Meeting the Challenge of the Oral Language Gap

Skill in Verbal Reasoning is a Major Factor in Performance on the FCAT

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Just Read Florida
Johnny can decode but not comprehend the FCAT.
Verbal Reasoning

- Using language to think
- Without a language system must “think” using mental visual images
- FCAT is testing how well we can think about information we get from reading written texts.
FCAT Language Specifications

- Identify or label things, events and ideas using words
- Understand that new information is embedded in clauses/phrases
- Relate information/ideas to other information/ideas using conjunctions
- Apply verbal reasoning processes that may not be modeled in their home.
Johnny can decode but not comprehend the FCAT.
Rationale for Oral Language Instruction

- Sunshine State Standards which are correlated with verbal learning and reasoning: L.A.A.1.1.3; L.A.A.1.2.3; L.A.B.1.1.2; L.A.B.1.1.3; L.A.B1.2.2.

- Readers use oral language to make sense of words they see in print.

- Readers must understand 95% of words in a text before comprehend meaning.

- Advanced readers must be able to learn new word meanings from contextual and derivational clues in the written text.
Asha’s Position Statement  (2001)

“Roles and Responsibilities of the SLP with Respect to Reading and Writing in Children and Adolescents.”

- Inextricable link between spoken and written language

- Hierarchical and reciprocal relationship

- Recognition that the same children who have problems with spoken language also have problems with reading and writing
Goals of Oral Language Instruction

- To connect words found in text, to the student’s life experiences, thereby those words meaning.

- To clarify and extend word meanings.

- To develop strategies for learning new words.

- To use language to both gain and give information orally and graphically.
SLP Outcomes
Good and the Greater Good.

- Identify and plan to implement IEP objectives which are most relevant and supportive of literacy tasks grades k-3.

- Resolve scheduling issues associated with 90 minute Reading Block through use of SLP directed “authentic” center based instruction.

- Use expertise and leadership ability to advance all student's oral language and verbal reasoning skill as tested by the FCAT.
The Greater Good

- Verbal reasoning is how we think.

- If a person does not think for themselves, someone will think for them.

- Our students, schools and society are in jeopardy.

- We have a moral obligation to use our talents to effect positive change.

- As a member of your school’s Reading Leadership Team you can be part of the solution.
Outcomes for the Educational Leaders, Reading Coaches and Teachers

- Understand the link between oral language and mastery of the SS State Standards as measured by SAT 10 and FCAT.

- Identify what oral language is most educationally relevant for k-3.

- Recognize what strategies do and don’t work to effectively increase oral language skills.
Outcomes (cont)

- Develop and implement explicit language instruction as an integral part of all classroom instruction and routines.

- Develop a plan for targeting students who are at high risk and provide for grades K-3.

- Provide follow through: inspect what you expect and reward results.
Research: Facts for Focus

- Vocabulary knowledge is one of the single most important factors contributing to comprehension.

- 95% of the words in a text must be known in order for the text to be understood.

- Students need to add approximately 2000-3500 word meanings to their reading vocabulary a year.

Source: National Reading Panel. 2002
In Florida our effectiveness will be judged by the performance our students make on the FCAT.

The oral language gap is a major limiting factor in student performance on the FCAT at third grade.

Skill in oral language/verbal reasoning will have an even greater impact on FCAT performance in later grades.

Source: Dr. Joseph Torgenson, - Director Florida Center Reading Research. 2004
What skills are particularly deficient in level 1 and level 2 readers in 3rd grade?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Skill/Ability</th>
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<td>45th</td>
<td>59th</td>
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<td>31st</td>
<td>45th</td>
<td>69th</td>
<td>87th</td>
<td>95th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dr. Joseph Torgenson, Director – Florida Center for Reading Research. 2004
Percentile Scores on Peabody

Average Percentile

Average verbal score of level 1

Students in FCAT study was 42\textsuperscript{nd} %

Dr. Joseph Torgenson, Florida Center for Reading Research, 2004
Johnny can decode but not comprehend the FCAT.
Etiology of the Language Gap

- Research indicates that children from lower socio-economic strata have adult models who use:
  - Non specific referents
  - Provide directives rather than interactions
  - Use concrete language
  - Few expansions of information
  - Less complex language
  - Limited models for verbal problem solving
FCAT Language Specifications

- Identify entities and ideas with words
- Find new information embedded in text
- Relate info and ideas to other info and ideas using conjunctions
- Use verbal reasoning processes not modeled orally in the home.
Pause and Reflect

- Marketing: Sell it up and work it down

- Use PPVT and Gates scores from Outcome Measures to identify high risk students. (RC)

- Implement a plan for all student which includes both refined instruction and curricular supplements. (RLT)

- Create prescriptive plans for high risk students: such as a Language Literacy Center or Class. (RLT)
Components of Oral Language

**Semantics**
- Vocabulary
  - Labels
- Concepts
  - Relationships
  - Abstract Ideas

**Grammar/Sentences**
- Morphology
  - Affixes
- Syntax
  - Sentence Types

**Social Use**
- Rules for Communication Functions

Source: Language Development and Language Disorders. Bloom and Lahey
Oral Language Components
Specific Skills at Grade Levels

See Handout #1
What Every Teacher Must Know to Teach Oral Language

- When to use explicit vs. implicit instruction
- The difference between teaching and testing
- The criterion for word selection
- Know what strategies do not work
- Know what strategies do work
- How to make time to do it
Expansions and Expiations

- **Expansions refine the grammar.**
  
  Them dogs be big. Those dogs are big.

- **Expiations expand the meaning.**
  
  Those big dogs are called Great Danes.

Teachers should habitually employ both in adult/student interactions.
Differentiating Between Implicit and Explicit Instruction

- Implicit instruction reinforces word knowledge through experiences and modeling. Works well for good "incidental learners". Does not provide for multiple repetitions and word knowledge expansion. (Indirect)

- Explicit instruction reinforces word knowledge though a sequential and intentional process and works well for students who need multiple repetitions and word knowledge expansion. (Direct)
Teaching vs. Testing

- Always teach before you test.

- Identifying and teaching pre-requisite skills

- Teaching involves providing: rules, explanations, examples and non examples.

- Testing is done to check for comprehension.

- Testing involves asking the student to: show, find, point or tell you something.
Criterion for Word Selection

- Tier 1  Basic words usually “labels for things for actions”. (*Boy acts funny*)

- Tier 2  Words that are useful in describing own life and/or which are likely to appear in multiple contexts (*Youngster is comical*)

- Tier 3  Words that are specialized Found in content area texts (*Comedienne*)

Adapted from Building a Robust Vocabulary, Isabel L Beck, PhD, and Margaret McKeown, PhD.
# Tier Two Words

Source: *Elements of Reading Vocabulary*, Beck PhD. & McKeown Ph.D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Grade</th>
<th>Second Grade</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clumsy</td>
<td>glimmer</td>
<td>assume</td>
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<tr>
<td>suspense</td>
<td>murmur</td>
<td>tremble</td>
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<tr>
<td>invisible</td>
<td>glee</td>
<td>resemble</td>
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<td>cooperate</td>
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<td>gobble</td>
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<td>hectic</td>
<td>precarious</td>
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<tr>
<td>tidy</td>
<td>generous</td>
<td>elegant</td>
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<td>predicament</td>
<td>priority</td>
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<tr>
<td>glimpse</td>
<td>cling</td>
<td>conceal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dull</td>
<td>treacherous</td>
<td>frisky</td>
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<tr>
<td>caution</td>
<td>elegant</td>
<td>abundant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regret</td>
<td>Miniature</td>
<td>bizarre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name That Tier

forlorn    oboe
disguise    corner
hungry      carburetor
absurd      kitchen
Little Words – Big Problems

- Conjunctions link two or more thoughts and often confuse the reader who does not understand their meaning.

- Conjunctions are usually short words which are commonly used and therefore overlooked as a target for direct instruction.

- Example: You can have cake and ice cream if you work out tonight; however, it isn’t great cake, therefore I'd pass, albeit that's my opinion.
Negation is Not Easy

- Children often hear the contracted negative.

- Parents rarely use the more formal “not” to indicate negation, tests frequently do.

- Example: Show me the cow that is not eating.
Noun and Verb Phrases and Clauses

- Phrases and clauses are used in the language system to convey information. “Santa’s little helpers”.

- When a student does not learn to integrate phrases and clauses into their oral language they often overlooked them in written text.

- Example: I want the Mickey Mouse watch, that has diamonds marking the hour, which is located in the front of the little store.
Background:
Oral Language Development

- Age 2 Labels
- Age 3 Concepts and grammatical forms
- Kindergarten may be 2-3 years delayed
- CCRP expects CA=LA
Oral Language Targeted for Explicit Instruction
Grades k-2 Curriculum Mapping

**Conceptual Language**
- Spatial / locational
- Temporal
- Quantity/Measurement

**Tier 2 Vocabulary Words**
- CCRP Words
- Supplemental Materials

**Grammar**
- ing, ed, ‘s, er, est
- plurals, pronouns,
- conjunctions and, or, if, but, because
- Wh questions

**Social Use**
- To meet their needs
- To control their world

**Sentence Structures**
- Noun phrases
- Verb phrases
- Simple and compound

**Tier 3 Vocabulary Words**
- “Read Alouds”
- Content Area
Oral Language Targeted for Explicit Instruction
Curriculum Mapping for Grades 3-5

Abstract Language
- Multiple meanings
- Similes
- Idioms
- Proverbs
- Metaphors

Grammar
- Conjunctions
- Secondary verbs
- Prefixes/Suffixes

Sentence Structures
- Noun phrases and clauses
- Verb phrases and clauses
- Complex Sentences

Social Use
- Problem solve
- Negotiate
- Entertain
- Persuade

Code switching
- Informal to Formal

Tier 2
- CCRP Vocabulary Words
- Supplemental Materials

Tier 3
- Vocabulary Words in content Area
Grade Level Expectations

- See Handouts #2
Pause and Reflect

- Revise curriculum maps to include age appropriate language targets

- For example: See Grade Level Expectation Handout #2
Instructional Strategies That Don’t Teach Language As Well as We Might Think

- Student’s guessing at definition
  Student exposed to inaccurate information
  60% of answers judged unacceptable

- Definitions from the dictionary
  Vague, too concise
  65% judged to be “odd”

- Word meaning gleaned from text
  Author’s purpose is to tell a story, not define words

Source: Building a Robust Vocabulary. Beck, McKeown, Kucan, 2003
Word Meaning From Text Often Difficult to Determine

- **Mis-directive:** She is brilliant, we thought grudgingly.

- **Non-directive:** I knew that whining voice, it must be Cherise.

- **General:** I wish I could be as gregarious as Tom.

- **Directive:** Uses synonyms and definitions. I was so flummoxed, I was confused, in a state of flux that day.
Instructional Strategies That Do Work, Even Better Than You Think

- Explicit instruction to teach new word meaning
- Implicit instruction or modeling to reinforce acquired word meanings
- Teaching then testing for comprehension
- Student friendly, bumper sticker definitions
- Graphical organizers: word wheels, word continuums
- Hearing the word in a variety of contexts throughout the day
EXCIPS MODEL for Explicit Language Instruction

Exposure: Relate to prior knowledge
Phonemic awareness
Student friendly explanation
Clarify with: examples, non examples, word wheels and word continuums

Comprehension: WH Questions, reasons, contexts, examples of use

Imitation: Student imitates word in its grammatical context

Prompt: Student prompted to use in follow up activities

Spontaneous: Create ways to use and maintain by incorporating into daily classroom routines
Process for Teaching Oral Language

- **Exposure**
  - Personal connection
  - Context (setting, grammar and syntax)
  - Body language

- **Word Writes**

- **Teacher Models 25+**

- **Say It**
  - Pronunciation (PA)

- **They own the word**

- **Word Chats**
  - Comprehension Checks

- **Word meaning established in kid friendly terms**

- **Examples & Non-Examples Provided**

Start here
Specific Strategies: When and why to use them to develop oral language

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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rule Statement</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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</table>

* A few used independently are worth many used dependently.
What does it mean to know a word?

- No knowledge
- Concrete or partial definition
- Memorized definition
- Imitates what another student said
- Can explain it to another
- Can use abstractly: humorously or figuratively
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Know well can explain</th>
<th>Can relate to a situation</th>
<th>Have seen or heard it</th>
<th>Do not know at all</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Brouhaha</td>
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</table>
Authentic SLP Directed Learning Centers

Phonemic Awareness

- Auditory discrimination of same and different sounds, that are progressively more alike
- Segmentation of blends (cccvcc)
- Provide strategies for teacher as well as small group instruction for iii center.
- Examples: Thumbs up/down, chin bounce, finger count, back to back and board game.
Phonics

- Teachers excel at this, not best use of SLP time
- SLP may provide specialized help with students who have dialectal differences which compromise short vowels
- Provide semantic cues to aid vowel sound recall
- Example: LIPS (distinctive features) and/or Secret Stories
Fluency

- Function of decoding and comprehension
- SLP may assist when comprehension is compromising rate/ wpm
- May also help with prosodic features of oral reading.
- Examples: Reader’s Theatre
Oral Language

- Semantic expansions of target words from CCRP, concept development for time, place, quantity, abstract ideas and figurative language.
- Grammatical forms: morphological markers, negation, pronouns, conjunctions, finding information embedded in clauses and phrases.
- Strategies: Maintain theme from CCRP, teach the rule for the skill, adapt commercial products for center use.
Comprehension

- Identify the language pre-requisites for the task.
- Teachers excel at main idea, details, author's purpose. (Confirm with school’s FCAT data analysis)
- Focus on prediction, inference, cause and effect. (See word clues handout #4)
- Teach the process as well as the grammatical context in which the answer is framed.
Process to Teach Prediction

- Relate or build prior knowledge
- Describe what happened
- Compare and contrast
- Evaluate, can the same thing happen?
- Use models when framing grammatical context.
Integrate Higher Order Verbal Reasoning in all Instruction

- My purpose in teaching you this is....

- The main idea I want to teach is....

- Compared to yesterday this ....

- Looking at this, I can infer.....

- Based on what I know, I can predict.....

- If I choose to do this, then I will have to.....
Plan to Integrate Language Instruction Across the Curriculum

- Lesson plan must identify the measurable skills to be learned in each of FAB 5.
- First, identify the comprehension goal
- Go back and identify language targets
- Go forward and identify writing targets
- Plans should be integrated.

See Lesson Plan Handout
Lesson Plan

- See Handouts #3
Oral Language for the Instruction of New Information

- Slightly below the student’s oral language level as determined by the mean length of utterance. (MLU)

- Use simple sentences

- Limit complex language: conjunctions and embedded clauses

- Reducing the level of instructional language ensures you are teaching only one unknown at a time
Oral Language to Support Grade Level Instruction

- Identify the pre-requisite vocabulary in both your instruction and the text.

- Develop the prior knowledge needed to comprehend the new information.

- Paraphrase text using simple sentences.

- Avoid use of embedded clauses and another complex structures.
Written Language Problems that Result from Limited Oral Language

- Concrete ideation
- Lack of development of details
- Disorganization of events
- Limited expression of ideas, characters or events
- Lack of cohesive transitions.
Don’t Forget: Strategies to place information in Long Term Memory

- **Associate**
  
  with something you already know

  *After the hurricane, we felt confused.*
  *We were flummoxed when we returned to work.*

- **Motivate**
  
  identify a reason to use the word

  *There are a lot of confusing things in this world*
  *I will have many opportunities to use this word*

- **Contextualize**
  
  know the grammatical form

  *Flummox means confused. It is a verb.*

- **Repeat**
  
  to increase familiarity and fluency

  *After I hear it while, practice a bit I am no longer flummoxed about when and how to use the world*

*Source: Semantic Difficulties in Children with Language Impairments. Blackenberg*
Reading Leadership Team Checklist

- Staff development for teachers/ PDP/Evaluation
- Identify extent of problem (Outcome Measures: Gates/ PPVT)
- Identify specific high risk students (Outcome Measures: PPVT)
- Plan for providing explicit language for all students (Supplemental)
- Plan for iii for specific at risk students (Supplemental)
- Provide programs, materials to teach language
- Inspect what you expect: Walk through, PDP, Evaluation
- Reward results.
“Edutainment”

Washington Post’s New Definitions

- **Sarchasm**: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn’t get it.

- **Inoculatte**: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.

- **Hipatitis**: Terminal coolness

- **Dopeler effect**: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at your rapidly

- **Osteopornosis**: A degenerate disease
Short Stories and Tall Tales by the Princess and Pirate

- Video learning series designed to teach the concepts and grammatical forms to support early literary for pre k through grade one.

- Provides explicit instruction for students

- Models explicit instruction for teachers

- Provides implicit instruction in phonemic awareness, story grammar and higher level verbal reasoning.
Short Stories and Tall Tales
by the Princess and the Pirate

- A video learning series used to teach academically relevant oral language, pre K- first grade.

- Focuses on concepts and grammatical forms which support literacy

- Explicit and integrated language instruction for phoneme awareness, story grammar, symbolic progression for new vocabulary.

- Implicit and integrated instruction for higher order verbal reasoning skills.

- Ordering Information: Sandia@lee.k-12.fl.us
References


- Gaiser, B., Short Stories and Tall Tales by the Princess and the Pirate. Video learning series, Lee County School District. Sandia@lee.k12.fl.us