



ORAL LANGUAGE SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY RESEARCH PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT
1 NOVEMBER 2010

1. OLSEL School Presentations & Teacher Reflections

On 6/10/2010 at Gardenhurst Reception Centre, Essendon a team from each of the eight research schools provided a presentation based on their progress with the OLSEL initiative. In each of the presentations, school teams reflected on their professional knowledge gains as well as the process undertaken in each of the schools to commence the embedded approach. The presentations were videoed and it is planned that they will be added to the OLSEL website in the near future. Feedback both from school and Catholic Education Office personnel was very positive both regarding the high quality of the presentations as well as the depth of theoretical understanding demonstrated by members of each of the school teams.

As a component of the day’s program, school staff were asked to reflect on their involvement in the OLSEL Project Initiative. Results of these reflections were as follows:

	ALL (n = 43)	INVOLVED 2009 & 2010 (n = 34)	INVOLVED 2010 only (n = 9)
Rate your current level of confidence in identifying and implementing OLSEL based teaching strategies that have enhanced learning outcomes for students	4.00 (80%)	4.15 (83%)	3.44 (69%)

Comments

- A very informative program with excellent in-school support.
- Colourful Semantics and Story Grammar are my new best friends. The impact on creating fluent, confident children has been most impressive.
- My current level of confidence is much more advanced and I look forward to continuing to enhance and hone my skills/strategies to benefit my students.

- I have found the strategies extremely helpful and have noticed a huge difference in the outcomes for students.
- Much more comfortable now that at the beginning when overwhelmed.
- Great program, great support .. feel much more confident.
- Still learning through presenting various aspects to the children and adapting how I use the strategies.
- Now know importance of speaking, listening and understanding for comprehension. Greater knowledge of how language and stories work and necessity for explicit teaching.
- Practice has become embedded in all interactions with children (formal and informal).
- Has greatly enhanced my teaching practice in all aspects of literacy. I am able to use the same strategies for most areas of the curriculum when questioning the children. I am now focussed on improving the oral language output of children.
- What a difference time can make! At the beginning, it was so much to take in but it has been sifted and sorted daily to “pick the eyes” out of all that is on offer.
- Teaching strategies are straightforward and immediately implementable.
- I have a much better understanding of the importance of oral language and the vastness of oral language related competencies.
- I still have a long way to develop but I understand, comprehend and know how to access resources to adapt to future circumstances (e.g. different year levels)

	ALL (n = 43)	INVOLVED 2009 & 2010 (n = 34)	INVOLVED 2010 only (n = 9)
Rate your level of confidence in further identifying and implementing adapted teaching and learning practices in your school based on your involvement in the OLSEL Professional Learning Program	4.02 (81%)	4.09 (82%)	3.78 (76%)

Comments

- I haven't had the opportunity to try everything and after watching the presentations today there are many ideas that we can still implement
- Happily share and carry out all suggestions.
- I have every confidence that I will continue expanding my teaching and learning practices.
- Will continue to trial and embed strategies into teaching and learning practices.
- Have become more confident in 2010.
- Working as part of an enthusiastic team helps keep momentum going.

- With increasing understanding, the possibilities within any given lesson are wide open.
- I will use it for all my inquiry learning planning and questioning as a tool to enhance the oral/written output of all children.
- I feel confident. This is quickly becoming embedded in my classroom practice.
- I feel confident with offering suggestions on what/how we could do things to improve oral language. However, I think extending this knowledge to senior/middle staff members is presenting as a challenge.

	ALL (n = 43)	INVOLVED 2009 & 2010 (n = 34)	INVOLVED 2010 only (n = 9)
Overall, rate the value of having been involved in the OLSEL Research Project and Professional Learning Program	4.63 (93%)	4.79 (96%)	4.00 (80%)

Comments

- Superb!! It has been a valuable program in supporting our Reading Recovery program and I have gained many useful strategies to improve my teaching and student outcomes.
- OLSEL really opened my eyes on the way to best incorporate oral language into all areas of school.
- The ideas, suggestions and shared experiences have been most valuable. It has given more depth to my teaching.
- It was highly valuable in all aspects and the ongoing support from the OLSEL website will be a great aid in the future.
- The support from outside school has been tremendous.
- This is the best on-going PD I have ever been involved in (Teacher of 30 years). Excellent combination of theory, practical application and expert support.
- Support from CEO great. OLSEL website a great aid.
- Highly valuable due to continued support and links made to other schools.
- It has been a very beneficial exercise and has had quite an impact for us.
- It has been GREAT. At first, I was totally confused but now am definitely a believer and a doer of OLSEL.
- Created awareness of providing ample opportunity to refine oral language and its importance as basis for literacy learning.
- It has affirmed what is “good” in my teaching practice and has reminded me of the benefits in not “throwing out the baby with the bathwater”.
- This project has made a significantly positive impact upon teaching and learning in our school.

- This has been excellent PD. Classroom practices have changed; outcomes for children have changed.
- As a graduate teacher, this program has given me a greater awareness of oral language and provided me with greater confidence in this area of literacy.
- The value of this program is not limited to the oral language project. This program has helped build strong staff relationships and has helped provide information/strategies to meet a very evident need with the children in our school.
- As Principal, the greatest value I've seen is a cohort of staff having PD together over an extended period with excellent support from experts. This has enhanced the professional knowledge of the teachers.
- An excellent program to be involved in where we have learned as teachers ourselves and also seen development and growth within the children.
- This is the most "hands-on", easily implemented program that I have been involved in for a very long time.

What have been the impacts of your school's involvement in the OLSEL Research Project during 2009 and 2010 in relation to?

A. Your theoretical knowledge about oral language and literacy acquisition

- Planning using the OLSEL folder has been beneficial (collaborative planning)
- More specific information with regard to where the children are at and where to lead them to.
- Use folder to guide planning. Have specific goals for lessons taught.
- Has increased dramatically due to study of ICPALER folder and University subject.
- Has grown immensely. I feel I am being more accountable and more focused.
- It has provided a scaffold for me to build on.
- Greater reflection on and evaluation of my teaching practice.
- Increased ability to identify, plan for, implement and assess oral language learning.
- More of an understanding behind the theory of oral language and how children acquire literacy.
- Deeper understanding of the aspects of oral language and the importance of laying a firm foundation through oral literacy to develop other forms of literacy.
- Has put it all into perspective and has made my knowledge much clearer.
- Deepened my understanding and knowledge. Provided a research base for improved practice.
- A high impact. Some knowledge from First Steps (Tutor) but I really needed to re-visit the whole oral language area. I feel my knowledge has increased greatly.

- A greater awareness of the individual aspects of literacy acquisition and presumptions about children’s ability to absorb the information with understanding.
- I thought I knew a lot about oral language development but I was humbled by what I still didn’t know.

B. Your teaching practices and those of your colleagues

- We have focused on the four elements for our planning and this has proven to be a successful formula. All feel progress is being made.
- Shared ideas of what works well
- Lots more talk and fewer worksheets.
- I have a more focused view with planning. We have learned to unpack and then “scaffold” children’s learning.
- It has improved our teaching strategies especially in the areas of literacy and maths.
- Being more explicit in the language that I want children to use. Having oral language in the foreground of my planning.
- Now question what we assume children know; mindful of the questions we pose; aware of how much we talk and how much we allow the children to talk.
- Having colleagues who enthusiastically share.
- More aware of teaching oral language explicitly and more incidental teaching of oral language. More confident identifying and teaching oral language.
- Our Junior Team has refined and expanded their repertoire of literacy teaching practices. We have explicitly refocused existing practices concatenated with new ideas. Synergy at its best!
- I have implemented a range of strategies that began as “I will try this” and have developed into my everyday practice.
- I feel more confident in my teaching.
- An overall change in the approaches to literacy planning and programming and a “depth” to our already good practices.
- While we already had a strong literacy program due to the needs of our high ESL student population, OLSEL has expanded and enhanced this further.

C. The working of the Professional Learning Team

- Terrific .. weekly meetings in the beginning with termly review of expectations keeps all on the same “wavelength”
- Team members always willing to share ideas and resources with each other
- Each week, an element of OLSEL is discussed, work samples compared and new ideas and website explored.
- Good support and leadership.

- Has been very good especially when going through data.
- Development of literacy-language action plans. Regular reflection.
- Great team building.
- Shared enthusiasm of the need to focus on oral language to support other areas of literacy.
- The team have a common language towards a common set of goals.
- We are all on the same journey wanting the same outcomes for our children. Oral language is embedded in daily interactions.
- A common language for professional discourse. Provided a focus for the PLT.

D. Students' learning and classroom participation

- Notable progress .. easy to implement with measureable progress. Children enjoy many of the activities.
- Improvement in the standards achieved.
- Children using more complex language. Prepared to ask questions when unsure and willing to have a go and take risks.
- Classroom more vibrant, children more confident. Many more children express their opinions. Children's vocabulary and comprehension has increased.
- Providing an in-depth oral language program across the curriculum has helped my students develop stronger communication skills.
- Children are active in the classroom discussions. Their vocabulary has significantly grown and they retain new ideas really well. Very good at identifying the skills/behaviours needed to be a good listener.
- In the Junior School, the impact of OLSEL has been positively immense. Children think before answering, listening is more focused, minds are engaged and imaginations are also vividly engaged and responding.
- More interesting lessons, discussions and feedback.
- Children LOVE participating in Big Book activities .. acting out, putting themselves in the text. They are more enthusiastic about their learning.
- Increased in volume and improved in quality. Happy, talking children .. expressive and articulate.
- The students enjoy telling each other to "use your words" and "speak in sentences". They contribute to class discussions with excitement.

What are strategies you will be looking to implement within your school to achieve the following:

- Sustaining what has been learned from the project; and,
- Further strengthening the links between oral language and literacy learning both for current and future students.
- Dedicated PD sessions so we can ensure as a team we continue to know our future direction and share our successes and ideas as well as discuss any improvements.
- Ensure that the rest of the school is familiar with the program so it can be carried on throughout the year levels.
- Expanding OLSEL into a P-6 approach to improving student literacy outcomes.
- Further strengthen our resources and the understandings behind them.
- PLT meetings will continue to highlight, review and share all OLSEL experiences, resources and updates.
- Using ideas learned from the PD day of sharing from other schools that have come up with different strategies and ways of working with the ICPALER model.
- Expand use of Colourful Semantics and Story Grammar.
- Spreading our message to our community .. the importance of oral language and what parents can do.
- Ensure when there are changes to staff that team members are all on the same page.
- Revisit literacy policy to reflect understandings.
- Importance of community links both for current families and each new intake of Prep children.
- Extending the assessment strategies for oral language and using this data to develop programs that will extend oral language and other literacy outcomes.
- Sharing of ideas for embedding oral language practice across the curriculum.

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