
attended to when attempting to measure language
development depends on one's professional orientation.
Cognitive scientists, educators, psychologists, linguists,
and speech pathologists all have different definitions of

what language is and what should be measured when assessing language performance. Thus, there are many different types of instruments that measure and assess oral language, and the measurement of oral language can be difficult when the tasks depend on oral language ability. Properly measuring and diagnosing language problems is the key to effectively treating the problem. While this study dealt with diagnosing and treating language disorders from a linguistic point of view, it may follow that properly identifying students who have low oral language skills may help in overcoming reading difficulties from an educational point of view. To this end, it may be helpful to look at some other tools for measuring oral language that are designed for use by teachers in a school setting.

Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy. I mentioned the Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL) in an earlier section. Dickinson, McCabe, and Sprague (2003) developed the TROLL to for teachers to use to discover what students were interested in and to keep track of student's language and literacy development. The TROLL is an informal assessment that asks the teacher to describe different aspects of language use observed in a student. Some of the skills measured are willingness to start a conversation, communicating a personal experience,

asking questions, make believe talk, recognizing rhymes, and how often the child tries to use new vocabulary. There is also a reading and writing component in the assessment.

In looking at the rubric used to assign values on the above-mentioned skills, it looked to be subjective to the observer's interpretation. For example, the entry for the lowest score on the part of the rubric that deals with starting a conversation says "Child almost never begins conversation with peers or the teacher and never keeps trying if unsuccessful at first" (Dickinson, McCabe, & Sprague, 2003) In my experience as a kindergarten teacher, it would be very difficult to give enough attention to each student as they go about their day in the classroom and at recess to know if this is true. I would be guessing on a small sample of time that I watched each student. In fact, Dickinson, McCabe, and Sprague (2003) expressed some concern about the fact that fall scores on the TROLL had a high correlation with other formal assessments but said there was "no firm correlation" in the spring. Their reasoning for this was that teachers may have failed to update the profile during the year and that children's progress in the measured skills was possibly undetected by the teachers. In contract, the OLAI scores are based on

the student's actual performance on various concrete, measurable tasks.

Another concern I have about the TROLL is the recommendations for students who fall in the lowest percentile. For students who fall in the lowest tenth percentile assessment of the child by an audiologist or speech pathologist is recommended. That's all! Students who fall in the lowest twenty-fifth percentile get the same recommendation with the addition of more involvement in conversations and literacy activities. If the audiologist and speech pathologist find nothing wrong with the child in their area of expertise, the teacher is left with a weak recommendation of what to do for the child who is struggling with oral language. On the other hand, the OLAI is accompanied by an instruction guide that gives specific recommendations for interventions that can be used to develop oral language skills.

California English Language Development Test. The only assessment that I am aware of that is being used currently to measure oral language skills is the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). In California, students whose language survey indicates their first language is not English, or if a language other than English is spoken in the home, are given the CELDT to

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measure their language proficiency. The CELDT assesses three strands: listening and speaking, reading, and writing, however, only the listening and speaking portion of the test is given to kindergarten and first grade students (CTB/McGraw-Hill LLC, 2005, p. 1). The speaking portion of the CELDT looks at sentence complexity, phrasing and story retelling in much the same way as the OLAI.

Oral Language Assessment Inventory. The previous studies have established that there is a strong link between oral language and reading achievement. The NICHD (2005) study has said that we should be looking at our assessments and interventions more critically in the area of oral language development. The Oral Language Assessment Inventory (OLAI) along with the accompanying *Oracy Instruction Guide* (Gentile, 2003a, 2003b) is an assessment and interventions that treat oral language in a more structurally complete way. The methodology in the following chapter describes the OLAI and *Oracy Instruction Guide* more fully as the focus of my research is to determine if this type of language development intervention can increase oral language skills and impact reading achievement.

Summary

The review of literature demonstrated that there is a possible connection between students who do not succeed in a reading intervention like RR and low oral language skills. Further, prominent reading theorists and educators agree that good oral language skills highly correlate to reading success. Recent studies are calling for a more balanced approach in looking at oral language and its correlation to reading success. The studies conclude that too much emphasis is placed on phonics and vocabulary development. There is an emerging consensus that good oral language skills, like narrative discourse, semantics, and syntax, contribute strongly to learning new vocabulary and to reading comprehension.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Reading Recovery (RR) is an accelerated reading program that is designed to serve the lowest twenty percent of first grade readers, with the expectation that they will be reading with the average of their class within twelve to twenty weeks. It has been my finding as a RR teacher for seven years, that many of the students who fail to make the expected acceleration have low oral language skills and may benefit from a period of instruction in oral language development prior to being placed in the RR program or any other reading program where the goal is to accelerate their reading progress.

Design of the Investigation Reform Implementation

The reforms that I used are based on a model for language development that Lance Gentile developed and outlined in *The Oracy Instructional Guide* (Gentile, 2003b, pp. 44-70); however, he purposed to add these elements into the RR lessons along with reading instruction within the first four to five weeks of instruction. A RR lesson consists of reading several familiar books that the student has read during previous lessons. Immediately

following the familiar books, a running record is taken as the student re-reads a book that was introduced and read the day before. Next, the student uses magnetic letters to make and break words to learn about how words work. After that, the teacher asks the student to dictate and write a one or two sentence story, the teacher cuts up the story after writing it on a sentence strip and the student puts it back together and re-reads it. Finally, a new book is introduced, with a picture walk, and possibly locating some words that might be problematic. The student then attempts to read the new book as the teacher prompts for strategies to help solve any problems that might arise during the reading. All this is suppose to be done inside a thirty minute time period and all of these elements are suppose to be in the lesson each and every day. It would be rather difficult to add another component to this already demanding lesson.

It made more sense to take a five to six week period prior to beginning the RR lessons to do some language development with no specific reading instruction other than the fact that much of the oral language lesson was centered on a book we read together. Any reading that was taking place was to promote conversations and lead to oral practice as outlined in *Oracy Instructional Guide* (Gentile

2003b). The four components of the instruction are as follows:

1.   Repeated Sentences (Model/Repeat).

2.   Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension.

3.   Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation.

4.   Information Processing and Critical Dialog.

Herbert, Pearson, Taylor, Richardson and Paris state that "oral language is the foundation on which reading is built, and it continues to serve this roll as children develop as readers" (as cited in Hurley & Tinajero, 2001, p. 32). The foundation is laid before the house is built; the oral language foundation needs to be laid so reading instruction will be successful. The following sections give a more complete description of each of the components of instruction.

Repeated Sentences

The first part of the lesson always started with an exercise in repeating sentences. The first week it seemed rather artificial, and the students took turns repeating a series of simple, structurally correct sentences. For the remaining five weeks, this transformed into a more natural conversation to activate background knowledge about the book we were going to use that day. Let's say the book was

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"The Little Cousins Visit" (Dufresne, 1998). I would begin a conversation by asking the students to talk about when their cousins or someone else came to visit them. As the conversation developed, I asked the students to repeat a sentence I modeled, or I might repeat one of the student's sentences that may need a bit of correction, and then asks the student to repeat the corrected version. For example, Randall said, "We play swings," when talking about what he did with his cousins. I repeated back, "We played on the swings," then I asked everyone to repeat the corrected version. According to Gentile (2003b, p. 12), the repeated sentences technique encourages students to refine their language by rephrasing their responses.

Story Reconstruction

Story reconstruction is an activity where the student listens to a story while looking at a series of pictures, or listen to a story from a book while looking at the pictures. The student would then be asked to retell the same story or they could tell a different story using the same pictures. According to Gentile (2003b, p. 13), this lays the groundwork for developing the language needed to read stories and expository text.

Because the students tend to use short responses and simple sentences, the teacher would repeat what the

student said to model complete sentences and more complex language structures such as prepositions or conjunctions. Gentile (2003b, p. 19) states that through this type of modeling and "interactive talk" children learn to experiment with new language structures and will eventually add the new structures to their conversations. For example, Brant looked at the page where the little cousins were riding on the big cousins backs and said, "They are riding." Through a process of exchanges, we refined the sentence to "The little cousins are riding on the big cousin's backs," and we practiced repeating it. In the process of time, it would be hoped that teacher modeling would become less necessary and that the student would become more independent in telling stories about the pictures using more complex language structures.

Picture Drawing, Narration, and Dictation

Next, the student would be allowed to do some drawing about some recent event or something that is relevant to the student. While the student is drawing, the teacher and the student are conversing about the event that the student is drawing about, with the hope that the student is doing most of the talking. A variation on this might be that if the event being drawn is an event that the teacher experienced as well, they might share the drawing task and

take turns drawing the picture. An example of this would be something that happened at a school assembly, or maybe seeing a blimp fly over the school, or possibly a really bad rain storm. From the conversation that occurred during the drawing, a short story or dictation can be written down about the finished picture. According to Gentile (2003b), the shared attention and conversation are a way to scaffold the children's language and literacy development.

Information Processing and Critical Dialogue

Hurley and Tinajero (2001, p. 87) states that language plays an important role in creating understanding of technical terms and also has a great influence in the success of students in all the content areas. To help students acquire content vocabulary, some time would be spent reading and discussing informational text. This should include topics such as other cultures, animals, insects, trees and plants, planets or any topic informational topic that might be of interest to the student. Student would be expected to respond to who, what, where, when type questions, and respond to questions relating the content to their own thoughts, feelings or reactions (Gentile 2003b, p. 11). Time limitations would not permit us to do all four component of instruction

every day so we worked with informational text's approximately two days a week following much the same format as when we did narrative dialog.

Population

This study was conducted at a school in Southern California. Class-size reduction is fully implemented in grades K through 3 at this school. According to the latest available school accountability report (2004-2005), the school's total enrollment was 834 with 88.8% being Hispanic or Latino, 4.7% White, and 5.4% African-American. Other ethnicities represented were less than 1%. From this population, five first grade students were selected to be a part of this study.

I asked first grade teachers to refer students, whose first language was English, who demonstrated some difficulty with speaking, and were lagging behind their peers in reading achievement as measured by the first trimester DRA (Beaver, 1997) results. Speaking difficulties that I was looking for were one or two word responses, or in some cases, the students would have difficulty responding at all. They also might struggle with any language structure that was more complex than a simple sentence.

Selection of Students

I administered the OLAI (a more complete description of the OLAI is in the next section) to the students that were recommended by the first grade teachers. I determined that the students who were selected to participate in the study should fall in the Stage 1 category of oral language development. Gentile describes Stage 1 students as those who can point and name people or objects in illustrations and respond in one or two word phrases and some simple sentences (Gentile, 2003a, p. 16). The following is a description of each of the five students with their names being changed to protect their identity. These students were selected based on information from their kindergarten and first grade teachers, and the results of the OLAI.

Randall

Randall was the youngest student in his kindergarten class. At the beginning of the school year, he constantly sucked on his fingers, and when he took them out of his mouth to speak, his speech sounded like baby talk. He was not reluctant to talk in class; however, when he did, he responded with one or two word responses that were often hard to understand. As the year progressed, he did stop sucking his fingers and became easier to understand, but

the teacher was still concerned about his progress in general and specifically in speaking and reading.

His first grade teacher felt that he was a very good candidate for the oral language tutoring based on the guidelines I had given her; however, her main concern was his reading level. At the end of the first trimester, he was reading level 5 as determined by the DRA.

George

George had a different kindergarten teacher, and he was also the youngest student in his kindergarten class. His kindergarten teacher expressed concerns about the small amount of progress he had made in reading in kindergarten and felt that his oral language skills were below average. His first grade teacher had the same concerns and at the end of the first trimester, he was reading at level 1.

Brant

Brant's kindergarten teacher said that Brant is the youngest child from a large extended family. He and his mother and older brother live with his grandparents, another aunt and uncle, and several cousins. She had noticed that Brant is given very special treatment as the youngest in the family, and she felt that part of the reason he does not talk much is because at home he doesn't

have to. She was of the opinion that everyone in his household anticipated his every need and attended to it before he even asked. In her classroom, he was very quiet and did not like to participate in class discussions. She would occasionally ask him to contribute in class, but this usually ended in failure with him not saying anything. She said that he was more comfortable in one-on-one situations and would talk a little more, but his responses were limited to one or two words. She stated that he learned skills quickly, like sight words, letters, and sounds, but was not where he should be in reading at the end of kindergarten.

Brant's first grade teacher recommended him for tutoring because she felt that he fit the profile I had given her. She stated that he spoke very little in class and had trouble constructing any type of sentence. She felt that he was a little behind in reading; however, she felt that his reading ability was ahead of his speaking ability. At the end of the first trimester, his DRA reading level was 5.

Andrew

Andrew's kindergarten teacher stated that at the beginning of kindergarten she was not terribly concerned about Andrew's academic progress because he was a

marvelous artist. He could draw people and animals with great detail, but she did notice that he had a very difficult time dictating a story about his pictures. As time went on, she began to notice that Andrew would raise his hand during class discussions, but when she called on him, he didn't know what he wanted to say. He would seem a little frustrated and just say, "I forgot." She discussed retention in kindergarten with his mother, but in the end, teacher and parents decided to see how he did in first grade.

Andrew's first grade teacher was very concerned that he had trouble expressing himself orally, but she was more concerned that he was reading at a very low level for first grade. At the end of the first trimester, his DRA reading level was 1. Like the kindergarten teacher, she noticed that he was very good at drawing but couldn't really talk about what he had drawn. She is also considering him for retention in first grade.

Katrina

Katrina was the fifth and final student to be selected to participate in the study and she was the only girl. Unfortunately, she moved two weeks into the tutoring sessions. I was not able to collect enough data on her to include her in this study.

Treatment

As stated earlier, *Oral Language Acquisition Inventory* (See Appendix A) is the informal assessment instrument that I used to determine which students would be eligible for tutoring as well as to get a baseline of each students oral language ability. In explaining his rationale behind the development process of the OLAI, Gentile stated that control of language and its structures has not been evaluated in schools because it is assumed that the most common structures of language occur naturally over time. He states further that reading and writing instruction alone is not sufficient to accelerate their oral language and link it to literacy (Gentile, 2003a). This assessment has four parts as follows:

1. Repeated Sentences.
2. Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension.
3. Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation.
4. Information Processing and Critical Dialogue.

The following sections give a more complete description of each component of the assessment.

Repeated Sentences

The first assessment in the OLAI is an exercise in repeating sentences starting with simple sentences then

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moving to sentences with more complex structures. The purpose of this part of the assessment is to measure what types of sentence structures students control and which ones they do not. Hurley and Tinajero (2001) states, "The teacher must assess young children on their ability to use a variety of language patterns and structures" (p. 38). The types of sentence structures represented in the assessment are simple sentences, prepositions, conjunctions, relative pronouns, adverbial clauses, negative statements, and questions.

Story Reconstruction

In this part of the assessment, the student and teacher look at a series of pictures and have a brief conversation about them. The teacher then reads a story about the pictures. Upon completion, the teacher invites the student to tell a story about the pictures, making sure the student knows he/she can retell the same story or make up a different one. This assessment helps to show how the student controls language in a more independent setting than repeated sentences and actually give them a second chance to demonstrate proficiency (Gentile 2003a, p. 15). According to Hurley and Tinajero (2001, p. 11), story retelling is a good informal assessment of a

student's comprehension, sentence structure usage, and vocabulary development.

Picture Drawing, Narration, and Dictation

For this assessment, the student would be allowed to do some drawing about some recent event or something that is relevant to the student. While the student is drawing, the teacher and the student are conversing about the event that the student is drawing about, with the hope that the student is doing most of the talking. Vygotsky (1962) points out that talking out loud is a reflection of conversations the child may have had with others, and the social conversations becomes a part of the child's use of language and thinking. This statement supports the rational for the assessment as well as the instruction. This session is recorded so the teacher can go back to listen for and count the different language structures used by the student.

Information Processing and Critical Dialogue

This assessment consists of the children looking at pictures and listening as the teacher reads an expository passage about the pictures. Children are then expected to answer questions that demonstrate comprehension of about the content of the text. According to Barr, Blachowitz, and Kaufman (2002), "questions can have a significant

effect on the development and assessment of students'
comprehension strategies" (p. 172), and when teachers use
good questioning, this helps students develop independent
comprehension skills. The assessment is scored in the same
way as the previous assessment, by listening to a
videotape of the session and noting the different sentence
structures and also noting any significant words the
student used.

Scoring the Oral Language Acquisition Inventory

Once all the sections of the OLAI had been
administered, a profile was created for each student (See
Appendix D). For the first component, repeated sentences,
each sentence that the student repeated verbatim was
counted. In story reconstruction, picture drawing and
dictation, and information processing and critical
dialogue, the types of sentences the student used
retelling the story or talking about the drawing or
responding to informational text were counted and recorded
in the three categories. The structures under
consideration were, simple sentences or sentences that
contained prepositions, conjunctions, relative pronouns,
and adverbs. Looking at all this information, the student
was then designated a stage of language development from

Stage I to Stage V. A detailed description of each stage

can be found on the OLAI profile (See Appendix D).

Authentic Assessment

I chose to use the OLAI because, of the two oral

language assessments that were available to me, I liked

the fact that the OLAI is a mirror image of the type of

instruction that will result from the outcome. Wiggins

(1998, pp. 21-22) states that assessment needs to be based

on authentic tasks because they give direction for the

focus of instruction and that the tasks should replicate

how the student's abilities will be tested in real life

situations. I believe Gentile designed this assessment to

fit real life tasks that students are asked to perform in

school and in life every day and the assessment results

can be used to give direction for the focus of

instruction.

Development of the Oral Language Acquisition
   Inventory

Gentile (2003a) worked with Reading Recovery teachers

and looked at data collected during the first thirty weeks

of daily, thirty-minute lessons. He analyzed over 2000

dictated and written sentences or stories and identified

the five most common sentence structures used. The

structures were:

1. Simple Sentences

2. Sentences containing prepositional phrases

3. Sentences containing two or more phrases or
    clauses linked by a conjunction

4. Sentences containing two phrases or clauses
    linked by a relative pronoun

5. Sentences containing two phrases or clauses
    linked by an adverb (Gentile, 2003a).

Gentile (2003a) then compared children who were
successful in completing the RR instruction and those who
were not. His findings were that students who were
consistently using all the five language structures in
their stories and dictations were successful in completing
the program in twenty weeks. Students who did not succeed
in completing the program in twenty weeks used only simple
sentences or frequently relied on repeating one or two of
the structures.

In addition to this, Gentile (2003a) studied the
journal writing of 500 first grade students. He found that
students who were reading successfully at or above first
grade level wrote longer stories and used a variety of the
five sentence types he identified earlier. The journal
writings of students who were not reading at or above
grade level might contain only drawings, single words, or

simple sentences with the same structure be repeated over and over.

Validity and Reliability

Wiggins (1998, p. 32) lays out two criteria for measuring the validity and reliability of an assessment task. First, could the student have performed the task well for reasons that do not relate to showing understanding of the skill being assessed, and second, could the student have done poorly for the same reason. He says that if the answer to either of these questions is yes, then the results could be "insufficient or misleading." In looking at the OLAI, I would say that I could give a qualified "no" answer to both questions. The four parts of the OLAI give the students many opportunities in different settings to demonstrate the skills being assessed. For example, students may not do well at retelling a story that was read to them during the reading and retelling portion of the assessment; however, they may be more skillful at talking and describing and event of their choosing during the picture drawing/narration portion of the assessment.

Another reason that a student may give a poor performance on an assessment that has no relation to the actual skill being assessed is the social setting that the

assessment occurs in. Johnston (1997, pp. 19-25) discusses the social aspects of evaluation interaction and how they can affect the outcomes. The way the OLAI is administered does a good job of negating the negative factors that can occur in the social setting of this type of assessment. Johnston's concerns are with trust, power and control, time and timing, focus, stakes, and objectivity and distance. The OLAI is administered in such a way that many of these issues are addressed. Trust and rapport are established before assessment begins by discussing a favorite toy or something else familiar to the child. The discreet use of a tape recorder is encouraged so the evaluator's attention can be focused directly on the child rather than scoring, and this would also deal with the focus of responses. Since the actual scoring will be done at a later time, the teacher will only be listening to what the student has to say without placing value on any of the responses, and the only thing at stake is whether or not the student will receive additional tutoring. The teacher does not assume a position of power by standing or sitting across from the child; teacher and student are seated beside each other at a table. The individual nature of the test allows as much time as is needed for responses.

Developmental Reading Assessment

The primary goal of this study is to see if specific oral language instruction can help low oral language students increase their oral language skills. A secondary question under consideration was that as oral language competency increases, would this reflect in student's reading achievement. To answer the secondary question, some sort of reading assessment needed to be done.

The DRA was already being administered by classroom teachers three times a year, so I opted to use this data to determine reading achievement growth of the students I tutored, as well as to get an overall picture of how first graders were progressing in reading overall. By making a comparison between the overall reading scores and the students I tutored, I could hope to make a determination as to whether or not oral language development is an effective intervention in the cases where low oral language skills may be holding students back in reading achievement.

The DRA was developed and field-tested over a nine-year period in the Upper Arlington City School District in Ohio. One hundred teachers participated in the field-testing, and of those, eighty-four returned feedback forms expressing overall satisfaction with the DRA for

providing documentation of students reading development over time (Beaver, 1997, pp. 6-7).

Data Analysis

As noted in the previous section, portions of the OLAI were recorded. This enabled me to go back and listen to the conversations more carefully and add to the notes and observations made during the assessment. According to Gentile (2003a, p. 12), an exact count of items or errors is not critical to getting the information needed to create the OLAI profile (See Appendix D) of the child's language development. Once the profile was developed, the child was determined to be in a particular stage of language development ranging from one to five, with one being the lowest stage and five being the highest (for a detailed description of each stage, see Appendix C).

For the purpose of this study, the students that landed in stage one were the ones selected to receive some intensive oral language development instruction prior to being considered for an reading acceleration program such as Reading Recovery. The duration of the intervention lasted six weeks by the school calendar from December 12th to February 3rd. In February, students were given the OLAI again to check progress. To account for and prevent

contamination due to test familiarity, the OLAI has three different forms.

To answer the primary question of this study, can specific instruction in oral language increase oral language skills in low oral language students, I compared and charted the pre and post scores and student profiles of the OLAI. To answer the secondary question, will increasing oral language skills impact reading achievement, I took the reading levels determined by the DRA at the end of the first trimester and compared them to the DRA reading levels of the targeted students at the end of the second trimester. I took the DRA reading levels of all the students of each first grade class I pulled students from to get an average overall growth rate to compare with the targeted student's growth rate.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In my experience as a Reading Specialist and Reading
Recovery teacher for seven years, I found it particularly
troubling that many of the lowest students that I tutored
seemed to have very low oral language abilities. I began
to feel that oral language development might be a more
appropriate intervention for these students and that is
why I conducted this study. The purpose of this study was
to see if students who appear to have low oral language
skills could improve their oral language skills with
tutoring in oral language development following *The Oracy
Instructional Guide*, by Lance Gentile (2003b). A secondary
question under consideration in the study was; would
reading proficiency improve with improved oral language
skills. The student's oral language abilities were
assessed using the OLAI prior to the six weeks of tutoring
and at the end of the six weeks of tutoring. The pre and
post assessment results of the OLAI are broken down for
each student.

Presentation of the Findings

The OLAI was administered to all of the subject
students prior to and following the interventions. The

following tables present and overview of the data
collected from both assessments.

Table 1. Randall's Oral Language Acquisition Inventory Data

	December (7 possible per item)	February (7 possible per item)
Repeated Sentences		
Simple Sentences	6	5
Prepositions	5	6
Conjunctions	0	2
Relative Pronouns	*	*
Adverbial Clauses	*	*
Negative Statement	5	5
Questions	5	3
Commands	5	5
Exclamations	4	4
*Not tested. Student is allowed only four errors in the first five categories combined.		
Story Reconstruction		
Simple Sentences	3	0
Prepositions	1	3
Conjunctions	0	1
Relative Pronouns	0	1
Adverbial Clauses	0	1
Picture Drawing, Narration		
Simple Sentences	2	5
Prepositions	0	2
Conjunctions	0	1
Relative Pronouns	0	0
Adverbial Clauses	0	0
Information Processing & Critical Dialogue		
Simple Sentences	3	1
Prepositions	0	4
Conjunctions	0	0
Relative Pronouns	0	0
Adverbial Clauses	0	0

Randall's overall score for repeated sentences went up by two points. In story reconstruction, picture drawing and narration, and information processing and critical dialog it is evident that he is using more complex sentence structures. In December, he used a total of 8 simple sentences and 1 complex sentence. Compare that to February where he used 6 simple sentences and 13 complex sentences. The data indicates that he is talking more and using more complex sentence structures more often as opposed to simple sentences.

Table 2. Brant's Oral Language Acquisition Inventory Data

	December (7 possible per item)	February (7 possible per item)
Repeated Sentences		
Simple Sentences	5	5
Prepositions	3	5
Conjunctions	*	2
Relative Pronouns	*	*
Adverbial Clauses	*	*
Negative Statement	2	2
Questions	2	3
Commands	3	5
Exclamations	3	2
*Not tested. Student is allowed only four errors in the first five categories combined.		
Story Reconstruction		
Simple Sentences	3	0
Prepositions	0	2
Conjunctions	1	6
Relative Pronouns	1	4
Adverbial Clauses	0	2

	December (7 possible per item)	February (7 possible per item)
Picture Drawing, Narration		
Simple Sentences	5	7
Prepositions	1	3
Conjunctions	3	4
Relative Pronouns	2	0
Adverbial Clauses	0	0
Information Processing & Critical Dialogue		
Simple Sentences	5	1
Prepositions	1	1
Conjunctions	0	2
Relative Pronouns	0	0
Adverbial Clauses	0	0

Brant's overall score for repeated sentences went up by six points. In story reconstruction, picture drawing and narration, and information processing and critical dialog it is evident that he is using more complex sentence structures. In December, he used a total of 13 simple sentences and 9 complex sentences. Compare that to February where he used 8 simple sentences and 24 complex sentences. The data indicates that he is talking more and using more complex sentence structures more often as opposed to simple sentences.

Table 3. Andrew's Oral Language Acquisition Inventory Data

	December (7 possible per item)	February (7 possible per item)
Repeated Sentences		
Simple Sentences	5	6
Prepositions	5	4
Conjunctions	*	0
Relative Pronouns	*	*
Adverbial Clauses	*	*
Negative Statement	1	3
Questions	1	0
Commands	5	2
Exclamations	2	3
*Not tested. Student is allowed only four errors in the first five categories combined.		
Story Reconstruction		
Simple Sentences	2	3
Prepositions	0	0
Conjunctions	2	1
Relative Pronouns	1	4
Adverbial Clauses	1	4
Picture Drawing, Narration		
Simple Sentences	12	8
Prepositions	0	4
Conjunctions	2	6
Relative Pronouns	0	5
Adverbial Clauses	0	1
Information Processing & Critical Dialogue		
Simple Sentences	6	5
Prepositions	1	3
Conjunctions	0	3
Relative Pronouns	0	1
Adverbial Clauses	0	0

Andrew's overall score for repeated sentences went down by one point. In story reconstruction, picture drawing and narration, and information processing and critical dialog it is evident that he is using more

65

complex sentence structures. In December, he used a total

of 20 simple sentences and 7 complex sentences. Compare

that to February where he used 16 simple sentences and 32

complex sentences. The data indicates that although he is

still using many simple sentences, he is talking more and

using more complex sentence structures much more often.

Table 4. George's Oral Language Acquisition Inventory Data

	December (7 possible per item)	January (7 possible per item)
Repeated Sentences		
Simple Sentences	7	6
Prepositions	6	6
Conjunctions	5	3
Relative Pronouns	4	*
Adverbial Clauses	*	*
Negative Statement	7	7
Questions	7	3
Commands	5	7
Exclamations	5	6
*Not tested. Student is allowed only four errors in the first five categories combined.		
Story Reconstruction		
Simple Sentences	3	0
Prepositions	1	2
Conjunctions	1	4
Relative Pronouns	1	8
Adverbial Clauses	1	2
Picture Drawing, Narration		
Simple Sentences	1	3
Prepositions	2	3
Conjunctions	1	1
Relative Pronouns	0	0
Adverbial Clauses	0	0

Information Processing & Critical Dialogue		
Simple Sentences	4	3
Prepositions	1	0
Conjunctions	2	0
Relative Pronouns	0	0
Adverbial Clauses	1	0

George moved at the end of January so he received only four weeks of tutoring. George's overall score for repeated sentences went down by eight points. In story reconstruction, picture drawing and narration, and information processing and critical dialog it is evident that he is using more complex sentence structures. In December, he used a total of 8 simple sentences and 11 complex sentences. Compare that to his end of January scores where he used 6 simple sentences and 20 complex sentences. The data indicates that his use of simple sentences went down as the number of complex sentences went up.

Discussion of the Findings

My primary question in doing this study was, can instruction in oral language development increase oral language skills in students who are struggling in this area. The overall results show that the students' oral language skills did improve, and it was a significant improvement considering that the instruction lasted only

six weeks. Over a longer period of time, the amount of
improvement shown could have been attributed to general
exposure at home, in school, and just maturing over time.
Combining the last three sub-tests of the OLAI, complex
sentences and the increased amount of oral language
overall was impressive. The results of repeated sentences
were less conclusive. A closer examination of the
different sub-tests gives a more complete picture of the
results.

Story Reconstruction, Picture Drawing, and Information Processing

The story retelling and picture drawing with
narration sections both showed a significantly increased
use of complex sentences over simple sentences. The
information processing and critical dialogue showed little
or no improvement across all students. One possible
explanation is that it was not feasible to do
informational instruction, picture drawing and narration,
and story retelling all in one thirty-minute session. I
had to alternate story retelling with informational
instruction. Accounting for days when the students could
not come to tutoring, there were 24 lessons in total. Of
these lessons, only 8 of them were based on informational
instruction.

A second explanation could come from the test itself. In Form A of the OLAI (See Appendix A), the informational portion of the test is based on kangaroos. The students connected immediately to the kangaroos. They had heard other stories about kangaroos, and they knew about Kanga and Roo from Winnie-the-Poo stories. In Form B of the OLAI (See Appendix B), the informational section was the account of how some people in Spain discovered some drawings in a cave. The students made very weak connections to this subject. None of the students had ever seen a real cave, and they didn't really know what a cave was. One of the students kept calling it a cage. For this assessment to provide valid information, the students need to make similar connections to each of the two subjects. For future reference, I might use Form C (See Appendix C) of the OLAI. The informational text in Form C is about stars, and students can probably make better connections with stars than with caves.

Repeated Sentences

The results of the repeated sentence portion of the assessment showed mixed results. Two of the students made slight improvement, and two of the students actually regressed in this skill. This portion of the OLAI assessed what language structures the students controlled. It was

effective in doing what it was supposed to do. I found that if a student did not control certain conjunctions, or relative pronouns, he could not repeat them correctly. The student would always revert to the structure he was used to when attempting to repeat the sentence. I think that this information would be more effective in explaining reading miscues, than in assessing oral language skills.

The results of the other portions of the OLAI do not agree with the results of the sentence repetition portion. The sentence repetition results could indicate that the students do not control the more complex structures. However, in the story retelling and picture drawing portions of the OLAI, the students were using the more complex structures successfully. It became obvious that the students had partial knowledge of the more complex structures and they were able to use the ones they were most familiar with when they were just talking about a story or about a picture they were drawing. With that said, the strength of the OLAI is that it gives students multiple opportunities in various situations to demonstrate oral language skills.

<u>Reading Levels</u>

The secondary question under investigation in this study asked if reading levels would go up as oral language skills .increased.
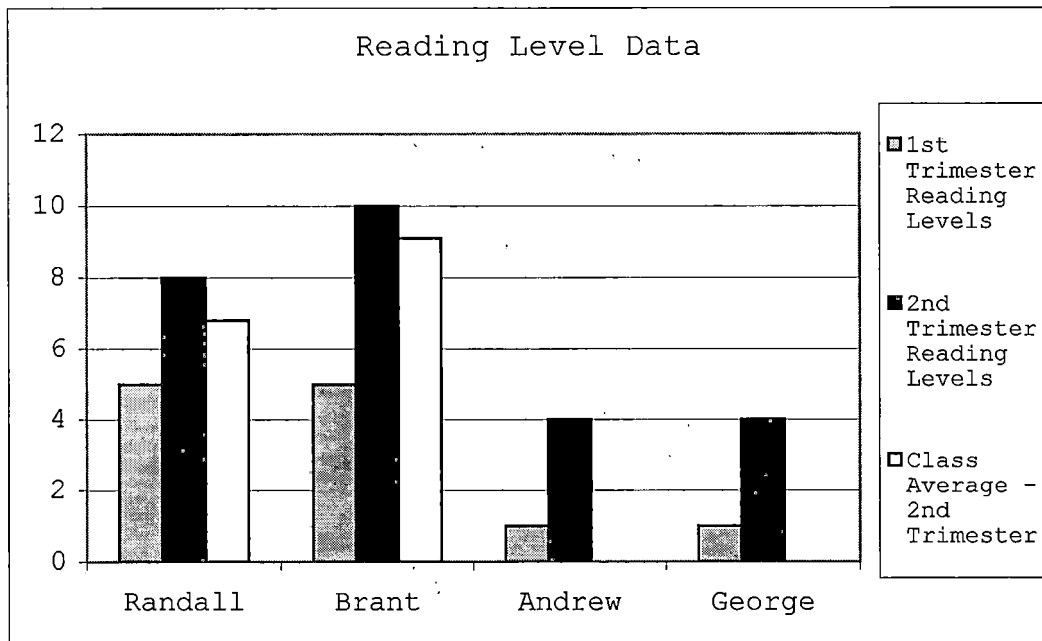
Reading Level Data

Figure 1. Reading Levels Data

Analysis of the reading level data indicates that the students who participated in this study increased from 3 to 5 reading levels between the first and second trimester. This is significant because none of these students had gone up in reading levels between the end of kindergarten and the end of the first trimester. It is also significant that both Randall and Brant's reading levels are slightly above the average in their respective

classes. They are presently staying on pace with their peers and not falling further behind. I could not make the class comparison for Andrew because the second trimester reading levels were unavailable for his class. George moved in the middle of January and did not complete the second trimester at our school. He has a reading score because I was able to give him the DRA before he left; however, it did not seem appropriate to compare his mid-trimester score with the end of the trimester average for his class.

Summary

Based on the findings, my preliminary analysis suggests that the oral language interventions I used in this study were successful. The data demonstrates that all of the students who participated were using many more complex sentence structures at the end of six weeks of instruction. The reading level data shows that these same students also made greater progress in reading levels following oral language development intervention. This strongly suggests a connection between increased oral language skills and reading achievement because these students had made no progress in reading levels in the previous trimester.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

My experience as a Reading Recovery teacher led me to conduct this investigation into the connection between oral language skills and reading achievement. Over a seven-year period, I noticed that many students who were unsuccessful in RR demonstrated low oral language development. My primary focus in this study was to see if specific instruction in oral language would increase oral language skills. I also wanted to determine if reading levels would increase, without any specific instruction in reading, as students' oral language proficiency increased.

Summary

The methodology that I followed is based on a model for language development that Lance Gentile developed and outlined in *The Oracy Instructional Guide* (Gentile, 2003b, pp. 44-70). The instruction lasted for six weeks and was primarily language development with no specific reading instruction other than the fact that much of the oral language lesson was centered on a book we read together. The four components of the instruction are as follows:

1.   Repeated Sentences (Model/Repeat).

2.   Story Reconstruction and Narrative
     Comprehension.

3.   Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation.

4.   Information Processing and Critical Dialogue.

Conclusions

This study is significant for two reasons. First, in searching the literature, I found longitudinal studies that measured oral language skills over time, but I could not find any studies that applied intervention to increase oral language skills and measured the results. A second reason this study is significant is because generally when students struggle with reading, it is assumed that they need more reading instruction. We may be giving the wrong intervention at the wrong time. By gaining a better command of oral language, students may become more proficient at reading without specific reading instruction.

Some of the limitations of the study were obvious from the beginning, and others were discovered as the study progressed. Obviously, low oral language skills are not the only reason for delayed reading, however, if we are to meet the individual needs of students, it should

not be ignored if evidence points in that direction. As expected, student mobility and attendance of the tutoring sessions caused some of the data to be incomplete. An unexpected teacher maternity leave also contributed to the problem. The study was limited by the length of time I had to collect the data and the number of subjects included in the study.

An analysis of the data collected from the pre tutoring and post tutoring assessments shows that students made significant growth in the complexity of their sentence structures and the amount of talking that they did. This leads me to conclude that with carefully planned lessons and language input, it is possible to increase students' oral language skill. A direct connection between increased oral language skills and reading achievement was a little more difficult to make. In looking at the reading level graph, all students went up in reading levels. The increase may be connected to the oral language tutoring because in the previous trimester, these students had not progressed in reading levels at all.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Classroom Teachers

The focus of much of our current reading instruction is phonics and vocabulary, as this is the focus of the language arts adoptions that we are told we must faithfully replicate in California. Classroom teachers need to increase their pedagogical knowledge of the development of children's oral language and find ways to incorporate more language experiences into reading instruction. In addition to the techniques described in this study, have discussions that activate prior knowledge and build background knowledge prior to reading a new story. If there are illustrations, talk about them. Use Reciprocal Teaching strategies to promote student discussion for the purpose of clarifying new vocabulary instead of doing vocabulary worksheets. Help students build their narrative skills and comprehension by asking them to summarize stories or parts of stories. These things do not have to be done in addition to the scripted instruction: they can be incorporated into the required curriculum with some skill and a few adjustments.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study focused on developing oral language skills in students who demonstrated low oral language skills and

delayed reading progress. Because it was difficult to cover all of the components of oral language in the lesson time frame, I recommend that future studies narrow the focus to either narrative dialogue or informational processing and discourse. Additional studies should look at other ways to assess all aspects of oral language as well as to see how multiple oral language skills and reading mutually reinforce one another.

APPENDIX A

ORAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION INVENTORY

FORM A

Level I

Simple Sentences

Directions for Levels I and II: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After four checks in the first fourteen sentences, stop. Skip the remaining levels and go to Component II: Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension (Page 30).

Sample Sentences: I like ice cream. I am running. She can jump.

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. They are lost.

☐ 2. She is working today.

☐ 3. John was the best.

☐ 4. We were walking slowly.

☐ 5. You will be here tomorrow.

☐ 6. That is the biggest dog.

☐ 7. I like playing tetherball.

Observations and Notes

Level II

Prepositions

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____.

- [ ] 8. I saw a dinosaur at the movies.

- [ ] 9. He sang a song for me.

- [ ] 10. We are going to our house after school.

- [ ] 11. She went swimming in the lake.

- [ ] 12. I wanted to swing with my sister.

- [ ] 13. He was walking down the steps.

- [ ] 14. My friends found a coat at her house.

Observations and Notes

Level III

Conjunctions

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements (Page 26).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. My brother was crying because he was sad.

☐ 2. Tonight is Halloween, so I dressed in my costume.

☐ 3. I went to the zoo but I forgot what I saw.

☐ 4. She wants to go if they'll let her.

☐ 5. The sun is shining and I feel better.

☐ 6. The lights went out so she got scared.

☐ 7. If I had a pet I would feed him every day.

Observations and Notes

Level IV

Relative Pronouns

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements (Page 26).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. He is the man who hit the dog.

☐ 2. She can have what she wants today.

☐ 3. They're the ones that grabbed my coat.

☐ 4. You took what you wanted yesterday.

☐ 5. He saw the cat that got hit by the car.

☐ 6. We found the man who had his ball.

☐ 7. You showed me which ones you wanted.

Observations and Notes

Level V

Adverbial Clauses

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. The dog ran home when he got hungry.

☐ 2. We looked where he buried his bone.

☐ 3. Mom takes me to school then she goes to work.

☐ 4. We played video games when we got home.

☐ 5. I went to the dentist then my teeth felt clean.

☐ 6. They were standing where he got off.

☐ 7. My dad buys me candy whenever we go to the store.

Observations and Notes

Negative Statements

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Questions (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. He is not my brother.

☐ 2. They can't find the ones they wanted.

☐ 3. She won't know where to look.

☐ 4. They aren't in the bathroom.

☐ 5. We don't want to go with her.

☐ 6. Today is Friday and tomorrow there is no school.

☐ 7. You can't play with me today.

Observations and Notes

Questions

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Commands (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. Is your friend fun to play with?

☐ 2. Can I go home when I finish my work?

☐ 3. Are you going to help me find it?

☐ 4. Do I have to stay in bed today?

☐ 5. How can they take their picture?

☐ 6. Why do we have to write again today?

☐ 7. Will you go with me to her room?

Observations and Notes

Commands

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Exclamations (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐   1.   Be quiet so we can work.

☐   2.   Take this and put it on your desk.

☐   3.   You lost it now go find it.

☐   4.   Go outside and play and take him with you.

☐   5.   Let me go you're not my mother.

☐   6.   Put that back it's not yours.

☐   7.   Leave me alone or I'll tell my teacher.

Observations and Notes

Exclamations

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Component II: Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. Thanks for a good breakfast!

☐ 2. Wow, there's no school tomorrow!

☐ 3. Let's play basketball when we get home!

☐ 4. She loves to eat candy at the movies!

☐ 5. He has the biggest berries in his basket!

☐ 6. We're going to the beach tomorrow and play in the sand!

☐ 7. Tomorrow I'm staying home with my mom and my brother!

Observations and Notes

Popcorn and Mary

Directions: Say:"**I'm going to show you some pictures and read you a story.**" Display the pictures and invite the child to tell you about them. Then stack the pictures in the numbered sequence and say: "**Now I'm going to read you a story about Popcorn and Mary. When I finish, your job is to tell me a story using the pictures. You can tell me the same story I read or you can make up one of your own. Do you understand?**"

As you finish reading the narrative that accompanies each picture, slide it to the bottom of the stack. When you have read the story, spread the frames out in front of the child and say: "**Now use the pictures to tell me your story.**"

Frame 1: Once upon a time there was a very special pony whose name was Popcorn. He was called Popcorn because of all the tiny white spots on his back. Popcorn was special because he could talk. But his friend Mary was the only one who knew it.

Frame 2: Popcorn and Mary played every day. Popcorn loved to roll and kick his feet high in the air. When he did this, Mary laughed and laughed. Popcorn thought it would be fun if Mary would ride him. But Mary was afraid.

Frame 3: Then, one day Mary felt brave. She went to get her saddle. She said, "Popcorn, I'll try, I'm brave!" Popcorn said, "Don't worry Mary. You won't fall."

Frame 4: Mary hopped on Popcorn's back. They went trotting across the field. A little bird and a furry rabbit called, "Don't be afraid Mary! You won't fall." Mary was never afraid again so she rode every day. She and Popcorn had many happy and wonderful times together.

Frame 1

Frame 2

Frame 3

Frame 4

Component II: Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension

Transcription Page from Audiotape

Popcorn and Mary

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Reconstructed Story

Observations and Notes

Component III: Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Directions

1. Identify something for the child to draw by asking a few brief questions about favorite pets, toys, experiences or family members. Say: **"Draw a picture and we'll talk about it."** (Child draws picture and talks with you.)

2. Briefly discuss the picture. Then say: **"Tell me the most important thing you want to say about your picture."** The child can write or you and the child can write, using a bold, black marker to copy the child's words beneath or over the drawing.

3. Now say: **"Look what you've said. I'm going to read it and have you read it, but first I want to ask you some questions."** Ask the following questions and have the child point to or tell you the answer. Check "Yes" or "No" to indicate if the child demonstrates control of the concept or strategy.

Child Controls	Yes	No
"Where do I start reading?"	☐	☐
"Which way do I go?"	☐	☐
"Then where do I go?"	☐	☐
"Where do I stop?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that?"	☐	☐
"Can you point to the word _____?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that word?"	☐	☐
"Can you point to the letter ____?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that letter?"	☐	☐

4. Say: **"Now I'll read what you said, then you read it."** Point underneath the first letter of each word as you read. When you finish reading, say to the child: **"Now I want you to read it just like I did."** Does the child point to each word and match one-to-one?　☐ Yes　☐ No

5. Read the statement to the child slowly. Then ask the child to listen carefully and write the sounds he or she hears in each word. Place a check mark above each sound in a word the child writes correctly. Note: A word may have more letters than sounds. For example, *you* (u) and *know* (no).

Component III: Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation

Transcription Page from Audiotape

Directions: Listen to the audiotape of Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation. Write on this page as much as you can of what the child said. Leave space between the lines, as this transcript will help identify language structures the child uses, interesting vocabulary or concepts and any confusions with syntax, inflected endings or pronouns.

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Child's Dictated Statement: Underline words the child writes independently that are spelled incorrectly.

Kangaroos

Directions: Ask what the child knows about kangaroos. Talk briefly with the child about them. Then say: **"I'm going to read to you about kangaroos. Listen, and when I'm through I want you to tell me the most important thing you learned. Then, I will ask you some questions and we can talk more about kangaroos."**

Hand the first picture to the child and read the corresponding text, then the second, third and fourth.

Frame 1: Kangaroos are fun to watch! They live in large groups far away in Australia. Kangaroos hop or leap around looking for leaves and grass to eat.

Frame 2: Kangaroos have strong back legs and thick tails. They use their tails to push off so they can hop forward as far as thirty feet. That's longer than a bus!

Frame 3: The father kangaroo is bigger than the mother. He is called a boomer. Mother kangaroo is called a doe, which is what a mother deer is called, too.

Frame 4: A baby kangaroo is called a joey. He spends the first weeks of his life in his mother's pouch. Sometimes he can get out of the pouch to play on the grass. But if there is any danger, he crawls back inside so they can leap away together.

Directions: Now ask the questions on the following page. You will record the child's answers later when listening to the audiotape.

Frame 1

Frame 2

Frame 3

Frame 4

Adapted from Meadows, G. and Vial, C. (2000) *Kangaroos*. Carlsbad, CA: Dominie Press, Inc.

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Transcription Page from Audiotape

Kangaroos

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Critical Dialogue
Listen to the audiotape and write as much as you can of what the child says in response to the following:

Intrapersonal Questions

1. What is the most important thing you learned about kangaroos?

2. What were you thinking while I was reading about kangaroos?

3. What were you feeling?

4. What is the most important question you have about kangaroos?

5. Tell me why kangaroos are interesting to you.

Extrapersonal Questions

1. What is a kangaroo?

2. Where do kangaroos live?

3. What is a baby kangaroo called?

4. What do they eat?

5. What is a "pouch"?

6. Why are kangaroos fun to watch?

APPENDIX B

ORAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION INVENTORY

FORM B

Component I: Repeated Sentences

Level I

Simple Sentences

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After four checks in the first fourteen sentences, stop. Skip the remaining levels and go to Component II: Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension (Page 46).

Sample Sentences: I have a dog. I like my dog. My dog is fun.

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. They are sick today.

☐ 2. She is going home now.

☐ 3. Mary's ball was flat.

☐ 4. We are playing hard.

☐ 5. You can be my friend forever.

☐ 6. This is my yellow pencil.

☐ 7. I like her dog Checkers.

Observations and Notes

Level II

Prepositions

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐   8. I saw whales at the park.

☐   9. He walked the dog for me.

☐   10. We are going to our dad's house on the weekend.

☐   11. She was jumping in the gym.

☐   12. I like to play with my cat at night.

☐   13. He is running down the street.

☐   14. My brother got the apple from the man next door.

Observations and Notes

Level III

Conjunctions

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements (Page 42).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

- ☐ 1. My sister went home because she got sick.

- ☐ 2. Tonight I felt sad so I slept with my mom.

- ☐ 3. I got a bike for my birthday but I can't ride it.

- ☐ 4. She wants to play if they have time.

- ☐ 5. The dog at her house is barking and I know why.

- ☐ 6. My mom went to work so my dad did my hair.

- ☐ 7. If my mom lets me I'll go to McDonalds.

Observations and Notes

Level IV

Relative Pronouns

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements
(Page 42).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. He's the guy who hit the dog.

☐ 2. She knows what she wants for lunch.

☐ 3. They're the ones that broke the mirror.

☐ 4. You want what I had for dinner last night.

☐ 5. He saw the boy that stole his toys.

☐ 6. We told the teacher who took the eraser.

☐ 7. You can tell me which books I should choose.

Observations and Notes

Level V

Adverbial Clauses

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. My mom wakes me up then she fixes my breakfast.

☐ 2. We put the book where we could find it.

☐ 3. She cried hard when they hit her.

☐ 4. I'll go to the park tomorrow then I can play soccer.

☐ 5. I saw them here in the room where they were playing.

☐ 6. My mom brings me books when she comes home.

☐ 7. When I go to the store my mom and dad buy me candy.

Observations and Notes

Negative Statements

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Questions (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. He is not home today.

☐ 2. They can't go to his party.

☐ 3. She won't know where to sleep.

☐ 4. They aren't on the piano.

☐ 5. We don't want to work with him.

☐ 6. You shouldn't be that way.

☐ 7. I haven't any more gum left.

Observations and Notes

Component I: Sentence Transformations

Questions

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Commands (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. Is she the one you saw yesterday?

☐ 2. Can I go out and play with her?

☐ 3. Are you sure she was looking for me?

☐ 4. Will you ask if I can go tomorrow?

☐ 5. How can they paint that fence without a brush?

☐ 6. Could you help me find my coat and backpack?

☐ 7. Do you think she'd be mad if I used this?

Observations and Notes

Component I: Sentence Transformations

Commands

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Exclamations (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. Be nice so we can play.

☐ 2. Take this home and read it yourself.

☐ 3. You took it now give it back to me.

☐ 4. Go away and take him with you.

☐ 5. Put that back where you found it.

☐ 6. Don't tell me I can't do that.

☐ 7. Find your own toys to play with.

Observations and Notes

Exclamations

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Component II: Story Reconstruction and Narrative
Comprehension (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

- ☐ 1. Thanks for the new boots!

- ☐ 2. We're having a party today!

- ☐ 3. Let's work in the garden after school!

- ☐ 4. Hey, he found that pencil in the same spot!

- ☐ 5. Look at the cake she made for me!

- ☐ 6. I'm having a good day because she's gone!

- ☐ 7. He loves to play on my side when we go to recess!

Observations and Notes

John Likes to Do Lots of Things

Directions: Say: **"I'm going to show you some pictures and read you a story."** Display the pictures and invite the child to tell you about them. Then stack the pictures in the numbered sequence and say: **"Now I'm going to read you a story about John, John Likes to Do Lots of Things. When I finish, your job is to tell me a story using the pictures. You can tell me the same story I read or you can make up one of your own. Do you understand?"**

As you finish reading the narrative that accompanies each picture, slide it to the bottom of the stack. When you have read the story, spread the frames out in front of the child and say: **"Now use the pictures to tell me your story."**

Frame 1: John was a boy who liked to do lots of things. But he could never decide what he liked to do best. He was good at soccer and he loved to run and kick the ball into the goal.

Frame 2: He loved playing football too because he got to run with the ball. The other boys tried to tackle him, but he was too fast!

Frame 3: Whenever it rained, John liked to stay inside the house so he could play video games. He lay on the floor and played until his mother called him to dinner.
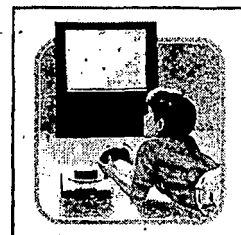
Frame 4: Then, after dinner he brushed his teeth, washed his face and hands and put on his pajamas. He crawled into bed and got under the covers where he could do what he liked best of all. John read his favorite stories until he fell asleep.
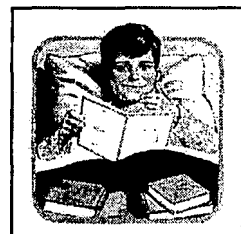
Frame 1
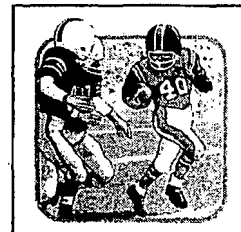
Frame 2

Frame 3

Frame 4

Adapted from Schubert, B. and Klein, A. F. (2002). *Things I Like to Do*. Carlsbad, CA: Dominie Press, Inc.

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Directions

1. Identify something for the child to draw by asking a few brief questions about favorite pets, toys, experiences or family members. Say: **"Draw a picture and we'll talk about it."** (Child draws picture and talks with you.)

2. Briefly discuss the picture. Then say: **"Tell me the most important thing you want to say about your picture."** The child can write or you and the child can write, using a bold, black marker to copy the child's words beneath or over the drawing.

3. Now, say: **"Look what you've said. I'm going to read it and have you read it, but first I want to ask you some questions."** Ask the following questions and have the child point to or tell you the answer. Check "Yes" or "No" to indicate if the child demonstrates control of the concept or strategy.

Child Controls	Yes	No
"Where do I start reading?"	☐	☐
"Which way do I go?"	☐	☐
"Then where do I go?"	☐	☐
"Where do I stop?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that?"	☐	☐
"Can you point to the word _____?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that word?"	☐	☐
"Can you point to the letter ____?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that letter?"	☐	☐

4. Say: **"Now I'll read what you said, then you read it."** Point underneath the first letter of each word as you read. When you finish reading, say to the child: **"Now I want you to read it just like I did."** Does the child point to each word and match one-to-one? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Read the statement to the child slowly. Then ask the child to listen carefully and write the sounds he or she hears in each word. Place a check mark above each sound in a word the child writes correctly. Note: A word may have more letters than sounds. For example, *you* (u) and *know* (no).

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Transcription Page from Audiotape

Directions: Listen to the audiotape of Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation. Write on this page as much as you can of what the child said. Leave space between the lines, as this transcript will help identify the language structures the child uses, interesting vocabulary or concepts and any confusions with syntax, inflected endings or pronouns.

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Child's Dictated Statement: Underline words the child writes independently that are spelled incorrectly.

Pictures on Cave Walls Tell Stories

Directions: Ask what the child knows about caves. Show a picture of the cave from the story and talk briefly about it.
Then say: **"I'm going to read to you about caves and some exciting things found in them. Listen, and then tell me the most important thing you learned. Then, I will ask you some questions and we can talk more about things found in caves."**

Frame I

Hand the first picture to the child and read the corresponding text, then the second, third and fourth.

Frame I: A long time ago a little girl named Maria and her father discovered a cave in Spain. Maria's father was a scientist who loved exploring caves. It was very dark inside the cave, so they had to use lanterns to see.

Frame 2

Frame 2: On this day, Maria walked ahead of her father. Suddenly she saw pictures of strange animals painted on the walls! She was frightened because she had never seen animals like these.

Frame 3: She called to her father, who came and knelt down next to her. They shined their lanterns on the walls of the cave. Her father said, "Don't be afraid. These are pictures of animals that lived over 40,000 years ago."

Frame 3

Frame 4: The people painted these pictures to tell about the animals they hunted for food. They used the skins of these animals for clothing to stay warm and to cover themselves when they went to sleep.
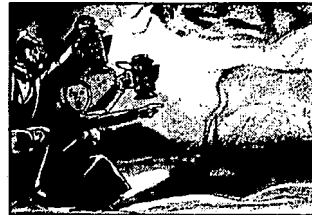

Frame 4

Directions: Now ask the questions on the following page. You will record the child's answers later when listening to the audiotape.

Adapted from Trussell-Cullen, A. (2001). *Ancient Times*. Carlsbad, CA: Dominie Press, Inc.

Transcription Page from Audiotape

Pictures on Cave Walls Tell Stories

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Critical Dialogue

Listen to the audiotape and write as much as you can of what the child says in response to the following:

Intrapersonal Questions

1. What is the most important thing you learned about pictures on cave walls?

2. What were you thinking while I was reading about pictures on cave walls?

3. What were you feeling?

4. What is the most important question you have about pictures on cave walls?

5. Tell me why pictures on cave walls are interesting to you.

Extrapersonal Questions

1. Who discovered the pictures in the cave?

2. What was painted in the pictures?

3. When were these pictures painted?

4. Where was the cave?

5. How were Maria and her father able to see the pictures?

6. What does the word *frighten* mean?

APPENDIX C

ORAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION INVENTORY

FORM C

Level I

Simple Sentences

Directions for Levels I and II: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After four checks in the first fourteen sentences, stop. Skip the remaining sentences levels and go to Component II: Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension (Page 62).

Sample Sentences: I see a bug. I see some ants. I see a spider.

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

- ☐ 1. I see my red letters.

- ☐ 2. She has a good sandwich.

- ☐ 3. My doll has new dresses.

- ☐ 4. Today we are having a party.

- ☐ 5. I gave my kitty a bottle.

- ☐ 6. Tom was a happy boy.

- ☐ 7. We like to go shopping.

Observations and Notes

Level II

Prepositions

Student _____ _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 8. I like the beach in the summer.

☐ 9. My backpack is under the table in your room.

☐ 10. Her dog is running up the stairs.

☐ 11. I played with my cousins in the park.

☐ 12. We were playing on the swings by the trees.

☐ 13. She rode her bike to Johnnie's house.

☐ 14. He wants to play with his cat after school.

Observations and Notes

Level III

Conjunctions

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements
(Page 58).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. I was not at school because my nose was bleeding.

☐ 2. We found a crab at the beach so I played with him.

☐ 3. She put the seeds in a hole and the tomatoes grew.

☐ 4. An alligator lives in the jungle and stays in the water.

☐ 5. I felt sad last night because I was cold.

☐ 6. My arm was hurting so I went to the office for five minutes.

☐ 7. Mom takes me to school every day if I feel good.

Observations and Notes

Level IV

Relative Pronouns

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements (Page 58).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. He took the best toy that I had.

☐ 2. We saw the guy who ran into the park.

☐ 3. My mom lets me wear whatever I want.

☐ 4. She was the one that was crying.

☐ 5. I like to draw pictures that are pretty.

☐ 6. We found what we were looking for in the closet.

☐ 7. We read a book about a boy who did not clean his room.

Observations and Notes

Level V

Adverbial Clauses

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim. After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Sentence Transformations: Negative Statements (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. She tickled me when I was in the water.

☐ 2. The lamb cried and cried then the boy gave it the bottle.

☐ 3. My mom took me where I could see the whales.

☐ 4. Sometimes when it rains I see a rainbow.

☐ 5. I like to go outside where I can play all by myself.

☐ 6. We saw a frog and a spider dancing where the rain made a puddle.

☐ 7. He lets me play with the blocks whenever I am at my desk.

Observations and Notes

Negative Statements

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Questions (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. We haven't found the one we wanted.

☐ 2. She can't have my breakfast cereal.

☐ 3. I don't like the way you're treating me.

☐ 4. He won't help me finish cleaning the room.

☐ 5. I couldn't do my homework last night.

☐ 6. We planted three beans but they didn't grow.

☐ 7. She hasn't seen my new video.

Observations and Notes

Questions

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Commands (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ . School _____ Date _____

- ☐ 1. Will you let her stay here while I read my book?

- ☐ 2. Can I have another sticker if I finish all my work?

- ☐ 3. Does she have to be in here when I'm playing?

- ☐ 4. Do you have the toast and juice for our picnic?

- ☐ 5. Would you share your shells with me and my sister?

- ☐ 6. How do I fix this so I can wear it?

- ☐ 7. Are you going to the beach with your family this weekend?

Observations and Notes

Commands

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Exclamations (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

☐ 1. Try harder, you can do it.

☐ 2. Don't be mad at me I didn't do that.

☐ 3. Help me carry this to the lunchroom please.

☐ 4. Stay with me and we can play on the swings.

☐ 5. Take her home with you when you leave.

☐ 6. You better not be playing with my toys.

☐ 7. Find your own place to jump and skip.

Observations and Notes

Component I: Sentence Transformations

Exclamations

Directions: Check the box in front of each sentence the child does not repeat verbatim.
After two consecutive checks, stop and go to Component II: Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension (next page).

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

- ☐ 1. Wow, she's taking us on a field trip today!

- ☐ 2. I have new skates and they fit me!

- ☐ 3. You can't tell me what to do with my toys!

- ☐ 4. I'm having a great day because my dad is home!

- ☐ 5. You are really good at that game!

- ☐ 6. He is going to show me how to play his new video game!

- ☐ 7. She feels better so I get to go with her!

Observations and Notes

Mike and Sally Go for a Ride

Directions: Say: "I'm going to show you some pictures and read you a story." Display the pictures and invite the child to tell you about them. Then stack the pictures in the numbered sequence and say: "**Now I'm going to read you a story about Mike and Sally, who ride on Mike's new bike. When I finish, your job is to tell me a story using the pictures. You can tell me the same story I read or you can make up one of your own. Do you understand?**"

As you finish reading the narrative that accompanies each picture, slide it to the bottom of the stack. When you have read the story, spread the frames out in front of the child and say: "**Now use the pictures to tell me your story.**"

Frame 1: Mike got a new bike for his birthday. He went for a ride and had a great time. He was happy because he was such a good rider.

Frame 2: Sally saw Mike riding in the street so she waved and hollered, "Mike, Mike, can I have a ride? Will you let me have a turn when you stop?" Sally really wanted to ride but Mike wasn't sure she knew how.

Frame 3: Mike was worried. "What happens if she falls?" he thought. But he helped her on after she put on her helmet. Sally surprised Mike because she could ride.

Frame 4: When Sally got off, Mike said, "Sally, I didn't know you could ride and you're a good rider too. If you get a bike for your birthday we could ride together!"

Frame 1

Frame 2

Frame 3

Frame 4

Transcription Page from Audiotape

Mike and Sally Go for a Ride

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Reconstructed Story

Observations and Notes

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Directions

1. Identify something for the child to draw by asking a few brief questions about favorite pets, toys, experiences or family members. Say: **"Draw a picture and we'll talk about it."** (Child draws picture and talks with you.)

2. Briefly discuss the picture. Then say: **"Tell me the most important thing you want to say about your picture."** The child can write or you and the child can write, using a bold, black marker to copy the child's words beneath or over the drawing.

3. Now, say: **"Look what you've said. I'm going to read it and have you read it, but first I want to ask you some questions."** Ask the following questions and have the child point to or tell you the answer. Check "Yes" or "No" to indicate if the child demonstrates control of the concept or strategy.

Child Controls	Yes	No
"Where do I start reading?"	☐	☐
"Which way do I go?"	☐	☐
"Then where do I go?"	☐	☐
"Where do I stop?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that?"	☐	☐
"Can you point to the word _____?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that word?"	☐	☐
"Can you point to the letter ____?"	☐	☐
"How did you know that letter?"	☐	☐

4. Say: **"Now I'll read what you said, then you read it."** Point underneath the first letter of each word as you read. When you finish reading, say to the child: **"Now I want you to read it just like I did."** Does the child point to each word and match one-to-one? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Read the statement to the child slowly. Then ask the child to listen carefully and write the sounds he or she hears in each word. Place a check mark above each sound in a word the child writes correctly. Note: A word may have more letters than sounds. For example, *you* (u) and *know* (no).

Component III: Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation

Transcription Page from Audiotape

Directions: Listen to the audiotape of Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation. Write on this page as much as you can of what the child said. Leave space between the lines, as this transcript will help identify the language structures the child uses, interesting vocabulary or concepts and any confusions with syntax, inflected endings or pronouns.

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Child's Dictated Statement: Underline words the child writes independently that are spelled incorrectly.

Our Most Important Shining Star

Directions: Ask what the child knows about stars. Talk briefly about them with the child. Then say: **"I'm going to read to you about stars. Listen, and when I'm through tell me the most important thing you learned. Then I'll ask you some questions and we can talk more about stars."**

Hand the first picture to the child and read the corresponding text, then the second, third and fourth.

Frame 1: When it gets dark and the sky is clear you can look up and see thousands of stars. The Earth is not a star and neither is the Moon. They don't give off light of their own.

Frame 2: People have traveled to the Moon but no one has ever visited a star. One star is the most important. We can see it in the daytime because it is the closest to us!

Frame 3: All stars give off light but this star gives us more than just light. It gives us heat and energy too, and that's what makes it so important.

Frame 4: Without this star it would be dark all the time and nothing would grow on Earth so our planet would be bare and look just like the Moon. Tell me the name of this star.

Directions: Now ask the questions on the following page. You will record the child's answers later when listening to the audiotape.
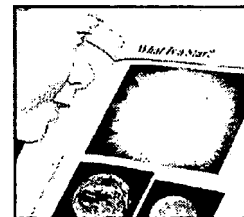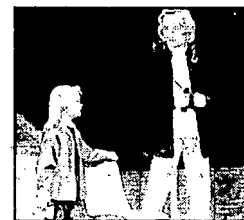
Adapted from Klein, A. F. (2001). *The Stars.* Carlsbad, CA: Dominie Press, Inc.

Frame I

Frame 2

Frame 3

Frame 4

Component IV: Information Processing and Critical Dialogue

Transcription Page from Audiotape

Our Most Important Shining Star

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Critical Dialogue

Listen to the audiotape and write as much as you can of what the child says in response to the following:

Intrapersonal Questions

1. What is the most important thing you learned about this star?

2. What were you thinking while I was reading about our most important star?

3. What were you feeling?

4. What is the most important question you have about this star?

5. Can you tell me why our most important star is interesting to you?

Extrapersonal Questions

1. Who has traveled to the Moon?

2. What is the difference between a star and a planet?

3. When do we see our most important star?

4. How did people travel to the Moon?

5. Why is our Sun the most important star?

6. What does the word *clear* mean?

APPENDIX D

ORAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION INVENTORY

PROFILE

OLAI Profile

Part I: Language Structures   (Circle form used: A B or C)

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Component I—Numbers Repeated Verbatim (out of 7)					
Sentence Repetition	**SS**	**Prep**	**Conj**	**Rel Pro**	**Adv**
Level I					
Level II					
Level III					
Level IV					
Level V					

Sentence Transformations—Numbers Repeated Verbatim (out of 7)			
Negatives	/7	Observations:	
Questions	/7	Observations:	
Commands	/7	Observations:	
Exclamations	/7	Observations:	

Component II					
Story Reconstruction and Narrative Comprehension	**SS**	**Prep**	**Conj**	**Rel Pro**	**Adv**
Story Frame #					
Story Frame #					
Story Frame #					
Story Frame #					

Component III					
Picture Drawing, Narration and Dictation	**SS**	**Prep**	**Conj**	**Rel Pro**	**Adv**
Pic Draw/Narration					

Component IV					
Information Processing and Critical Dialogue	**SS**	**Prep**	**Conj**	**Rel Pro**	**Adv**
Info Processing/Critical Dialogue					

Part 2: Story Structure, Syntax, Inflected Endings and Pronouns

Circle form used: A   B   or   C

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

- Story Structure   B   M   E   (Beginning, Middle, Ending) Logically Sequenced?
  Observations and Notes

- Confusions: Syntax (word order, subject-verb number agreement, etc.)
  Observations and Notes

- Confusions: Inflected Endings (-s, -es -ed, -ing, -er, -est, etc.)
  Observations and Notes

- Confusions: Pronouns (*He, She, We, They, Them, Us, Him, Her,* etc.)
  Observations and Notes

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Part 3: Five Stages of Language Acquisition

Circle form used: A   B   or   C

Student _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ School _____ Date _____

Place a check in the box next to the stage that best describes a child's control of language as demonstrated on the OLAI. Take into account information from your notes related to syntax (grammar), vocabulary, story reconstruction, information processing skills, concepts about print and hearing and recording sounds in words.

☐ **Stage I:** Uses one- or two-word responses; some phrases and short simple sentences. Understands some simple sentence transformations, i.e., negatives, questions, commands or exclamations.

☐ **Stage II:** Uses phrases, complete sentences with limited prepositions, i.e., in/on. Understands and uses some simple sentence transformations, i.e., negatives, questions, commands or exclamations.

☐ **Stage III:** Uses complete sentences with varied prepositions. Understands and uses expanded sentence transformations, i.e., negatives, questions, commands or exclamations.

☐ **Stage IV:** Uses complete sentences with varied prepositions and conjunctions. Understands and uses variations of sentence transformations, i.e., negatives, questions, commands or exclamations.

☐ **Stage V:** Uses complete sentences with varied prepositions, conjunctions, relative pronouns and adverbs. Understands and uses more complex sentence transformations, i.e., negatives, questions, commands or exclamations.

Interpretation: Write a brief summary of the results of the OLAI. Then make reccommendations for instruction (see next page).

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