Five Components of Effective Oral Language Instruction
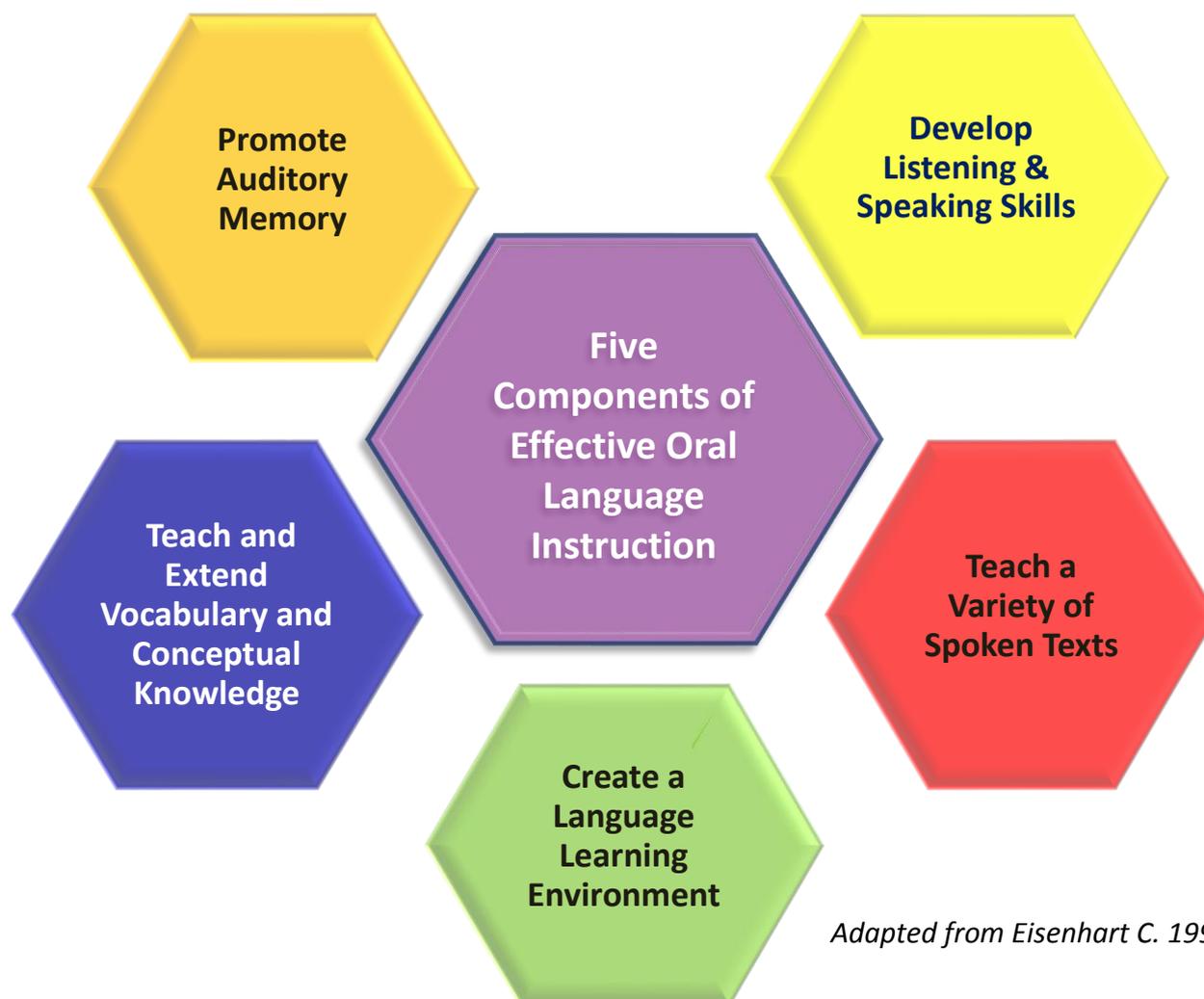
Introduction

"*Oral Language is the child's first, most important, and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary means through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control his/her experience. In addition, and most significantly, oral language is the primary mediator of culture, the way in which children locate themselves in the world, and define themselves with it and within it*" (Cregan, 1998, as cited in Archer, Cregan, McGough, Shiel, 2012)

At its most basic level, oral language is about communicating with other people. It involves a process of utilizing thinking, knowledge and skills in order to speak and listen effectively. As such, it is central to the lives of all people.

Oral language permeates every facet of the primary school curriculum. The development of oral language is given an importance as great as that of reading and writing, at every level, in the curriculum. It has an equal weighting with them in the integrated language process.

Although the Curriculum places a strong emphasis on oral language, it has been widely acknowledged that the implementation of the Oral Language strand has proved challenging and "*there is evidence that some teachers may have struggled to implement this component because the underlying framework was unclear to them*" (NCCA, 2012, pg. 10)

In light of this and in order to provide a structured approach for teachers, a suggested model for effective oral language instruction is outlined in this booklet. It consists of five components, each of which is detailed on subsequent pages.

Promote Auditory Memory

Develop Listening & Speaking Skills

Five Components of Effective Oral Language Instruction

Teach and Extend Vocabulary and Conceptual Knowledge

Teach a Variety of Spoken Texts

Create a Language Learning Environment

Adapted from Eisenhart C. 1990

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Develop Listening & Speaking Skills

Below is an article which relates to these 5 elements for effective language instruction and which contains useful information regarding the skills of speaking and listening.

The early years are a period in which young children are using language to learn not only about their world but also how language can be used to serve many purposes. This knowledge is referred to as pragmatic knowledge (Otto, 2006). One component of pragmatic knowledge is conversational skills. Ninio and Snow (1999) as well as Weiss (2004) assert that how well children develop conversational skills can influence how well they interact with others (as cited in Otto, 2006). To a certain degree, children pick up this knowledge naturally, but an astute teacher or parent plays a vital role in assisting children in their ability to be good conversationalists.

Conversing with children is not the only way to increase vocabulary, however. Strategies teachers use while reading with and to children can also build their word banks. Asking open ended questions (questions in which there is no right or wrong answer and to which the adult does not "know" the answer) helps teachers assess children's comprehension but also helps them learn more vocabulary words (Whitehurst et al., 1988, as cited in Wasik, 2006).Kerry (1982) asserts that the vast majority (approximately 80%) of "teacher talk" in classrooms is focused on tasks: giving instructions, providing information, or correcting behaviour or information. Of this talk, 80% of it consists of low-level questions that ask children to recall information rather than open-ended questions requiring children to think at higher levels (as cited in Jalongo, 2008). A very important consideration in using any questioning technique is the "wait time" given to children as they formulate their response.

In addition to giving children ample time to formulate answers, how teachers respond at that point can encourage or discourage future participation in discussions (Otto, 2006). Attentive body language, expanding children's responses, asking clarifying questions, and using reflective listening techniques are ways to support children's continued participation in current and future dialogues (Otto, 2006).

The obvious partner to participating in talk is the ability to listen. Conversation is a two way communication experience. Although children's oral, or expressive, language often gets emphasized, receptive language, or listening, is equally important. Naturally, the ability to listen is also a key component in learning. It is the way children take in information through hearing and interpret that information. Children (and adults) can be taught to be good listeners. A primary way of helping children participate as listeners and speakers in conversations is for teachers to model good listening and speaking techniques themselves. Following are some things teachers can do to increase children's listening and speaking skills:

- *When children are speaking, get down to their eye level. It is difficult to keep up a conversation with someone when you must keep looking up.*
- *Treat children as if they are skilled at conversation. Give them your full attention and focus on what they say. Ask open-ended questions to follow up on what they share.*
- *Speak to all children, even those who may have language delays or who are English language learners.*
- *Ask children questions about things to which you do not know the answer. Questions that ask children to reflect on a topic or to formulate opinions and explain them not only show children that you value their ideas but also encourage them to think about their own feelings and ideas. Don't give up if children don't respond well the first time. Sometimes this kind of questioning and responding takes more deliberate probing and time for children to develop this skill.*
- *Help children learn to listen to one another. When adults value listening to children and to each other, children will notice this. Adults must also, however, be intentional in giving children the skills to listen to one another. Some teachers find that giving the speaker a prop, such as a stuffed animal or other small object, while speaking to the group helps distinguish whose turn it is to talk (Jalongo, 2008).*
- *Limit group time and small group discussions to a reasonable time limit for young children. Their ability to stay attuned to a lengthy discussion is incomplete at this age. When attention is wandering, it is best to bring closure to the activity and transition to something else. Record, both by writing on chart paper and audio, transcripts of discussions so that children can hear and have read back to them things that were shared.*
- *Value all the home languages of the children in the class, including sign language for the hearing impaired. For the benefit of English language learners and everyone else, learn some of the key words and phrases in the languages represented in the group, record them, create word/picture cards, and provide them in a listening centre. This way, children can learn some important words in another language and support the speaker of that language (Jalongo, 2008).*
- *Help children learn to listen and to ask questions by having "Show and Ask" rather than "Show and Tell." As children bring in items or objects to talk about, have the rest of the group think of questions to ask the speaker about the item. This helps children become better listeners as well as learn how to ask questions (Jalongo, 2008).*

Deason (2012)

What needs to be taught?
There are certain elements that need to be explicitly taught before embarking on formal instruction of oral language. These are;

- Awareness of broad rules that govern social interaction
- Non-verbal behaviours
- Rules for listening
- Rules for speaking

Awareness of broad rules that govern social interaction:
In order to teach speaking and listening skills, teachers will need to create awareness of the way conversation works by considering the "rules" to be observed by good speakers and listeners. These are often unconscious.

- Turn-taking
- The Floor
- Adjacency pairs
- Repair
- Politeness

Turn Taking: turn taking is very important for an effective speaker listener relationship. Students need to recognize pauses in a conversation where they can take a turn, interrupt, ask a question or change the subject. Teachers can explicitly teach turn taking so that all pupils are encouraged to speak e.g. circle time where everybody has a turn, asking students to work with a partner and choose who will go first.

The Floor: the person who is currently speaking is the person who "holds the floor". During conversations, speakers and listeners use eye contact, body language, gestures, and pauses to judge when a new voice can take the floor.

Adjacency Pairs: these are the sequences of two utterances next to each other, produced by two different speakers e.g. a question and an answer, a greeting and a response. This can work well to help develop the everyday social interactions of pupils.

How are you?

Very well thank you!

Repair: repair takes place when a speaker has to "fix" something they have said e.g. "I said seen, I meant saw". Sometimes the listener can seek a repair which could be expressed through a facial expression or body language or check for meaning by asking a question such as *"What do you mean? "* or *"I don't understand"*. Pupils need to be encouraged to check that they understand what another person is saying and to check that others understand them.

Non-verbal behaviours
Communicating is more than just words. The manner in which we use voice, facial expression, and body language affects the messages we are trying to give. Students are not always aware that their posture or the way they approach another person speaks volumes in itself. By creating awareness around the expressive nature of the way a person uses their body and voice, teachers can help pupils to become critically aware of the non-verbal behaviours that will equip them to express themselves in an effective manner.

What are these non-verbal behaviours?
- **Use of voice:** The use of intonation and pauses that convey meaning and attitude
- **Volume:** Volume depends on the needs of the situation, purpose and audience. There are times when loud voices are required such as in a play, or during assembly. There are also times when quiet voices are necessary such as working in the library. Generally speaking a voice should be loud enough that the intended audience can hear and understand the message being delivered. The use of varying volume will help to create emphasis or drama when recounting events, telling a story or persuading an audience.
- **Intonation:** Intonation indicates the changes in speech; a downward intonation indicates that a message is complete, while an upward intonation indicates a question.
- **Pitch:** Pitch is useful to use when expressing emotion. Our pitch rises when we are excited and lowers when we are sad.
- **Pauses:** Pauses are moments of silence between phrases, used to separate ideas and also used for holding attention. This is particularly useful when giving formal presentations such as an oral report or telling a story.
- **Pronunciation:** Pronunciation refers to the way words are said. Some younger pupils may have difficulty in pronouncing the sounds in some words and will benefit from hearing those words modeled in meaningful contexts. Pronunciation varies across regions. It is important that pupils know the accepted pronunciation of words in Standard English.
- **Proximity:** Proximity is the amount of personal space between people who are talking. The relationship between them, their personalities, and their culture or whether the situation is personal, social or public will all affect the amount of proximity needed.
- **Eye contact:** Eye contact is the use of the eyes or gaze in face to face communication. The level of eye contact often depends on the relationship between the communicators and affects both the speaker and the listener.

Developing Listening Skills:
According to LeLoup and Pontero:

"*Listening is arguably the most important skill used for obtaining comprehensible input in one's first language and in any subsequent languages. It is a pervasive communicative event. We listen considerably more than we read, write or speak.*" (LeLoup and Pontero, 2007)

In order to teach listening skills teachers need to:
- Explicitly model how to be good listeners
- Show the children footage of what good listening looks like
- Schedule quiet, listening opportunities as part of the school day
- Provide spaces in the classroom that encourage conversation and attentive listening, e.g. 'The shop', 'The doctor's surgery'
- Create organic learning charts to capture what good listening is

Possible ways of achieving this include:

- ✓ Give simple instructions and directions during all learning activities
- ✓ Ask relevant questions
- ✓ Read stories aloud to the children and encourage them to re-tell the story in sequence
- ✓ Encourage note-taking using frameworks
- ✓ Use dictation drills
- ✓ Play games
- ✓ Use taped stories and questions
- ✓ Gather information
- ✓ Complete cloze type activities or unfinished sentences or stories
- ✓ Conduct Interviews
- ✓ Base topic work on content of radio programmes
- ✓ Sequence sentences, ideas and stories
- ✓ Listen to songs, poetry and music
- ✓ Use instructional exercises

Developing Speaking Skills:
In order to teach effective speaking skills teachers need to:

- ✓ explicitly model effective speaking in a formal and informal manner
- ✓ provide opportunities for students to engage in conversational-style speaking e.g. using the shop area, providing scenario cards
- ✓ give students tasks that involve observing and recording effective speaking
- ✓ use role-playing to teach and reinforce good conversational skills
- ✓ carry out activities where the whole class read aloud
- ✓ teach the rules that govern social interaction as mentioned above
- ✓ create organic charts to capture the mannerisms associated with effective speaking such as the non-verbal behaviours mentioned above

Activities to develop speaking and listening skills:

- **Act It Out**

This is a small group activity designed to give pupils time to decide what they would do in different situations. It provides them with the opportunity to discuss the information they need to include and to try to find ways of improving their speaking and listening.

1. At the table pick a scenario card and discuss these questions, what is happening? How do we know? What will we say and do so that everybody knows what we mean? How can we say this so that it sounds like the talk we use in school? What will we do to show that we understand what is being said?
2. You need to decide who will act out the part and where the action will start, before, during or after the event on the card.
3. Try acting it out.
4. Students can then reflect on these questions, what made sense and why? where else could we listen like this?, where else could we speak like this? What would we say differently next time and why?

Suggested Scenario Cards	
Mary is throwing blocks	Oops you have knocked over a carton of milk
John has taken Bill's coat by mistake	There is no towel in the bathroom

- **People I Talk To, People I Listen To**

This activity provides pupils with an opportunity to discuss the different purposes for speaking and listening. Teachers can draw on contexts inside and outside the classroom. Use a variety of photographs or pictures of people that the pupils meet or interact with on a daily and weekly basis.

1. Choose a picture and discuss using the following questions, when do we talk to …? What do we talk about with….? How do we speak when we talk to….?
2. Repeat with other pictures emphasising choices that are made according to topics that may be discussed or the purpose of the speaking.
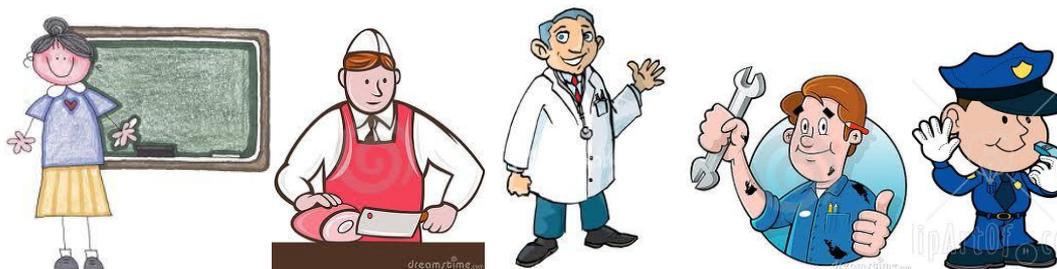
Teach a Variety of Spoken Texts

The primary purpose of language is to communicate needs, wants, ideas, information and feelings. Many theorists claim that the different purposes for which we use language fall under various categories. One seminal piece of research was carried out by British linguist, Michael Halliday who proposed a list of 7 functions of language commonly known as "Halliday's Functions of Language (1972)". These are listed below:

Function	Used for	Demands language of
Instrumental	Expressing needs/Getting things done	Asking, Requesting, Explaining
Regulatory	Influencing the behaviour, feelings/attitudes of others	Setting tasks, Managing, Negotiating, Instructing, Directing , Controlling
Interactional	Getting along with others	Initiating, Sympathising, Reconciling Arguing, Encouraging, Empathising
Personal	Expressing individuality and personal feelings	Stating opinions, Confronting, Expressing thoughts and feelings, Recounting experience
Heuristic	Seeking and learning about the social and physical environment	Interrogating, Discussing, Asking, Querying, Investigating, Clarifying
Imaginary	Creating stories, games, new worlds and new texts	Storytelling, Anticipating, Predicting, Imagining, Playing, Experimenting

Representational	Communicating Information	Telling, Lecturing, Stating facts, Sharing skills, Commenting, Imparting knowledge, Informing

There are a variety of oral language texts/genres (similar to written genres) that teachers can use to address the functions of language that are required in social and academic contexts.

The table below illustrates some of the different types of text:

A Selection of Different Text-types	
• Oral Reports	• Conversations
• Storytelling and Anecdotes	• Questioning and Interviews
• Partner and Small Group Work	• Arguments and Formal/Informal Debates
• Giving Instructions/Procedures	

Students need to understand and know how the range of oral language texts will operate in different contexts. Therefore as teachers we need to establish classroom structures and procedures that allow students to develop their understandings of the different forms that oral language texts take, as well as providing opportunities for pupils to purposefully practice these forms in a variety of settings.

It is important when addressing the different types of language to give consideration to

- The range of different social contexts of language (formal or informal, familiar or unfamiliar)
- The range of cultural contexts for language (local, community, institutional)
- The possible participants in a conversation and the relationship between them (the people who are known, unknown, students, peers, adults)

Definitions and Activities to Support Implementation

Oral Reports

Oral Reports give students experience in selecting and organising information that will suit specific purposes, situations and audiences. Reports can be planned such as reporting on a project ("The Lion") and unplanned such as the plenary part of a lesson (*How did your group get on?*). Oral reports are those based on a shared focus of interest or particular topics being studied at that particular point in time. Subjects like science and geography lend themselves to organising reports e.g. a report on the life-cycle of the butterfly, a report on volcanos, especially if students have been involved in group work first.

Language Function	Text Type	Text Structure and Language Features
Representational Communicating Information, descriptions, expressing propositions **Personal** Expressing individuality and personal feelings	**Oral Reports Can be planned or unplanned**	**Text Structure** • Description, explanation, report, recount **Language Structures and Features** • Subject-specific concepts and words depending on the topic • Key Words • Words that signal opinion **Knowledge Skills and Understanding** • Can structure a report so that it contains enough detail for the listener to follow and understand • Clarify new learning • Can actively listen **Metalinguistic Awareness** • Language use clear and precise • Pace • Understand how props can support communicative efforts **Specific Language skills** • Select and organize information • Identify key facts • Contextualise information • Explain • Compress Information

Activities for Developing Oral Reports

TV/radio Reports
Teacher can play segments of a range of TV or radio reports such as news, weather, and documentaries to create awareness amongst pupils. This will afford pupils the opportunity to listen to and analyse the specific language structures and features that make up this spoken text-type. The pupils can record key information under the 5W headings **w**ho, **w**hen, **w**here, **w**hat, **w**hy.

My News
This activity provides a framework for pupils to give an oral news report based on their own experiences. The 5W framework may be used here.

Today's News Report

Allow the pupils to create and present a news report based on something that happened within school e.g. a mouse in the classroom, in the locality e.g. local team won the county final, or indeed in the country/world e.g. President Obama being re-elected. Using a box as the television screen will act as an aid for the presentation of the report. Recording the report to re-play and self-assess may also be useful.

Projects

Allow time for pupils to present project work in the form of an oral report.

Speech Pyramid

The Speech Pyramid is a graphic organiser that is used to record observations about the range of speech that occurs in speech situations. With appropriate support, speech pyramids can be used at all class levels.

Storytelling and Anecdotes

Telling stories, recalling events and relating personal anecdotes has been how many cultures and societies have preserved and passed on their traditions. We constantly communicate information through stories e.g. "*Wait until I tell you a good one about what happened to me last week*" etc. Storytelling is a vital part of everyday conversation and so should be an important feature in all classrooms. *"Narratives help students to connect what is happening in the classroom with the real world; they provide a way of understanding, organising and communicating experiences*" (Ewing and Simmons, 2004). Teachers can extend storytelling skills into performance opportunities such as a play, recital in drama.

Language Function	Text Type	Text Structure and Language Features
Imaginative Creating new worlds, making up stories and poems	**Storytelling and Anecdotes**	**Text Structure** • Narrative, recount, description, report, retelling
		Language Structures and Features • Language to entertain and inform • Language to express experiences and emotions • Include an orientation, series of events, a complication and a conclusion • Descriptive vocabulary • Variety in tone of voice, volume etc. • Expressive body language • Use of rhetorical questions • Use of intensifiers (really, very, quite) to build significance and create drama
		Knowledge Skills and Understanding • When to include an anecdote or story in conversation • How to include others in composing the anecdote or story • What to listen for e.g. who the characters are, what the problem might be • How to visualize when listening

Activities for Storytelling and Anecdotes

Model Good Story-telling
Read stories regularly to your students. When reading stories it is important to model best practice: be as dramatic as possible so that the children learn to recognise how tone, volume, and body language create suspense, interest and enjoyment.

Creating Character Profiles
Allow pupils to work with a variety of materials to help them generate ideas about characters e.g. masks, hats, pictures, shoes. Afterwards ask them in pairs or small groups to invent a character and to describe the character by including information such as where they live, their age, what sort of family they have, what do they like to do in their spare time.

Story sacks
Story sacks are kits that are put together around a story. As the story is told the children use the props to re-tell the story. There are many websites that will give ideas for story sacks, such as
http://www.storysack.com/

Circle Stories

The teacher may go first and start a story by describing a setting and introducing a character. A student sitting next to the teacher will continue the story and then pass it on to the next student etc.

That's Good; That's Bad

This is a fun interactive game useful for engaging shy or reluctant speakers. The class sit in a circle. The teacher begins the story and includes fortunate event followed by an unfortunate event. The class respond with "that's good" or "that's bad" e.g.

Varied Stories

Model telling the class a wide variety of stories – spooky stories, I remember when stories, dramatic stories, stories from long ago. Allow pupils to share such stories.

> **Teacher;** "When I was washing my clothes last Saturday I found €20"
>
> **Pupils;** "That's good"
>
> **Teacher;** "Then I heard a loud bang; somebody had kicked a ball through my kitchen window by mistake. It is going to cost €20 to replace"
>
> **Pupils;** "That's bad"

Sound stories

A sound story tells a story using sound effects either in part or full. When using sound stories discuss the story with the children and with them select sounds to use and to add to the story. This is a natural way of integrating language learning with the music curriculum. Here are some suggestions for sounds to use with the familiar fairytale *The Three Little Pigs*.

Events	Sound effects
The three little pigs running around	Vocal squeaks, bells played quickly
Wolf prowling around	Drum repeated as footsteps
First little pig builds a straw house	Rubbing palms, finger stroking drum skin, scrunching paper

Readers' Theatre

This involves groups of pupils assuming characters from a story and reading the script aloud to the class. It allows a book to come alive and encourages pupils to consider volume, pace, pausing, tone, gesture and facial expression when presenting. Readers' Theatre can be easily organised by following these steps;

- Choose a suitable text – many books and websites provide scripts for Readers' Theatre
- Decide which groups will be allocated to which character
- Ask the groups to highlight the text of their allocated character
- Ask groups to decide where sound effects and props could be used
- Allow time for groups to practice their lines as a group several times
- Allow time for the whole class recital of the text

Puppetry

This again is useful for the shy or reluctant speaker. Puppets are useful aids that pupils can use when they are re-telling stories or presenting their own stories as they allow pupils to practice the structures and features of narrative and to experiment with voice and volume.

Drama

Through drama, pupils are given opportunities to use language to entertain. Teachers may organise drama through improvisational drama or through the use of scripts.

Partner and Small Group Work

Partner and small group work provides an authentic learning context in which student can develop both speaking and listening skills. Pupils are allowed to become actively involved in the construction of their own knowledge. This can often lead to greater understanding and internalisation of material. Students are allowed to use language to interact and plan, take on a particular role such as the manager, the recorder etc., develop a group activity and monitor and reflect on the task/learning. Small group learning allows the teacher to effectively scaffold students' learning by providing guidance towards ensuring that the groups run smoothly, that allocated roles are working and that learning is being fostered.
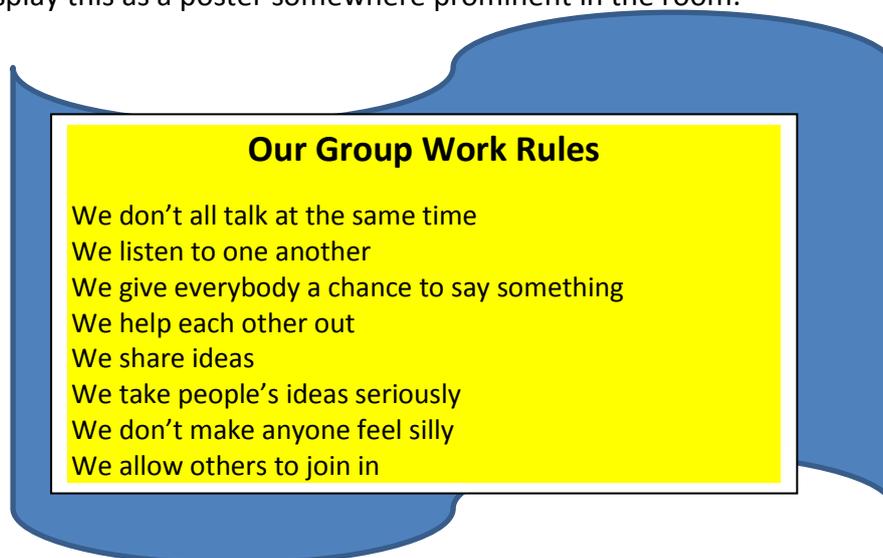

Language Function	Text Type	Text Structure and Language Features
Interactional Getting along with others, establishing relative status **Instrumental** Expressing needs/Getting things done	**Partner and Small-Group Work**	**Text Structure** • Students use language to interact and plan, to negotiate roles, develop or maintain a play or group activity, monitor and reflect on the task
		Language Structures and Features • Language to entertain and inform • Language to express experiences and emotions • Include an orientation, series of events, a complication and a conclusion • Descriptive vocabulary • Variety in tone of voice, volume etc. • Expressive body language • Use of rhetorical questions • Use of intensifiers (really, very, quite) to build significance and create drama

		Knowledge Skills and Understanding
		- Involve all people in a group - Respond to what others say - Listen to others and create space for them - Develop and clarify thoughts and ideas - Summarise and evaluate - Manage time - Prioritise
		Language for Social Interaction - Give feedback - Allocate roles - Request help - Tutor - Invite - Reinforce - Ask permission
		Language for learning - Suggest Ideas - Evaluate - Give and justify opinions - Initiate ideas for thought and action - Build on and extend others ideas - Initiate discussion - Share knowledge, Persuade, Disagree - Reach consensus - Give instructions - Consult - Challenge - Explain

Strategies for Partner and Small Group Work

Rules of Group Work

Rules are best established as a class for effective group work. Having collectively drawn up the rules, display this as a poster somewhere prominent in the room.

Our Group Work Rules

We don't all talk at the same time
We listen to one another
We give everybody a chance to say something
We help each other out
We share ideas
We take people's ideas seriously
We don't make anyone feel silly
We allow others to join in

Co-operative Learning Groups
In cooperative learning, team members are positively interdependent and a strong emphasis is placed on individual and group accountability. It involves group reflection on learning, team recognition and group responsibility for individual learning.
Here the teacher puts the pupils into groups and sets a task. Each pupil is given a particular role to fulfil e.g. manager, reporter, recorder, time-keeper. These roles will need to have been explicitly taught to pupils before they engage in a co-operative learning group. Sample cards for these roles are in the appendix section.

Jigsaw
Jigsaw is an example of a cooperative learning approach, which should include the key elements of cooperative learning such as positive interdependence, individual and group accountability. It involves group reflection on learning, team recognition and group responsibility for individual learning.
Pupils are organised into groups to research a topic or to complete a task. Students will need to explain or describe their new knowledge of the topic to other classmates; this helps students to gain better understanding of the topic or the task. Students will need to listen very carefully and ask questions if they are unsure about any element of the topic/task.
Steps to follow include:
- Divide the class into "home groups" of 4-6 pupils. Give each pupil a number within their group
- Move students from their home group into "expert" groups, based on the numbers – all the 3s go together etc. The "expert" group complete a specific task
- Students return to their "home group" having completed the task and share what they have done or what they have found out

Think-pair-share/Square
This is a way for pupils to pool their thoughts and ideas and to see things from different perspectives. Pupils listen to a presentation, story, read a text, see a video and record their ideas individually. As a class they pair up with a partner to share their ideas. A pair can team up with another pair to "square" their ideas.

Partner Conversations
After listening to a story, pupils in pairs re-tell the story in sequence with as much detail as they can remember.

Circle within a Circle
Pupils sit in 2 circles, one circle inside the other. Pupils in the inside circle discuss what they know and what they have found out about a topic, character etc. Pupils on the outside take notes and reflect on what they are hearing and share this with the inside group and may ask questions to clarify thinking.

Listening Triads
Pupils work in groups of three, with pupils taking the role of speaker, questioner or recorder. The speaker talks on a given topic e.g. gives an opinion on an issue, explains a

concept. The questioner asks questions in order to seek clarification. The recorder takes notes in preparation for giving feedback.

> ## Conversations
>
> Classroom conversations are dialogues that occur between students and teachers and between students and students. They are used to create, negotiate or deepen the understanding of a topic.

Language Function	Text Type	Text Structure and Language Features
Heuristic Seeking and testing knowledge **Interactional** Getting along with others, establishing relative status **Imaginative** Creating new worlds, making up stories and poems **Representational** Communicating Information, descriptions, expressing propositions	**Conversations**	**Text Structure** • A sustained exchange that extends beyond the IRE (Initiate, Response, Evaluate) **Language Structures and Features** • Use linking words • Technical language • Manage turn taking • Manage topic changes • Repair communication breakdowns • Sustain conversations through building on others' ideas and asking relevant questions • Use non-verbal listening and speaking behaviours • Specific vocabulary for seeking information • Give or request information • Provide background information if required • Provide appropriate detail **Knowledge Skills and Understanding** • Can respond to questions and statements • Can identify key information • Can identify different points of view • Can express opinions and substantiate **Metalinguistic Awareness** • Consider listener's needs • Group processes , how to build on others ideas, take turns, hold the floor

Activities to Develop Conversations

WWW and EBI
Discuss/reflect on something in terms of what went well and how it could be improved even better if …

Conversation Stations

Conversation Stations are helpful for the development of high quality, consistent conversations in the classroom. In Conversation Stations, children have the opportunity to talk, get feedback on their language and to have appropriate language modelled to them. In order to create a Conversation Station consider the following:

- **Designated Space –** table, display pocket chart, pictures, props,"Let's talk about….."
- **One to one conversations -** at the beginning, 10 min duration, max. two children
- **Rules** - establish at outset, talk and thoughtful listening, share purpose with children
- **Message Board –** "Time to Talk", topics that arise can be discussed at later time at Conversation Station
- **Shy/Reticent Child** - teacher initiated conversations, vocabulary theme, props, "phone a friend"
- **Conversation Essentials –** Talk: Open-ended questions and feedback. This supports child's use and comprehension of language

Conversation Scenarios

This is a useful activity to involve pupils in a variety of telephone conversations. Pupils work in pairs and are given a scenario card. They plan and discuss the card and type of conversation in which they will engage and then with the use of real phones, carry out the telephone conversation.

Scenario Card Examples		
You have to phone a friend to invite him/her to your birthday party	You have forgotten which page you must read for homework and so have to phone a classmate and ask them	Your friend has fallen from their bike, you must ring their mother to explain what happened

Questioning and Interviews

Questioning encourages higher order thinking and forms the basis of enquiry. Good questioning enhances understanding, as it provides opportunities to explain, clarify, probe, make connections and identify problems and issues. Questioning encourages dialogue between students and teachers and influences student's use of questioning to promote their own learning. Self-questioning enables students to reflect and assess their own results and efforts with a view to making them better.

Interviews provide an authentic context for questioning. In an interview, students purposefully practice asking questions and develop the skills to listen critically.

Language Function	Text Type	Text Structure and Language Features
Heuristic Seeking and testing knowledge	**Questioning and Interviews**	**Text Structure** • Asking and answering open and closed questions to serve a range of purposes
		Language Structures and Features • Use of closed questions as a strategy to elicit specific information • Use of open questions to elicit a range of responses • Use of sentences that are grammatically well formed and appropriate to the situation • Logical Connectors
		Knowledge Skills and Understandings • Shaping questions to produce optimal information • Stimulates and extends own thinking by questioning to explore possibilities • Clarifies own and others' opinions • Acknowledges another person's idea, building on another's idea • Frames questions to suit situation and person

Activities to Develop Questioning and Interviews

Applying Blooms Taxonomy to Questioning

Bloom's Taxonomy is a classification of learning objectives and skills which increase in complexity. The taxonomy can be applied to the use of questions as follows:

Knowledge *(recall)*

Tell, list, define, name, when, where, state, identify …

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- How?

- What happened next?
- How many?
- What is the name of …?
- Which is true or false?

Comprehension *(understanding)*

Retell, summarise, describe, explain, predict, restate, estimate …

- What is meant by?
- How would you describe?
- What is the difference?
- Can you tell me in your own words
- What is the main idea?

- What do you think will happen next?
- What is the main idea?
- Why did …?
- Tell me about the _____'s size and shape.
- Can you provide an example of …?

Application *(solving)*

Solve, use, construct, classify, examine, illustrate, modify …

- What would happen if …?
- How would you …?
- How might you use this?
- What information would you need to ….?
- In what other way can these be sorted?
- Can you draw a diagram of what you see?

- What would you do next time?
- If you had to… what would you do?
- Why is …. Significant?
- Devise a set of instructions for …
- Where have you seen something like this before?

Analysis *(reasoning)*
Analyse, compare, distinguish, examine, order, categorise, infer, investigate …

- Which were facts and which were opinions?
- What was the purpose of …?
- What are the parts?
- What might have happened if …?
- What do you see as other possible outcomes?

- What were the causes of...?
- What were the effects of …?
- How are these the same?
- What is the difference between …?

Synthesis *(creating)*
Create, design, formulate, invent, imagine, devise, combine …

- How can these be combined?
- What conclusions are you making?
- Can you design a … to …?
- Can you see a possible solution?
- Can you develop a proposal which …
- What other ideas do you have for …?

- How could this process be rearranged?
- What is your plan for accomplishing this task?
- How can you use what you learned?
- Why not compose ….?

Evaluation *(judging)*
Check, choose, prioritise, critique, hypothesise, judge, debate ...

- How could this be improved?
- How would you rank order?
- What is the most important?
- Justify your opinion …/how did you make your decision…?

- Which is better? Best?
- What is your top priority?
- What criteria did you use?

Feely Bag
Items are placed in bags. Students must choose one and feel the bag, describe as much as possible what it is they feel, and then attempt a guess as to what it is.

Taped TV/radio segments
Allow pupils to listen to taped interviews from the TV/radio. This is useful to allow the pupils to become familiar with which types of questions were asked and how the interviewee responded. It also allows pupils to be aware of and for the teacher to explicitly teach the stages of an interview e.g. how to introduce an interview, how to ask a variety of questions, how to end an interview.

Give it a Go
Propose a genuine purpose for conducting an interview such as: how pupils feel about the "Green Flag" project, what life was like when our grandparents were our age. Allow pupils

to gather information through interviewing. What type of questions will I ask, do I need to be sensitive about some questions, and will they understand me if I ask…

Hot-Seating

A character is questioned by the group about his or her background, behaviour and motivation. The method may be used for developing a role in the drama lesson or rehearsals, or analysing a play post-performance. Even done without preparation, it is an excellent way of fleshing out a character. Characters may be hot-seated individually, in pairs or small groups. The technique is additionally useful for developing questioning skills with the rest of the group.

Who Am I?

One pupil sits at the top of the room. The teacher gives them a character card e.g. Harry Potter. All other pupils must ask questions to decipher the identity of the character. Only Yes/No responses are allowed?

Arguments and Formal/Informal Debates

The purpose of debating and developing arguments is designed to persuade an audience to accept a particular point of view. Debates provide pupils with practice in giving and justifying opinions. Students will be required to research topics to provide relevant information to support their point of view. Debates can be used for exploring issues and different points of view such as topics from literature being studied in class, or local concerns such as pollution, phone masts, and current affairs.

Language Function	Text Type	Text Structure and Language Features
Representational Communicating Information, descriptions, expressing propositions	**Arguments and Formal/Informal Debates**	**Text Structure** • Argument, persuasion, debate
		Language Structures and Features • Technical Vocabulary • Organising information, i.e. introduction, supporting evidence, drawing conclusions • Persuasive linguistic devices • Persuasive tone of voice and body language • Use of technical data • Use of neutral language to present an argument
Regulatory Influencing the behaviour, feelings/attitudes of others		**Knowledge Skills and Understandings** • Expressing and justifying opinions • Point of view • Contrasting points of view • Refuting and argument • How to address arguments impersonally (by

		disagreeing with the statement, not the person)

Activities to Develop Arguments and Formal/Informal Debates

Both Sides

When discussing a topic/story with the class formulate a yes/no table e.g.

The school has invested in games for the yard such as Hopscotch, Snakes and Ladders but only the junior pupils are allowed to use them	
Yes that is fair because they are only small and they are too young to play football so they need games to help them play	No that isn't fair because I love Snakes and Ladders and just because I am in 5th class, I am not allowed to play it on the yard. I have as much right as a junior infant.

Brainstorming

The whole class contribute ideas for and against a topic. This will help pupils to look at both sides before they decide on a point of view and they will have reasons to justify their opinion.

Take a Stand

An imaginary line is established in the classroom. One end represents "agree" the opposite end represents "disagree". The teacher poses the topic e.g. should general elections and referendums take place on a Saturday. Pupils place themselves on the line according to their point of view. Those unsure of their opinion go to the middle of the line. Pupils share reasons to justify their standing. After the discussion, the teacher will ask questions to probe the process such as: would anybody like to change their position having heard other pupil's thoughts? What can you tell about a person's belief from the tone in their voice? Etc.

Four Corners

Similar to Take a Stand above, the teacher introduces an idea or issue and pupils decide on a position to represent their opinion. The four corners of the room are labelled as follows:

- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Pupils move to a corner and together present their reasons to the wider group. Teacher can probe the thought process by asking questions similar to those in "Take a Stand".

TV/radio/advertisements

Allow pupils the opportunity to see/hear formal and informal debates or arguments. From this they will be aware of structures such as introduction, presenting your opinion, outlining reasons to back up your opinion, concluding and appropriate language features for persuasive language such as *I believe, it is my opinion, I know, one of the many reasons…* etc.

> ## Giving Instructions/Procedure
>
> Giving instructions and outlining procedures involve communicating a series of steps in order to accomplish an end. The language used for this spoken text includes the use of dictate verbs such as Put, Go, Add, Turn, Take… etc.

Language Function	Text Type	Text Structure and Language Features
Representational Communicating Information, descriptions, expressing propositions	**Giving Instructions** *How to play a game, how to carry out a science experiment, a recipe*	**Text Structure** • Aim/Goal, equipment needed, procedure/steps to follow
		Language Structures and Features • Generalised participants • Linking words to do with time • Use of imperative verbs • Detailed factual descriptions • Detailed information on how, where and when
Regulatory Influencing the behaviour, feelings/attitudes of others		**Knowledge Skills and Understanding** • Presents ideas in a clear, logical manner • Includes relevant details and omits information that isn't required • Can identify important information • Can listen carefully and follow instructions
		Metalinguistic Awareness • Consider listener's needs • Uses non-verbal behaviours to engage listeners and stress important points

Activities to Develop Giving Instructions/Procedures

Barrier games

Barrier games are simple procedures based on giving and receiving instructions. The games are usually played in pairs and there is some type of "barrier" so that the students cannot see what their partner is doing. In Infant classes, the children work in pairs. Both children have the same objects such as a selection of shapes. Child A makes something with their objects. When child A has finished, child B copies the result. In middle and senior classes the students work in groups of three. One pupil is the barrier in the middle of the other two, holding up a book or a screen. Both children at either side of the screen have the same objects. Pupil A creates something with their objects and then gives instruction to Pupil B so

that they end up with the same outcome. Pupil B may ask questions to confirm instructions. When finished, the barrier is removed and all three pupils discuss the end results.

Types of barrier games:

1. **Sequencing or pattern making**: In pairs children describe successive items in an array or sequence such as bead threading, attribute blocks or toys to their partner and they complete a similar pattern.
2. **Matching pairs:** Students take turns to describe pictures or objects. One person describes the picture/object until the other child locates the matching picture/object.
3. **Assembly:** Assemble a picture from a selection of shapes. One player describes the picture and the other assembles the shapes to make the picture.
4. **Construction:** One player describes the steps in building a construction and the other player follows the steps in creating the structure.
5. **Location:** Students place items in relation to each other on a picture board. One student describes the objects location on the board and the other player listens, follows directions and places the items in the same location.
6. **Grids:** One student describes the location of an object on a grid. The other child listens and places their object in the same section of the grid.
7. **Mapping:** One Student describes how to get from one point on a map to another. The other child listens and draws the route on a corresponding map.
8. **Spot the difference:** Give pairs of students several pictures that vary in small details. The students describe their pictures to one another and identify the differences.

Complete the steps
Take a recipe or instruction on how to playing a games and cut up into various steps. The children in pairs have to order the steps in the correct sequence and orally retell how to complete the procedure.

Is this the way?
This activity needs to take place in an open area. One pupil is blind folded and an object is placed somewhere in the open space. Each pupil takes a turn in directing the blind folded pupil to the designated item. Initially pupils count how many instructions were needed in order to get to the object and this is what they aim to beat when the activity is played again. This is an opportunity to practice the language of position and direction in particular and demands precise use of clear instructions.

Create a Language Learning Environment

It is important that the classroom environment is supportive and nurturing where a variety of communication styles are valued, accepted and accommodated. Teachers can design differentiated teaching and learning activities that draw on pupil's interests, knowledge and skills. Teachers will also support students by helping them to develop strategies to use when speaking and listening for different contexts. By providing authentic purposes and audiences for speaking and listening, pupils will become confident and enthusiastic communicators.

A language learning environment can be created by focusing on three key elements:

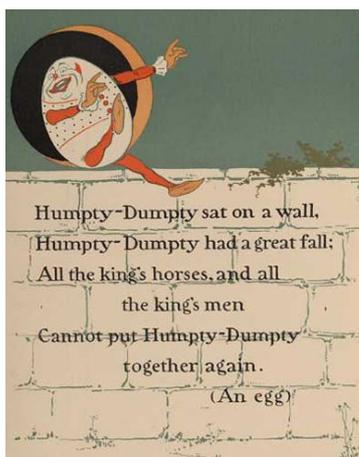| Element	Definition
The physical environment	By enriching the physical environment of the classroom, multiple opportunities for engaging oral interaction and development will exist. Suggestions for a rich physical environment are listed below.
Classroom culture	By enriching the physical environment of the classroom we create multiple opportunities for engaging oral interaction and development. Suggestions for creating a classroom culture that facilitates oral instruction are listed below.
Opportunities for communication	Communication happens all the time in the classroom. By taking advantage of certain communication opportunities, students can be exposed to multiple oral language contexts and uses. Suggestions for valuable opportunities for communication that can be harnessed are listed below.

Ways of developing the physical environment:

- ✓ Table/display board to display objects of personal interest/topic related resources
- ✓ Dress-up boxes as this allows pupils to engage in spontaneous role play, to re-tell experiences, and experiment with new ideas and vocabulary
- ✓ Collection of puppets to encourage re-telling favourite stories

- ✓ Creative area (toys, dress-up clothes, creative equipment)
- ✓ Rug area for instruction and whole group activities
- ✓ Library for children's books. Perhaps include a special place for books the children have created so they can be re-read
- ✓ Listening corner with CD player, CDs and headphones, this provides another opportunity for pupils to listen to a variety of audio recordings
- ✓ Telephones and message pads to practice conversational and inquiry skills
- ✓ Table for students to display objects of personal interest, work samples of topic related resources
- ✓ Hand-held Dictaphones to enable students to record speaking to share with others. The recordings could also help in self-assessment on performance and setting personal goals
- ✓ Display of songs, poems and chants that have been taught in class. Encourage students to recite them for other people, practicing the patterns and rhythms of language

Note: Involve pupils in developing classroom displays that showcase their case, illustrate new concepts or support their learning of new skills. Encourage pupils to explain or describe these displays to visitors

Ways of developing the classroom culture:

- ✓ Create a classroom culture of "have a go"
- ✓ Be sensitive to cultural differences
- ✓ Emphasise enjoyment for all
- ✓ Value social talk and the use of language used in the home
- ✓ Seize the moment if something unusual in the school happens or if a child brings something to school
- ✓ Encourage all attempts by the children at both speaking and listening
- ✓ Teach pupils to share classroom responsibilities e.g. change the calendar, set up writing table, organize the library
- ✓ Maintain an emphasis on enjoyment
- ✓ Provide opportunities for the children to reflect and review their speaking and/or listening
- ✓ Explicitly teach students to take turns in groups
- ✓ Communicate high expectations
- ✓ Motivate pupils to speak with all members of the class

Ways of developing opportunities for discussion:

- ✓ Model good listening to the children
- ✓ Model using specific language to the children e.g. re-telling stories
- ✓ Provide role play opportunities to experiment with language
- ✓ Teach/display nursery rhymes, poems, songs, chants, raps so that children can hear and practice the structure and sounds

- ✔ Read aloud to the children every day
- ✔ Provide puppets, felt boards, toys to re-tell favourite stories
- ✔ Read a variety of text types to the children
- ✔ Invite guests into the classroom
- ✔ Model and allow the children to purposefully practice the language associated with group work and social interaction
- ✔ Teach pupils to resolve conflicts through language e.g. "*The next time you should say*", "*I would like to play with that ball when you have finished please*"
- ✔ Read or recite poetry to the class each day

Teach and Extend Vocabulary and Conceptual Knowledge

Introduction

Vocabulary is the term used to describe the collection of words in a given language used and understood in Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

It is important for children to develop knowledge of word meanings from an early age and to this end, they need to be actively engaged in vocabulary development.

Vocabulary for academic learning is linked to the teaching of concepts. When a concept is completely unfamiliar to the students, they need to develop an understanding of the concept first and then vocabulary can be introduced. If the concept is familiar to the children new vocabulary is introduced in order to connect new words to an already familiar or understood concept.

As children develop, they need to be able to draw on different sets of vocabulary and as such teachers need to be mindful of these different sets when selecting words for instruction. Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002) have proposed three tiers of vocabulary that need to the explicitly taught to children.

Interesting Vocabulary Facts!

- ✓ A few thousand words account for 90 per cent of the spoken vocabulary anyone uses or hears on a regular basis! (Hayes and Ahrens 1988)
- ✓ A highly educated adult has a listening/speaking vocabulary of about 10,000 words but likely knows nearly 100,000 words in reading and writing (Byrnes and Wasik 2009).
- ✓ It has been found that by the age of three, children from lower income families know 600 fewer words than children of the same age from families with higher incomes (Hart and Risley, 1995)
- ✓ In order for children to become proficient readers, they need to learn five to six new words per day, 38 words per week, 2000 new words a year, and 10,000 by the age of 6!

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier3
Description	Basic words most children know before they enter school	Words that appear frequently in texts and for which children already have some conceptual understanding	Uncommon words that are typically associated with a specific domain
Example	Happy, no, door, chair, head,	Lonely, fortunate,	revolution, peninsula, staccato

When teaching vocabulary we need to plan for:

- **Teaching individual words** such as those listed in the 3 tiers above by teaching synonyms, antonyms, root words, suffixes etc. Direct word-meaning teaching is an effective way to facilitate children's vocabulary development
- **Teaching word-learning strategies** such as words in context, definitions, word maps
- **Fostering an awareness and love of words and language** such as multiple meanings, word games, word of the week
- **Providing varied experiences for using words** through reading, writing and oral language. Children need to be exposed to new vocabulary to acquire word knowledge and exposure in different contexts supports their acquisition of nuanced meanings

Teaching Individual Words	Providing Varied Language Experiences	Fostering an awareness and love of language and words	Teaching word learning strategies
- Synonyms e.g. burglar, robber, thief - Antonyms e.g. black/white, fat/thin, small/tall - Classification e.g. colours, countries - Which Words? (Tier 1,2,3, words) - Prefixes e.g. un, dis, post, pre - Suffixes e.g. es, s, tion, ies, ed - Root words e.g. love – lovely, form - reform	- Create situations that require searching out vocabulary needs needed to explain new ideas - Visit places of interest and interact with community members -Involve students in investigations and experiments - Ask children to review and discuss topics of interest - Choose vocabulary that may be important to teach with regard to a genre/theme you may be focusing on. For example the persuasive writing genre links naturally with the oral text – type of Formal/Informal debate. The vocabulary needed for persuasive oral, reading and writing is	Multiple meanings e.g. orange (fruit/colour) nail (finger/tool) Homographs e.g. sole (shoe and fish) present (not absent, gift) Interrelatedness e.g. stallion, rooster, bull (all animals and all male) Homonyms e.g. weak, week Word play e.g. spoonerisms – know your blose & blow your nose	- Context - Definitions - Deep processing of vocabulary to embed in long term memory - Semantic Feature Analysis - Semantic Mapping, Semantic Clusters, Semantic Gradients

listed below;			

Arguments and Informal/Formal Debates		
Infants	1ST/2ND	3RD – 6TH
• I think/ I don't think • Because • Yes/No • I like/don't like • I agree/ disagree • My favourite	• I think/ I don't think • Because • Yes/No • I like/don't like • I agree/ disagree • I have mixed feelings • I strongly agree/disagree • My favourite	• I strongly/firmly, thoroughly believe • In my opinion – I opine • I agree/disagree that • It is believed/widely believed • I has been found/proven/discovered • On one hand/other hand • Consider the following • To begin • Furthermore • In fact • Firstly, secondly, next • For example • However/although • To illustrate my point (further) • To reinforce my point The problem with --- is • Similarly, conversely • Unlike/like • Conversely • Finally • Therefore • Because of that • Overall • In conclusion, in summary • Consequently/as a result

Activities to Support Vocabulary Development:

Work Banks/Word Wall

Word banks work best if they are constructed as living banks or lists where the students can find, for example, synonyms from their reading books/library books etc.
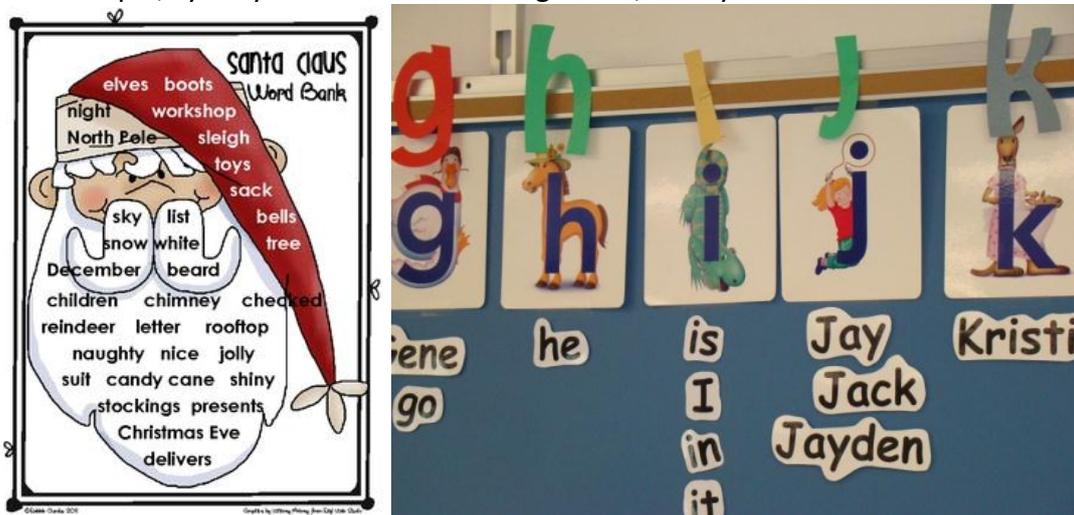
Chain Game

Chain Game is the name given to the gradual expansion of a sentence. An example of how a chain writing activity is structured is outlined here.

1. Select a word related to the theme you are developing e.g. spiders.
2. Ask the children to suggest words which describe spiders e.g.

Suggested words	Theme		
• Hairy • Scary • Black • Sneaky • Horrible • Long-legged	Spiders		

3. Then ask what spiders do and add the words to the list e.g.

Suggested words	Theme	Verbs	
• Hairy • Scary • Black • Sneaky • Horrible • Long-legged	Spiders	• Climb • Hide • Lurk • Creep • Bite • sleep	

Now combine the words to make sentences such as: **Hairy spiders creep. Scary spiders lurk.**

4. Next, list where spiders do things and add these to the list:

Suggested words	Theme	Verbs	Places
• Hairy • Scary • Black • Sneaky • Horrible • Long-legged	Spiders	• Climb • Hide • Lurk • Creep • Bite • sleep	• In the garden • Inside the light shade • In their webs • In the bathroom

And combine as before to make different sentences e.g. **Long-legged spiders sleep in the bathroom. Scary spiders lurk inside the lightshade.**

How Many Meanings?
Teacher chooses a word such as "bank" and pupils try and come up with as many different meanings as possible e.g. money bank, a river bank, a bank of clouds, the aeroplane banked suddenly, a blood bank, cars banked up at traffic lights, to bank on someone.

Ten/Twenty questions
This is a game where one player chooses of a word taken from a specific list and the other players ask questions to determine what that word is. It is important that children are taught the skill of questioning e.g.   *"Is it a noun/verb/adjective/adverb/compound noun?" "Has it one/two/three syllable(s)?"*

Text Innovation
Text innovation is a highly enjoyable activity for developing vocabulary. The goal of this activity is to keep the meaning of a text but change the words. The example below shows how a nursery rhyme, for example, can be innovated.

| Nursery Rhyme	Text Innovation
Jack and Jill went up the hill To fetch a pail of water. Jack fell down and hurt his crown And Jill came tumbling after.	John and Mary climbed up the mountain To fill a bucket of H_2O. John slipped down and bruised his crown And Mary came rolling after.

PWIM Pictures
Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM) is another highly engaging way of developing vocabulary. This is an activity that can be done with the whole class, a small group or individually.
In this activity, the teacher selects a picture and the children label the elements they know. They can discuss and research in order to label as much as possible. The children then give the picture a title and begin to categorise the vocabulary. Eventually they write about the picture using the associated vocabulary.
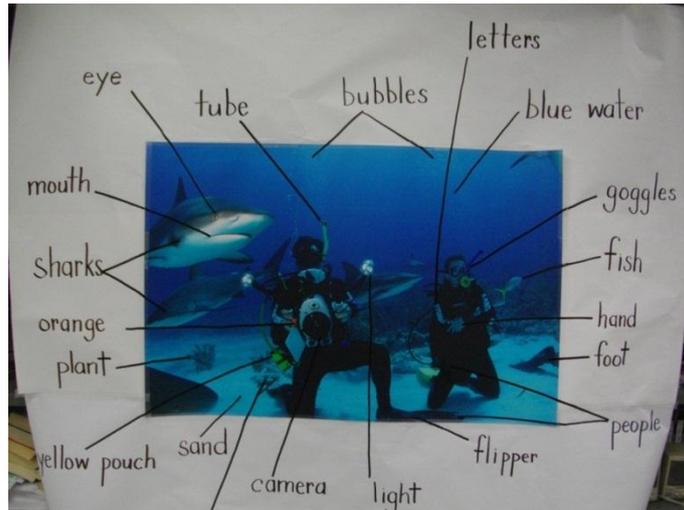
Semantic Gradient

Semantic gradients are a way to broaden and deepen students' understanding of related words. Students consider a continuum of words by order of degree. Semantic gradients often begin with antonyms, or opposites, at each end of the continuum. This activity helps students distinguish between shades of meaning. By enhancing their vocabulary, students can be more precise and imaginative in their writing. For example;
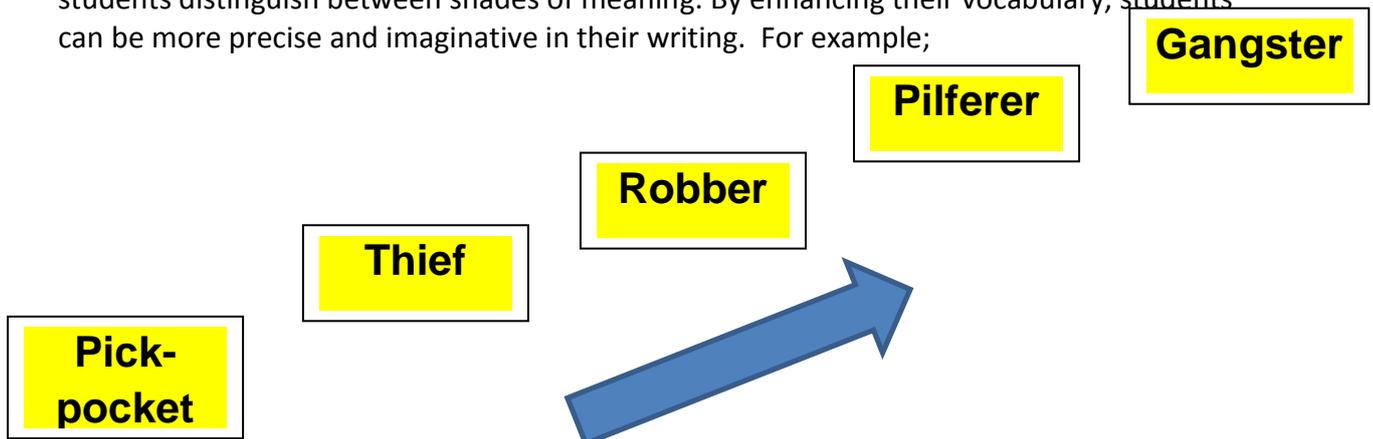
Semantic Mapping

Semantic mapping is a strategy for graphically representing concepts. Semantic maps clearly portray the schematic relations that compose a concept. It assumes that there are multiple relations between a concept and the knowledge that is associated with that concept.

Semantic map for weather
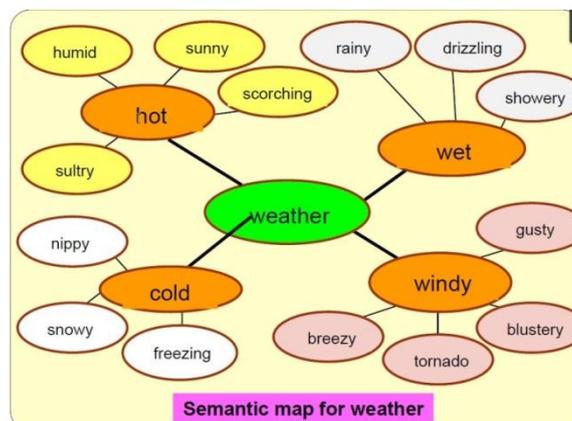
Promote Auditory Memory

Auditory memory involves the ability to assimilate information presented orally, to process that information, store it and recall what has been heard. Essentially, it involves the task of attending, listening, processing, storing, and recalling. This may be a challenging task for many students, including those who do not have a learning difficulty. A weakness in auditory memory can have serious consequences for learning because pupils may only pick up some of what is being said during a class lesson. Weaknesses in auditory memory can easily go undetected by a teacher. Children with auditory memory problems appear to be trying very hard to listen. Because their eyes are focused on the teacher and they appear to be attentive, it is easy for the teacher to assume that these children have heard and taken in all that is being taught. However, in reality, they often absorb and make sense out of very little of what is being mediated by the teacher. As a result, these students recall only a small amount or none of what is being said. They might remember a word here or there, or part of a thought, without truly understanding much of the information presented orally to them. Students with auditory memory deficiencies frequently experience difficulty comprehending orally presented directions. They often think that they have understood directions for completing their tasks but when they become engaged in tasks, they often ask for the help or indeed ask for the teacher to repeat the instructions.

Students with auditory memory deficiencies will often experience difficulty developing a good understanding of words, or remembering terms and information that has been presented orally, for example, in history and science classes. These students will also experience difficulty processing and recalling information that they have read to themselves. When we read we must listen and process information we say to ourselves, even when we read silently. If we do not attend and listen to our silent input of words, we cannot process the information or recall what we have read. Therefore, even silent reading involves a form of listening.

It is important to understand that each aspect of auditory memory is specific unto itself. Students must learn to take in all types of information, that which is presented in isolation as well as in context. While one area of the brain involves the intake of a series of unrelated letters, another involves numbers, another involves words, and, there are others that involve a contextual series of words, sentences, and whole passages. It must not be assumed that because a student can attend, listen and recall a series of numbers, for example, that he/she will also be able to recall a series of words.

Isolated units of information are often presented orally in school. Being skilled in recalling a series of items is essential for all students. For example, a teacher may say, "*Colour only the*
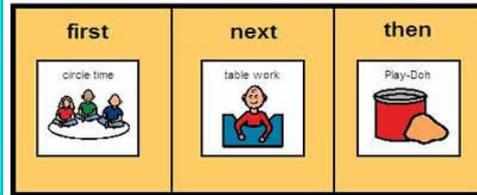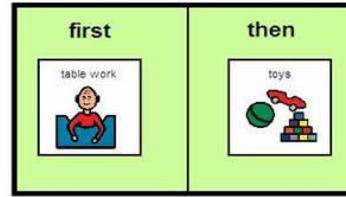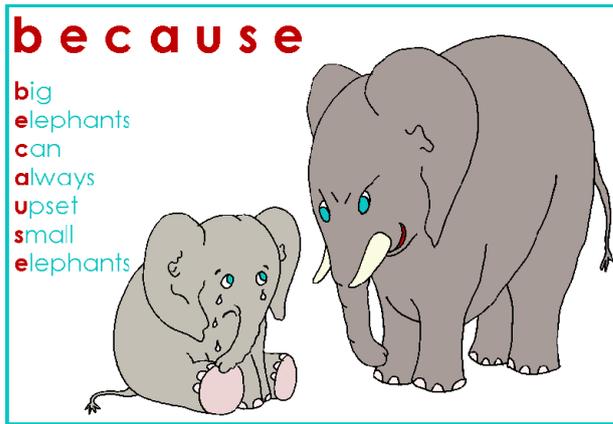
frogs, birds and dogs on your paper." If a student has an auditory problem for a series of words he/she will not be able to recall the series of frogs, birds and dogs. Students need to be tested to determine if they can recall the number of items in a series proficiently for their age. While some students may be able to recall a series of three items, they may not be able to recall a longer series of items. For example, add one more item to the list, frogs, birds, dogs and goats, and this longer series may be impossible for those same children to recall.

Auditory memory involving contextual information is equally important to the process of learning. Students with auditory memory problems in this area often cannot recall an entire sentence that has been presented orally. Or, they may be able to recall a short sentence of three words in length but not a longer sentence. This may lead to many problems in school with oral comprehension and the ability to follow oral directions. In addition, while some students can recall a lengthy sentence well, they may not be able to process and recall a short passage that is presented orally. These students may be able to answer a specific question about the information that has been presented to them orally or that they have read, but are not able to grasp the whole paragraph. Often, these students assume that they know what they have heard or read orally, when actually, they have processed and recalled very little of the material. Sometimes as teachers we assume that children have understood an entire passage when they answer a specific question about the passage, yet, that specific information might be all that they have gleaned from the passage. Therefore, students should be encouraged to restate passages, that is, the main idea and supporting details, in order to demonstrate that they have total comprehension. There is a vast amount of information that is lost by students with auditory difficulties. While we want our students to be prepared to answer specific questions from passages they have read, we also need to be certain that they comprehend passages in their entirety.

How to Develop Auditory Memory Skills

- ✓ Repeat and use information
- ✓ Recite poems, songs, tales, rhymes, etc.
- ✓ Memorise and sequence songs
- ✓ Re-tell stories, e.g. fairytales, myths
- ✓ Re-tell stories using puppets or by illustrating a map
- ✓ Recall verbal messages or phone numbers
- ✓ Play memory games Kim's game, Guess Who, Simon Says, 'My Grandma went shopping and bought me a...' Chinese Whispers
- ✓ Recount news events
- ✓ Use visual cues and mnemonics

because
big
elephants
can
always
upset
small
elephants

first	then
table work	toys

first	next	then
circle time	table work	Play-Doh

✓ Hide an object and give directions for others to find it
✓ Provide organizational tools to assist memory, such as graphic or visual organisers

Title
Charlotte's Web
by
E B White

Fern
little girl
loves Wilbur

Wilbur
pig
faints when afraid
is "Some Pig"

Charlotte
spider
Wilbur's friend
saves Wilbur

Templeton
rat
always hungry
helps Charlotte

Avery
little brother
wants his own pig

Mr. Arable
Papa
kind to Fern
sells Wilbur

✓ Explicitly teach pupils to be conscious of remembering important concepts, skills and metacognitive strategies such as the "think aloud"

I think this is very funny because it reminds me of …
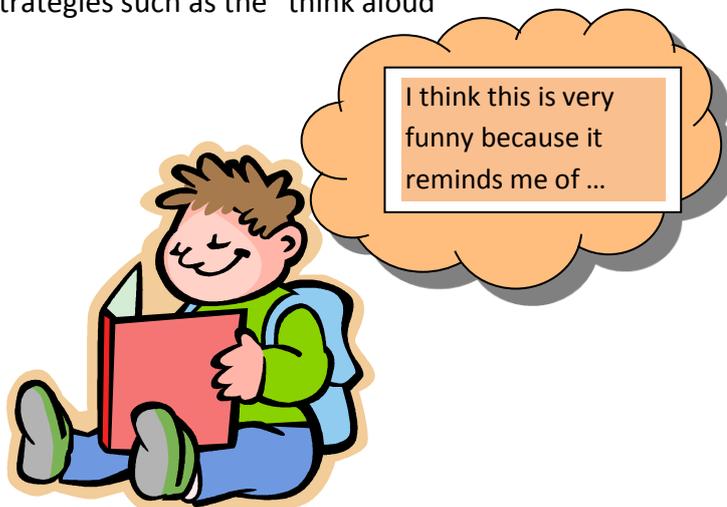
The following is a small selection of activities adapted from the book "Auditory Processing Activities" by Jeffries and Jeffries. This book contains a substantial amount of activities that can be used to develop auditory processing with a whole class and individuals pupils.

Activity Name and Instructions	Activity
Activity 4 Teacher assigns new names to the class. Each pupil receives 2 names to remember as his/her name (e.g. Mary could be named 1, 7). The pupils listen to each direction and does at it says only if they hear their numbers following the direction.	1. Clap your hands 2. Say the name of your best friend 3. Stand up 4. Touch your nose 5. Say the name of your favourite sweet 6. Walk to the door and back etc.
Activity 5 Teacher reads some sentences twice. On the second reading the teacher leaves out one word. The pupils must re-call the missing word. It may be useful for the teacher to underline the left out word for the second reading	- Sean and <u>Dana</u> are twins. They look so much alike that your cannot tell one from the other
Activity 7 Teacher reads a group of words. The pupils listen and then carefully tell the teacher the beginning sound of each word. Then the teacher changes it to the last letter in each word	- Say, see, sell - Game, girl, good - Pear, poor, pond - Ring, read, rain - Two, tin, teeth, - Bag, bead, bike
Activity 11 Teacher asks some questions. The pupils must think of more than one answer to the question	- What could you find growing in a forest? - What could you find living in a zoo? - What could you find in a grocery store? - What could you find in an animal shelter?

|	
Activity 12 Teacher reads a series of short stories, perhaps 4-5. Pupils listen very carefully as questions will be asked after each story.	40
Activity 13 Teacher asks questions that only have numbers as their answers. Pupils respond by restating each question in the form of a statement that includes the answer e.g. "how many tusks does an elephant have" "an elephant has two tusks"	- How many paws does a dog have? - How many legs are there on a three legged stool? - How many openings does a fish bowl have? - How many colours does a zebra have?

Assessment

Tools for assessing based on the NCCA Continuum

The assessment tools outlined in the Continuum of Assessment that is contained in the *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools* (NCCA, 2007) are very useful. The use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria is very much advocated and more information on this can be found on the NCCA website;
http://action.ncca.ie/primary.aspx

By introducing the idea of shared learning intentions and establishing success criteria in advance, many of the modes of assessment mentioned below will be greatly enhanced. For example, a student will find it easier to self-assess if they know what successful learning looks like. The teacher will also find it easier to record teacher observations according to the success criteria.

The diagram below illustrates the Continuum of Assessment contained in the above mentioned guidelines.
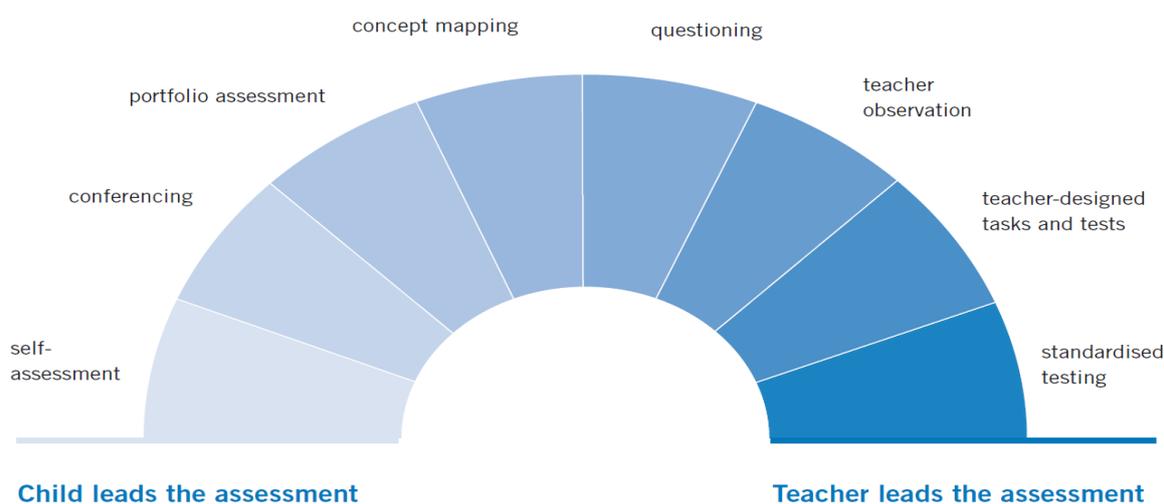
This continuum outlines the various modes of assessment moving from fully child-led (left-hand side) to fully teacher-led (right-hand side). The right hand side of the continuum includes methods associated with *Assessment of Learning* such as teacher designed tasks / tests and standardised testing. Even though various tests and tasks can be examined diagnostically, these types of assessment often give the pupil scores as percentages, sten scores or grades. Therefore the use of child-led assessment tools such as self-assessment, conferencing and so on are important towards ensuring that *Assessment for Learning* is also taking place. This ensures that pupils are actively involved developing their own learning.

The table below identifies appropriate tools for each mode of assessment along the continuum.

All assessment tools mentioned here can be used to assess all the three strands of literacy and indeed to assess any subject area.

Type of Assessment	Applicable for Oral Language, Reading and Writing
Self-Assessment (pp.14-23)	*"Children are involved in self-assessment when they look at their own work in a reflective way, identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then set personal learning targets for themselves"* (p. 14) Tools useful for Self-Assessment include: • KWL(p. 20) What I Know, What I Want to Know and What I Learned • 2 Stars and a Wish – 2 things that were very good, 1 thing that could be improved • Tools that allow students to reflect on the positive aspects of their work and to focus on an area for improvement. Examples include WWW (What Went Well) and EBI (Even Better If) • Traffic Lights (p. 85) • Ladders (p. 85) • Talk partners/buddies (p. 85) • Thumbs up/thumbs down/thumbs across to symbolise I understand/I don't understand/I'm not quite there yet • Numerical scale of understanding 1-5 (5 signifies greatest degree of understanding 1 signifies least degree of understanding) • Prompts – *"The most important thing I learnt was... what I found difficult was... what helped me best..".* • Rubric – (p. 84) • Surveys/Questionnaires • Checklists
Conferencing (pp. 24-27)	*"Those concerned with the child's learning share their knowledge and understanding of the child's work, it's processes and outcomes during a planned or intuitive meeting"* (p. 24) Ways of achieving this include; • Conferencing record sheet teacher/parent • Using a Rubric (p. 25) • Child/ Teacher Conference (p 26)
Portfolio Assessment (pp.30-33)	*"A portfolio is a collection of the child's work, reflecting his/her learning and development over a period of time"* (p. 30) Practical ways of using portfolio assessment include: • Creating Writing Portfolios. The teacher or child or both select pieces of writing that are entered into the Portfolio. The pupil

	attaches a short statement including why this piece as chosen. The Portfolio transfers with the pupil from class to class. (p. 31) ■ E-Portfolio. A folder is created for each pupil on the desktop of the class laptop/computer. The e-portfolio may contain various samples of oral, reading and written work recorded by means of using Microsoft word, PowerPoint, photo story, Audacity, digital camera images of written work.
Concept Mapping (pp. 36-40)	*"Concept Mapping is a process used to make spatial representations of ideas and the relationships between these ideas. The concept maps are similar to graphs containing ideas and labelled lines which describe the relationships between them"* (p. 36) There are different types of Concept Maps. These include: ■ **Spider Maps**: The spider concept map is organized by placing the central theme in the centre of the map. Outwardly radiating sub-themes surround the centre of the map as shown in Image 1 below. ■ **Chronological/Hierarchical Maps**: The hierarchy concept map presents information in a descending order of importance with the most important information placed on the top. ■ **Flow Charts:** The flowchart concept map organizes information in a linear fashion as in picture 2. **Image 1** **Image 2**
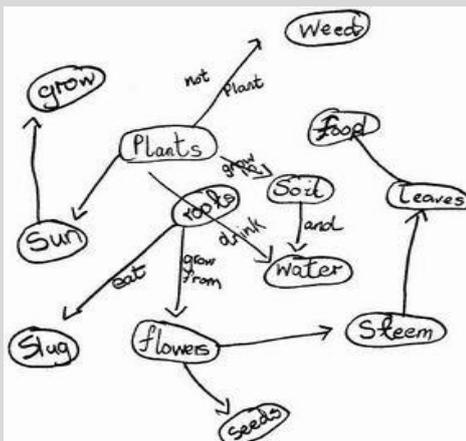
Effective Questioning (pp. 42-44)	*"Questioning underpins all classroom assessment methods. Teachers use questions to assess knowledge and understanding and to guide children in their learning"* (p. 42) **Bloom's Taxonomy of Questioning** Bloom's Taxonomy is covered in the NCCA Assessment Guidelines, 2007 (pg. 86-88). Bloom's Taxonomy classifies forms and levels of learning. As its structure suggests one cannot effectively address higher levels until those below them have been covered. As well as providing a basic sequential model for dealing with topics in the curriculum, it also suggests a way of categorising levels of learning, in terms of the expected ceiling for a given topic. It is vital that pupils have knowledge, comprehension and application, before they can analysis. It also offers opportunities to differentiate; some pupils may get to a certain level with a topic while other pupils may be guided to a higher level. Page 20 of this booklet provides a menu of questions for each level of the taxonomy.

Evaluation	check, critique, hypothesise, judge, debate
Synthesis	create, compose, plan, design, propose, formulate, invent, predict, construct, imagine, devise, combine
Analysis	analyse; compare; investigate; identify; order; connect; distinguish; contrast; categorise; separate; explain; infer
Application	solve; use; construct; examine; apply; calculate; show; illustrate; complete; classify; demonstrate; modify
Understanding	retell; summarise; describe; explain; discuss; interpret; outline; predict; restate; compare; estimate; contrast

	Knowledge	tell, list; define; name; when; where; identify; show; state; locate; relate; who

Teacher Observation (pp. 46-52)	*"Teacher observation, spontaneous or planned, can happen any time a teacher and child interact. Observations made by the teacher in the classroom provide some of the most immediate and accurate information"* (p. 46) Tools that aid teacher observation include: ▪ Drumcondra English Profiles. The Educational Research Centre compiled the Drumcondra English Profiles in 2000 and circulated to all schools. Copies are free to download and hard copies may be purchased through the ERC website. This booklet provides a list of measurable milestones or indicators for Reading, Writing and Oral Language for each class level. ▪ Checklists for formal observations
Teacher-Designed Tasks and Tests (pp. 54-58)	*"Tasks and tests can take the form of written or oral assessments or practical assignments developed by the teacher to assess children's learning"* (p. 54). Teacher-designed tasks and tests can be administered as individual tasks or group tasks. Some teachers have found it beneficial to develop such tasks and tests based on the class indicators/milestones set out for Writing, Reading and Oral Language in the Drumcondra English Profiles.
Standardised Testing (pp. 60-65)	*"Standardised tests are used to measure a child's reading and mathematical skills, and to determine children's progress in those areas"* (p. 60) **The Micra-T and Drumcondra Primary Reading Tests** A standardised test has standard procedures for its administration, scoring and for the interpretation of its results. The Micra-T and Drumcondra Primary Reading Test are standardised and have been normed on the Irish primary school population. This allows the teacher to compare a pupil's performance in that test with the national performance of pupils of that class level in Irish primary schools.

Circular 0056/2011 stipulates that all pupils in classes 2nd, 4th and 6th must be tested in English Reading and Mathematics during the period May/June from 2012 onwards.

The Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test (DPST)
The Drumcondra Primary School Spelling Test is designed to be administered to pupils in first to sixth classes in primary schools. The DPST includes three item types:

- word spelling, in which pupils are asked to spell words called out by the teacher
- sentence or story completion, in which the pupil is asked to write out the missing words in a text that is also read aloud by the teacher
- error detection ('mistakes') where the pupil is asked to identify common spelling errors in each of several sentences, and to write out the correct spellings.

The Drumcondra Primary School Spelling Test is available (www.erc.ie)

Developing Oral Language with your child

Top Ten Tips for Parents /Guardians

Infants – 1st Class	2nd and 4th Class	5th and 6th Class
• Listen to what your child is saying /trying to say and respond to contributions • Make and maintain eye contact while talking with your child • Explain the meaning of words • Talk through activities • Talk through everyday experiences • Involve your child in discussions / plans • Ask / Answer questions • Teach your child nursery rhymes / songs / poems/ raps • Develop your child's receptive language by asking him/her to follow simple instructions • Assist your child to express ideas in an orderly fluent way • Read to your child each night	• Set aside 10-15 minutes to discuss the day's happenings • Encourage your child to express and justify opinions • Involve your child in adult conversation when appropriate • Talk about the child's favourite T.V programme • Play language games which focus on words i.e. Scrabble, crosswords • Encourage your child to talk about experiences with a wide range of people ; peers, relations, other adults • Listen carefully and clarify meaning 'Do you mean /or is this what you mean?' • Encourage your child to give reasons for decisions • Encourage your child to listen courteously to the opinions of others • Talk about school topics and assignments	• Encourage your child to develop a positive attitude to speaking / listening • Discuss your child's school work successes/concerns/interests. • Respect your child's opinions and feelings • Involve your child in adult conversations, when appropriate • Help your child to extend his range of words in specialised subjects • Encourage your child to listen and respond courteously to others. • Watch and discuss T.V. news / current affairs programmes together • Assist your child to locate information in local library, internet • Talk about school topics and assignments • Play commercial games that focus on word building

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This manual has been designed by members of the Professional Development Service for Teachers. Its sole purpose is to enhance teaching and learning in Irish primary schools and will be mediated to practising teachers in the professional development setting. Thereafter it will be available as a free downloadable resource on **www.pdst.ie** for use in the classroom. This resource is strictly the intellectual property of PDST and it is not intended that it be made commercially available through publishers. All ideas, suggestions and activities remain the intellectual property of the authors (all ideas and activities that were sourced elsewhere and are not those of the authors are acknowledged throughout the manual).

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Professional Development Service for Teachers,

14, Joyce Way,

Park West Business Park,

Nangor Road,

Dublin 12.