Language Support Program

Professional Learning Guide

Every child, every opportunity

Language Support Program

Professional Learning Guide

Foreword

Dear colleagues

In 2005-6 the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development took a further step in recognising the significant influence that high-quality classroom teaching has on the learning performance of students when it introduced a comprehensive oral language program, the Language Support Program, in all Victorian government schools.

The Language Support Program is based on the extensive research of Associate Professor John Munro (University of Melbourne). Associate Professor Munro has spent 20 years working with students who exhibit difficulties with expressive and receptive language competencies, such that their academic progress is impeded. He has developed a comprehensive body of knowledge and expertise that champions pedagogical knowledge and skills to strengthen teachers' capacity to engage all students in the learning experience.

This resource has both a primary and secondary school focus and relates to the range of other priorities and policies that the Department promotes, such as the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, and student learning initiatives including the English Developmental Continuum. The Language Support Program is teacher focused. Its explicit aim is to build teacher capacity to support students with a language disorder or delay and hence the capacity of the system.

Recognition is paid to Associate Professor Munro, who developed the initial framework, and all regional language support program facilitators (2005 to 2008), who have developed much of the material available in this resource. Some material has been designed in direct response to teacher feedback from the professional learning program and modified to meet the increasing competence and confidence of teachers as they have implemented the program in schools.

As an education system we have a shared responsibility to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. This resource adds to the range of initiatives and programs that support student outcomes in a high-quality classroom environment.

Darrell Fraser
Deputy Secretary
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Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Contents

Teacher Guide

About this Professional Learning Guide

The Language Support Program (LSP) is a substantial program comprising direct assistance to teachers in developing strong oral language competency in children and young people to maximise their learning potential. It is founded on a framework of empirical evidence, which acknowledges that improved teacher knowledge and skills, conveyed in explicit teaching, respond to students' readiness to learn and results in positive learning outcomes. The Language Support Program is based on the extensive research of Dr John Munro (The University of Melbourne).

A train-the-trainer Language Support Program was originally delivered by Dr Munro to department staff in Victorian regions, and subsequently by the trained regional Language Support Program facilitators.

The Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide

The Professional Learning Guide was developed by drawing together the learnings within the regional professional development programs. It aims to provide teachers, coordinators and schools with:

- an understanding of the development of oral language and its linguistic structures and features
- procedures to identify children and young people with language difficulties based on observation of classroom behaviour
- an oral language observational profile enabling the identification of specific areas of difficulty
- teaching strategies that directly address the difficulties identified through the detection process and which can be implemented within the classroom
- advice about the implementation of the Language Support Program (LSP) in a school.

While the Language Support Program is primarily designed to meet the needs of coordinators and teachers of students in the Early Years and the Middle Years, there are opportunities included in the learning modules for teachers of students with language disorders and language difficulties in secondary schools to learn about and use the principles of language support.

Principles underpinning the Professional Learning Guide

The Language Support Program assumes that all teachers are aware of the principles underpinning literacy development. These principles apply to all stages of schooling: the Early Years, the Middle Years and the Later Years. The principles are sometimes described as the 'eight areas of literacy knowledge'.

1 Building awareness of oral language to support literacy
2 Awareness that texts are written for a range of purposes
3 Word meaning and vocabulary knowledge
4 Orthographic and morphemic knowledge
5 Reading aloud to achieve fluency and phrasing
6 Literal, critical, inferential and creative comprehension outcomes
7 Recognising and using the forms, linguistic structures and features of written texts
8 Using metacognitive and self-management strategies

Source: Munro 2005

All teachers, coordinators and language aides need to be aware of the concepts underpinning each of these areas of literacy knowledge, as well as the teaching and learning strategies that can be used to support them.

The Professional Learning Guide has been developed to reinforce the knowledge and successful use of these principles.

Structure of the Professional Learning Guide

The Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide includes this Teacher Guide, five learning modules, a set of appendixes and references.

Teacher Guide

This short guide for teachers provides information about the origins of the Language Support Program, its aims, advice about literacy knowledge, and information about the structure of the Professional Learning Guide and its modules. It describes a range of optional professional learning opportunities within modules and advises on possible learning pathways.

Module 1: The Language Support Program

Module 1 describes the aims, purpose and nature of a Language Support Program. It provides information about literacy and language difficulties and the importance of language education to support these. It includes a survey for participants to assess their own and their school's needs in relation to literacy knowledge and language support. It briefly describes Modules 2 to 5 to allow participants to select those modules that meet their immediate and future needs.

Module 2: Language disorders and difficulties

Module 2 provides essential knowledge about language, language disorders and difficulties, and the role of language frameworks for understanding and supporting students with language difficulties. It provides a detailed theoretical and practical analysis of the ICPAL oral language framework, which has been designed to meet the needs of students in a Language Support Program.

Module 3: Identifying and profiling students with language difficulties

Module 3 explores how curriculum documents and assessment tools can be used to identify students with language difficulties in the Early and Middle Years of schooling. Individual Learning Plans that can be used to profile students and plan for their educational needs are described in detail.

Module 4: Teaching strategies for students with language difficulties

Module 4 outlines practical teaching activities and strategies that can be used to improve the learning outcomes of students with language disorders and/or difficulties in the Early Years and Middle Years of schooling. Practical teaching and learning strategies and resources connected to Indicators of Progress relevant to students with language difficulties, and a number of eLearning products and activities for Middle Years classes, are also described.

Module 5: Implementing a Language Support Program

Module 5 takes a whole-school approach to the implementation of a Language Support Program. Implementating the program is linked to the characteristics of the Effective Schools Model, in which the roles of principals, school leaders and teachers are explored. The module concludes with a description of how the use of a Student Support Group can involve principals, teachers, parents and consultants in creating a whole-school approach that respects the developmental needs of students with language difficulties.

Appendixes

The appendixes contain useful additional information, including a glossary of key terms; the ICPAL language framework; and advice on how schools with a Language Support Program should cater for Indigenous, ESL and secondary school students with language difficulties.

References

The list of references cites material referred to in the Professional Learning Guide.

DVD

The DVD that accompanies this resource provides a brief introduction to each module. The purpose of these presentations is to provide background to the concepts introduced in each module, illustrate classroom practices and assist school-based Language Support Program Coordinators to facilitate the implementation of the Language Support Program in their schools.

Structure of a learning module

At the start of each module, advice is provided to participants about the content and resources required to engage with the module.

Learning modules are divided into sections. These sections are indicated by the numeral following the module number (e.g. Module 2.2 refers to Section 2 of Module 2). The sections are based on natural divisions in the content, as well as what is deemed to be achievable within a 60- or 90-minute school-based professional learning activity.

Timing

For the benefit of users engaging with a module within a self-paced or collegiate professional learning program, an estimation of the time it should take to complete a module section is provided at the start of each section. Additional research and practical classroom-based activities are not included in this time estimation.

These time estimations (in minutes) for all modules are summarised below.

Module 1.1 – 60   Module 4.1 – 90
Module 2.1 – 90   Module 4.2 – 90
Module 2.2 – 90   Module 4.3 – 60
Module 2.3 – 90   Module 5.1 – 90
Module 3.1 – 90   Module 5.2 – 60
Module 3.2 – 60

Resources

Recommended resources are specified at the start of each section of a learning module. This allows participants to source any external resources required before the professional learning begins. In most cases, however, required resources are included in this guide and presented after the reference to them in the text. Larger resources may be found at the end of a module.

Resources follow a predictable numbering system where the first numeral identifies the module and the second numeral identifies the number of the resource within the module (e.g. Resource 2.1 refers to Resource 1 of Module 2). This is designed to enable printouts of resources to be easily identified and matched to specific modules.

Glossary of key terms

Descriptions of key terms used are listed at the front of each module. The complete listing of key terms used in the guide is included in Appendix 1.

Potential audiences for the Professional Learning Guide

The Professional Learning Guide has been developed into learning modules that are designed to meet the needs of the following potential audiences:

- regional LSP facilitators who have participated in a train-the-trainer program and who want to ensure consistency between regional and school-based resources
- school-based LSP coordinators, teachers and LSP assistants who have attended regional training and need a reference to use on an ongoing basis in a school
- school-based LSP coordinators, teachers and LSP assistants who have attended regional training and are facilitating school-based training in a school
- school-based LSP coordinators, teachers and LSP assistants who have not had an opportunity to attend regional training, yet who want to use and learn from the Professional Learning Guide
- school leadership teams and interested parent or community representatives who are seeking general information about language support and the implementation of a Language Support Program in a school.

Principles of professional learning

Sound and accepted principles of professional learning are essential for the delivery of high-quality professional learning to improve student learning outcomes. The principles apply to all levels of an education system: schools, networks, regions and the central office. These principles are summarised below:

1 Professional learning is focused on student outcomes.
2 Professional learning is focused on and embedded in teacher practice.
3 Professional learning is informed by the best available research on effective learning and teaching.
4 Professional learning is collaborative, involving reflection and feedback.
5 Professional learning is evidence based and data driven.
6 Professional learning is ongoing, supported and fully integrated into the culture and operations of the system (i.e. schools, networks, regions and the central office).
7 Professional learning is an individual and collective responsibility at all levels of the system and it is not optional.

Professional learning opportunities

The professional learning opportunities within the Professional Learning Guide are based on these seven principles of highly effective professional learning. They underpin the opportunities for you to extend your understanding within each of the five learning modules.

Professional learning opportunities are indicated in the modules by a range of symbols, where each symbol refers to a further, optional activity.

- Locate, gather and interpret resources
- Locate resources on the internet
- Use reflective learning techniques
- Participate in collegiate professional development
- Practical classroom-based activity

Where possible, professional learning opportunities within this guide use teaching and learning strategies that apply to adult learners as well as children and young people. These teaching and learning strategies can also be used in the classroom. For more detail about these strategies, refer to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority website, which includes a 'Teaching and Learning Resource' (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2007). This rescource provides descriptions and illustrations of brainstorming techniques, graphic organisers, collaborative learning strategies and so on.

Going further

At the conclusion of each section within a learning module there are suggestions for follow-up activities and research related to the content of the session. These are optional.

Professional learning pathways

The learning modules of the Professional Learning Guide are designed to enable users to both sequentially progress through the five modules and to use modules in part or in full to meet their immediate or ongoing needs.

The following tables provide a set of recommended pathways through the Professional Learning Guide based on user profiles. The parts of the Professional Learning Guide recommended for the user are indicated by darker shading.

Evaluation

If the learning modules are delivered in facilitator-led training, subsequent evaluation is desirable. There will be a number of models of professional learning evaluation that have been used in your school. The following model (presented as a set of key questions) is provided as a sample of what is possible:

What did you find particularly useful in this module?

Is there something that puzzles you and about which you would like more information?

What parts of the module can you implement in the classroom?

What additional resources have you discovered that can be shared with others?

Online support

The components of the school-based LSP Professional Learning Guide can be downloaded from the Victorian Education website.

As weblinks are subject to change, updates to links to online content will be periodically made on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website, at http://www.education.vic.gov.au

Recommended pathways through the Professional Learning Guide to match user profiles

User	Regional LSP facilitator										
Experience	Has completed a train-the-trainer training program and is currently delivering regionally based LSP professional development										
Purpose	Ongoing reference										
Teacher Guide	1.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2

User	School-based LSP facilitator (coordinator, teacher, speech pathologist)										
Experience	Has completed regionally based training										
Purpose	Ongoing reference										
Teacher Guide	1.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2

User	School-based LSP coordinator, LSP teacher, LSP speech pathologist										
Experience	Has not completed regionally based training.										
Purpose	Self-paced or collegiate professional learning. Preferably led by a regionally trained, school-based LSP facilitator										
Teacher Guide	1.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2

User	Teacher (Early Years)										
Experience	Has not completed regionally based training										
Purpose	Self-paced or collegiate professional learning. Preferably led by a regionally trained, school-based LSP facilitator										
Teacher Guide	1.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2

User	Teacher (Middle Years)										
Experience	Has not completed regionally based training										
Purpose	Self-paced or collegiate professional learning. Preferably led by a regionally trained, school-based LSP facilitator										
Teacher Guide	1.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2

User	Principal, school leader, parent, community member										
Experience	Has not completed regionally based training										
Purpose	Collegiate professional learning led by a school or regionally based LSP facilitator										
Teacher Guide	1.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2

User	LSP assistant										
Experience	Has not completed regionally based training										
Purpose	Self-paced or collegiate professional learning										
Teacher Guide	1.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2

Module 1:

The Language Support Program

The Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide has been developed to assist teachers, coordinators and school leaders to understand more about language, language disorders and language difficulties, and how the ICPAL oral language framework can guide a Language Support Program in a school.[1]

Module 1 is an introductory learning module. It comprises one session that addresses the following key questions about the school-based support of students with language difficulties:

- What knowledge about language development is required of teachers, coordinators, teacher aides and speech pathologists?

- How is oral language a foundation for student learning?

- What are the aims, purpose and nature of the Language Support Program?

- How should schools implement the Language Support Program?

- How will this Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide be useful for developing and maintaining a school's Language Support Program?

Prerequisites[2]

No prior training is required before attempting this introductory module. If you are unfamiliar with the Language Support Program or a language framework, you should begin your engagement with the Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide at Module 1.

Outcomes

Learning outcomes are identified at the beginning of each module. They apply to all the sections of a module. Learning outcomes will usually be met by engaging with the content of the module and completing the relevant learning opportunities identified.

By the end of Module 1, you will be able to:

- identify critical knowledge and processes required for catering to students within a school's Language Support Program

- understand how the Language Support Program will improve student learning outcomes

- understand the rationale, purpose and aims of the Language Support Program

- know which modules are relevant to your immediate and future professional learning needs.

Timing

For the benefit of users engaging with a module within a self-paced or collegiate professional learning program, an estimation of the time it should take to complete a module section is provided at the start of each section. Additional research and practical classroom-based activities are not included in this time estimation.

Module 1.1 timing – 60 minutes

Resources

Recommended resources are specified at the start of each section of a learning module. This allows participants to source any external resources required before the professional learning begins. In most cases, however, required resources are included in this guide and presented after the reference to them in the text. Larger resources may be found at the end of a module.

Resources follow a predictable numbering system where the first numeral identifies the module and the second numeral identifies the number of the resource within the module.

Glossary of key terms

Descriptions of key terms used are listed at the front of the module, and are also highlighted in colour the first time a term is used. The complete listing of key terms used in the guide is included in Appendix 1.

Module 1.1:
Introduction to the Professional Learning Guide

Module 1.1 is an introductory learning module in the Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide. It introduces and describes the importance of oral language to language and literacy learning and briefly raises issues relating to school implementation of a Language Support Program (LSP).

Resources

1 Resource 1.1 Student observation activity

2 Appendix 2 Language Support Program Implementation Survey

3 Speech Pathology Australia website and Speech Pathology Australia Fact Sheets (available at: www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

Timing

60 minutes

Module glossary (terms in italics are separate glossary items)

language difficulties	Difficulties in acquiring or using language. May be expressive or receptive. These difficulties may involve one, some or all of the *phonologic, morphologic, semantic, syntactic* or *pragmatic* components of the linguistic system
language disorder	Extreme *language difficulties* not accounted for by other factors such as ESL, hearing loss, intellectual disability or social or emotional factors. Diagnosis is made by a multidisciplinary team including a speech pathologist and a psychologist. Is also referred to as language disability, language impairment or specific language impairment
oral language	Verbal communication through spoken symbols (sounds, words, sentences and discourse) that represent objects, actions and ideas
phonological knowledge	What we know about individual sounds (phonemes) in our language

Communication and language difficulties

It is estimated that one in seven children, young people and adults in Australia have a communication disability. This equates to 2.7 million Australians (Speech Pathology Australia website, 2008[3]).

These disabilities can be present at birth or acquired later in life. Communication disorders can arise from a range of challenges including speech (articulation), producing and understanding language, voice, fluency (stuttering) and hearing.

Speech Pathology Australia has identified that in the Australian states and territories:

- 386, 000 children have speech delay problems
- 577, 000 school-aged children have language difficulties
- 326, 000 people stutter
- 2.5 million people have a hearing impairment
- 25, 000 people suffer a severe brain injury every year.

Source: Speech Pathology Australia n.d.(a)

Explore, download and read relevant Fact Sheets from the public section of the Speech Pathology Australia website relating to language disorders and disabilities. Identify any content that interests you relating to teaching and learning.

Consider starting a reflective journal to use when engaging with the Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide. You might like to start a K-W-L-H organiser to identify 'What you know' and 'What you want to learn'. Complete 'What you have learned' and 'How you learned it' after completing Module 1.1.

The K-W-L-H organiser provides you with a framework to explore prior knowledge about a topic and consider what you want to know and learn. It can be used in a group learning strategy but is most effective when you reflect personally before sharing ideas with others.

See Resource 1.2 (page 18) for an example layout.

Are you familiar with the eight areas of literacy knowledge outlined by Dr John Munro (Munro 2007)? Test your understanding of each by referring to http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/8areas.pdf. You might use a reflective journal to explain key literacy concepts and to build a linguistic vocabulary for language learning.

The importance of oral language

Oral language is the foundation for student learning. It is essential for literacy learning, and successful use of language is critical for students' wellbeing. Almost all classroom-based learning relies on oral language.

Students vary in their ability to use their existing language in order to learn. The level of oral language knowledge and competency of some students is substantially different from the demands of the curriculum.

An explicit oral language program acknowledges that the 'Speaking & Listening' dimension of the English domain requires further elaboration for those students with oral language difficulties, or gaps in language knowledge, skills and practice.

Learning Module 5 provides advice about how an explicit oral language program can be implemented at a school level.

The implementation of a Language Support Program for students with language difficulties can lead to enhanced student learning in:

- listening comprehension
- expressive language
- vocabulary
- phonological knowledge
- grammatical knowledge
- social language skills
- using language to learn and to communicate effectively
- storage and retrieval of information in and from long-term memory
- perception and attention to spoken language.

What is a Language Support Program?

A Language Support Program is designed to cater for students with language difficulties. Its purpose is to develop the capacity of schools and teachers to provide appropriate programs and learning experiences that will improve the oral language skills of children and young people.

While you or your school may offer a range of approaches and programs that attempt to meet the oral language needs of the majority of students through the study of English and English as a Second Language (ESL), these opportunities may not enable students with specific and general language difficulties to develop the necessary competency in the use of oral language.

Under Section 32 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, education providers must comply with the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. To comply, an education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with a disability. The *Disability Standards for Education* set benchmarks for education and training providers with which all Victorian government schools must comply. In particular, guidelines relating to *participation* and *curriculum development* apply to students with identified language difficulties. For more information regarding the *Disability Standards for Education*, visit: www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Humanrightsandanti-discrimination_DisabilityStandardsforEducation.

Rationale

The long-term nature of language disorders and difficulties means that, even when provided with specialised speech pathology intervention, a significant number of students require ongoing, targeted teaching that enables them to access the day-to-day curriculum of the classroom.

A Language Support Program can assist you and/or your school to develop strategies to support the needs of these students.

Strategies that your school may consider using include:

- targeted resources, such as speech pathologists or other professionals
- specialised materials
- teacher professional development and learning
- LSP assistants
- targeted teaching methods.

Best-practice funding models for Language Support Programs attempt to ensure that:

- resources are best directed to build teacher capacity to support students
- embedded funding leads to certainty for schools in developing a program
- funding targets those students with the greatest need.

> If you are a school leader or coordinator, you might like to collect data relating to your school. This might include student family occupation data, the extent of existing funding for language support, and the names and contact details of speech pathologists and other relevant professionals used in your school.

The 'characteristics of effective schools' in relation to improving student outcomes in literacy are explored in Module 5.1.

How schools will use the program

In order to provide high-quality programs for students with diverse learning needs, your school needs to focus on embracing the broad objectives and the specific aims of the Language Support Program for students with language difficulties. The incidence of language difficulties and disorders means that the related learning issues are relevant to every school and to all aspects of teaching and learning.

Your school will need to examine:

- what it currently understands about the influence of oral language on learning and general school performance
- what it currently understands about language difficulties and disorders

- how current teaching practices meet the language needs of all students, and in particular those experiencing difficulties
- what whole-school processes are in place for identifying and understanding the specific needs of students who may have a language disorder or difficulty.

Your school will also need to decide:

- how a Language Support Program for students with a language disorder or difficulty will be implemented and coordinated
- how students in need will be identified and then individually targeted
- how the program will involve appropriate teachers, coordinators, parents and regional or community specialists
- who will be responsible for the program's implementation and coordination.

> Consider each of these points to gain an understanding of your school's readiness to introduce or implement a Language Support Program. You may like to complete the survey included in Appendix 2 to clarify your ideas.

> If you are undertaking a collegiate professional learning activity, construct a SWOT analysis that takes into account the views of the group as reflected by the survey results (see above). A SWOT analysis is a tool that allows you to focus on key issues and make informed decisions. By looking at the pros and cons of a topic, you consider the whole picture.
>
> See Resource 1.3 (page 19) for an example layout.

> Use the analysis to reflect on your personal professional learning priorities in the area of language and literacy learning.

Structure of the Professional Learning Guide

Modules 2 to 5 will provide you with the tools required to contribute to, or lead, a Language Support Program. These modules include:

- a set of language tasks that will allow you to probe in greater depth the oral language knowledge of particular students of concern

- recommended resources for delivering a program.

Before progressing to Module 2, you might think about and document what is happening in your own classroom. 'Resource 1.1 Student observation activity' allows you to reflect about a student who may be experiencing language difficulties.

Module 2	Research about language disorders and difficulties, including an analysis of the ICPAL language framework
Module 3	Identifying students with language difficulties through the curriculum and profiling students using an Individual Learning Plan
Module 4	Teaching strategies that address the difficulties identified in the profiling process and that can be implemented in the Early Years and Middle Years classrooms
Module 5	Detailed advice for teachers, coordinators and school leaders about implementing a Language Support Program
Appendixes	Resources, advice and references

Going further

There are valuable online Australian education resources relating to literacy, particularly as it relates to language difficulties and disorders in children and young people. These include state and territory policies and guidelines as well as academic research.

Explore the content of a literacy learning resource bank such as:

- 'Literacy Professional Learning Resource', Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2008c, available at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ studentlearning/teachingresources/ english/literacy/default.htm

- 'Literacy Learning Disabilities', (in Munro 2008), University of Melbourne, available at http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/ eldi/selage/publications/

Resource 1.1: Student observation activity

It is important to become good observers of students' conversations so that you can make judgments about their language development.

If they are having difficulties, just what sort of problem can you identify?

If you are participating in group professional learning, share the results of your research.

By taking examples of language in the classroom, it is possible to see whether a student seems to have difficulty with various tasks.

Remember that you already know a great deal about children's language.

TRUST YOUR INTUITION!

Think of a student whose language is somehow different from that of other people.

What is it that concerns you?

What do others, including you, do when communicating with the student?

What can the student do or not do, compared to their peers?

Resource 1.2: K-W-L-H

What I Know	
What I Want to Find Out	
What I Learned	
How Did I Learn It?	

Resource 1.3: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses

Opportunities	Threats

Module 2:

Language Disorders and Difficulties

The Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide has been developed to assist teachers, coordinators and school leaders to understand about language, language difficulties and disorders, and how language frameworks are important for effective language support programs.[4]

Module 2 includes three learning modules that address the following key questions about the school-based support of students with language difficulties:

- What does research tell us about language difficulties and disorders in children and young people?
- What is a language framework and how is it used to inform teaching?
- What are the theoretical components of the ICPAL language framework? (Ideas, Conventions, Purposes and Ability to Learn in both the expressive and receptive areas of (oral) language)
- Which linguistic concepts and terms are essential for understanding language difficulties?
- How can the ICPAL language framework be used to develop a common language for the understanding of language and literacy development?

Prerequisites[5]

If you are a teacher, coordinator or LSP assistant and have a limited understanding of language, literacy or how to cater for students with language difficulties, you are advised to complete Module 1 before attempting Module 2. More experienced teachers and coordinators or aides who may have completed regional training can begin at Module 2.

Outcomes

Learning outcomes are identified at the beginning of each module. They apply to all the sessions in the module. Learning outcomes will usually be met by engaging with the content of the module and completing the relevant learning opportunities identified.

By the end of Module 2, you will be able to:

- understand the principles of language development
- recognise how students acquire and develop language throughout primary and secondary school
- understand the linguistic concepts underpinning the ICPAL language framework
- understand, and be able to use, the language of the ICPAL language framework to identify, profile and teach students with language difficulties.

Timing

For the benefit of users engaging with a module within a self-paced or collegiate professional learning program, an estimation of the time it should take to complete a module section is provided at the start of each section. Additional research and practical classroom-based activities are not included in this time estimation.

Module 2.1 timing – **90 minutes**
Module 2.2 timing – **90 minutes**
Module 2.3 timing – **90 minutes**

Resources

Recommended resources are specified at the start of each section of a learning module. This allows participants to source any external resources required before the professional learning begins. In most cases, however, required resources are included in this guide and presented after the reference to them in the text. Larger resources may be found at the end of a module.

Resources follow a predictable numbering system where the first numeral identifies the module and the second numeral identifies the number of the resource within the module.

Glossary of key terms

Descriptions of key terms used are listed at the front of the module, and are also highlighted in colour the first time a term is used. The complete listing of key terms used in the guide is included in Appendix 1.

Module 2.1:
Language and language frameworks

Module 2.1 provides a working definition of language and describes the links between language, learning and cognition within and across the stages of schooling. Receptive and expressive language disorders and difficulties are defined and the concept of language frameworks is introduced. The broad categories within the ICPAL language framework are outlined at the conclusion of Module 2.1.

Resources

1   Appendix 4 Indigenous students with language difficulties

Timing

90 minutes

Module glossary (terms in italics are separate glossary items)

expressive language	The production of a message through speaking and/or gestures or writing. Also known as *expression*, or language production
ICPAL language framework	Ideas, Conventions, Purposes and Ability to Learn in both the expressive and receptive areas of (oral) language
language difficulties	Difficulties in acquiring or using language. May be *expressive* or *receptive*. These difficulties may involve one, some or all of the *phonologic*, *morphologic*, *semantic*, *syntactic* or *pragmatic* components of the linguistic system
language disorder	Extreme *language difficulties* not accounted for by other factors such as ESL, hearing loss, intellectual disability or social/emotional factors. Diagnosis is made by a multidisciplinary team that includes a speech pathologist and a psychologist. Is also referred to as language disability, language impairment or specific language impairment
metacognition	Conscious awareness of one's thinking and learning processes; thinking about thinking

metalinguistics	Conscious awareness of language processes; ability to talk about language
morphology	Linguistic study of patterns of word formation in a language; system of word-forming elements (*morphemes*) and processes in a language
oral language	Verbal communication through spoken symbols (sounds, words, sentences and discourse) that represent objects, actions and ideas
phonology	Study of the sound system of a language
pragmatics	Social use, purpose and implied meaning of oral language, which is dependent on situational context. See also *Purposes* on page 29
receptive language	Ability to understand a message conveyed by another person via *expressive language.* Also known as language comprehension
semantics	Aspect of language that deals with meaning
syntax	Arrangement of words in a phrase or sentence to indicate relationships of meaning

What is language?

Language is a system of communication that uses symbols, shared by a culture or community, to convey meaning. Oral language uses spoken symbols (i.e. sequences of speech sounds) to make words, which represent objects, actions and ideas. Generally, words are arbitrary symbols that hold meaning for the users of the language because of the shared nature of the language. The symbols are associated with the meaning of the words only in the associations that we make between the words and the concepts to which the words refer.

The rules for how these words are combined into sentences and discourse is the grammar of the language. People can combine words in ways they have never heard before to construct new sentences and to communicate new meaning. The ability to use language to construct and communicate new meaning is a key feature of language, and is uniquely human.

Most children acquire language without being specifically taught. There is a strong, innate drive to language learning, with rapid development occurring between the ages of three and five years.

Language learning and cognition

Oral language development is intimately connected with cognition. Language gives the child an opportunity to think out loud (e.g. *this puzzle might fit because it's got blue on the end*). 'Self-talk' links words, actions and ideas, and facilitates planning and critical thinking. The ability to consciously attend to the way we think is often described as metacognition or 'thinking about thinking'.

Oral language supports learning across the curriculum. Language helps children to integrate new information, ideas and experiences into their existing framework of knowledge and beliefs. It also assists in making sense of the 'new', so that they can change and expand what

learning

they already know. When they express their ideas, justify their opinions and hear the responses of others, they are required to accommodate alternative ideas and modify their thinking.

Oral language underpins literacy. It is the primary language mode and students' comprehension of written language across the curriculum will depend on their underlying oral language ability. Social recognition is most often given to achievement in the written language mode. However, because students need to follow teacher instruction, understand and participate in oral discussions and learn to ask questions, oral language will continue to be the most important avenue for gaining information in the classroom.

Early instruction in literacy assumes a complex and abstract level of language that may not be present when the child begins school. Literacy learning requires metalinguistic awareness or ability to 'think about language'. Predictive skills are required to evaluate possible word meanings within the context of the sentence as spoken sounds are mapped onto the letters that represent them. Students with language difficulties may not have the ability to use this metalinguistic awareness, and require explicit teaching and modelling in thinking about language.

Are you familiar with the terms used above? Use a reflective journal to build your vocabulary about language learning. These terms are defined in the glossary and will be used throughout the modules. A full glossary of all key terms used in the Professional Learning Guide can be found in Appendix 1.

If you completed Module 1, you will have completed 'Resource 1.1 Student observation activity'. This enabled you to reflect on a student who may be experiencing language difficulties. Think about and compare what you have recorded about the student's language skills with the following description of language development in the Early and Middle Years of schooling.

Language learning in primary and secondary schools

Language is the foundation for all learning. It is essential for literacy learning. It is also critical for a child's wellbeing. International studies have linked language difficulties with psychosocial and socio-emotional disorders, depression, problem-solving difficulties, learning disabilities and the correlates of language difficulties such as impulsive behaviours, problematic social skills, substance use and abuse and unemployment issues.

Early Years of schooling

Children entering the first year of primary school will vary in their ability to use their existing language to learn. The entry level of oral language knowledge of some children is substantially different from that required for the beginning phases of the 'Speaking and Listening' dimension of English.

Examination of the learning outcomes for the first level of the Speaking and Listening dimension shows that students need to be able to listen to and talk about familiar ideas in appropriate ways, using relevant language structures, and need to take steps to clarify meaning where appropriate.

Some students lack the language knowledge necessary for learning these outcomes. They need additional teaching that will enhance their language knowledge to a point where they are able to benefit from conventional teaching, targeting speaking and listening. This discrepancy in oral language knowledge, if not addressed in a systematic and consistent way, will lead to the student becoming increasingly disengaged from academic success.

Eight-year-old children have usually mastered most of the phonological and grammatical conventions they will need for both comprehension and expression of language. They will learn more complex grammatical conventions in the period between eight and 13 years.

Develop some wall charts for an Early Years classroom identifying elements of language skills that students should have at entry into Prep. Use these as teaching and learning tools at the beginning of the year.

If you are interested in exploring typical language development of children before they enter primary school, you will need to refer to a current and reliable table of developmental language norms (your regional LSP facilitator or speech pathologist will be able to help you to locate one). If you are participating in a collegiate professional learning activity you might concentrate on one element (e.g. grammatical conventions), understand the development described and then develop a poster or presentation to share with others in the group.

Middle Years of schooling

During adolescence, young people essentially communicate in an adult manner, displaying increasing maturity in this process throughout secondary school. They comprehend abstract language, such as idioms, figurative language and metaphors. Explanations may become more figurative and less literal. Literacy and its relationship to cognition, linguistic competency, reading, writing and listening are the primary focuses in this age group. Students should be able to process texts, process abstract meaning, relate word meanings and contexts, understand punctuation and form complex syntactic structures.

If you are participating in a collegiate professional learning activity, use your English curriculum to identify the standards for oral language competency Prep–Year 4, or Years 5–8.

If you are a beginning teacher, remove the relevant level indicators and jumble the standards and then try to reassemble them in a developmental continuum. If you are an experienced teacher, use a think-pair-share activity to discuss what skills a student should exhibit if they meet an individual standard.

What is a language disorder?

A language disorder is an impairment in receptive or expressive language development, at a level substantially below the child's or young person's non-verbal cognitive abilities. Language disorders interfere with academic and occupational achievement and social interaction. The severity of the language disorder cannot be accounted for by other conditions, such as intellectual disability, hearing impairment, environmental or emotional factors. Diagnosis of a language disorder is typically made by formal standardised assessment carried out by an interdisciplinary team of a speech pathologist and a psychologist.

Students with a language disorder have difficulty in one or more areas of language:

- semantics: aspect of language that deals with meaning, concepts, vocabulary
- phonology: study of the sound system of a language
- morphology: the patterns of word formation in a language; how adding or deleting parts of words changes their meaning (e.g. plurals as in house/houses, past tense –ed, as in jump/jumped)
- syntax: arrangement of words in a phrase or sentence to indicate relationships of meaning
- pragmatics: social use, purpose and implied meaning of oral language.

Approximately 16 per cent of students (or four students in a class of 25 students) have language abilities significantly below the average range. The administration of standardised measures allows the language disorder to be categorised as mild, moderate or severe. Approximately 2 per cent of students have a severe language disorder.

Is the 4–in–25 ratio described above valid, based on your observations of children and young people in your class or school? Do you have any students that you believe have a 'severe language disorder'? In which area/s of language is the disorder most observable? You might use your reflective journal to record your observations and thoughts.

Children and young people with severe language disorders are at great risk of developing learning disorders and experiencing lifelong difficulties. With targeted assistance, they can develop both language skills and compensatory strategies over time.

Characteristics of a language disorder vary depending on its severity and the age of the student. Some commonly observed behaviours of students with language disorders are listed in Table 2.1.1.

Table 2.1.1 **Expressive and receptive language disorders and associated disorders**

Expressive language disorders	Limited vocabulary, often restricted to high-frequency short words
	Word-finding difficulties (e.g. use of non-specific words such as *thing*, *stuff*, *it*)
	Immature grammatical skills
	Fewer complex sentences (i.e. limited use of conjunctions and embedded phrases)
	Discourse lacking logical sequence
	Difficulty with conversational skills (e.g. staying on topic; initiating conversation)
	Difficulty recalling and retelling details of a past event
	Producing awkward sentences
Receptive language disorders	Limited vocabulary comprehension
	Difficulty understanding verbal instructions
	Difficulty understanding jokes or figurative language (e.g. *You're pulling my leg* – takes things literally)
	Difficulty reading non-verbal cues (e.g. tone of voice and facial expressions)
Associated disorders	Poor organisational skills (e.g. forgets readers and belongings)
	Low self-esteem
	Confusion due to misunderstanding of what is being said around them
	Behavioural difficulties that may arise from continual social and educational failure, including acting out as well as withdrawal
	Difficulty making and maintaining friendships
	Difficulty maintaining attention (e.g. easily distracted and impulsive)
	Difficulty expressing feelings
	Difficulty understanding concepts (e.g. left/right, under/over, etc.)
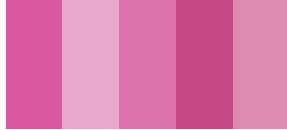
Language frameworks

An evidence- or research-based framework for understanding, identifying and teaching students with language difficulties or disorders must underpin any systematic language support program.

Language is a rule-governed system for making meaning. Bloom and Lahey (1978) identify three connected language skills: 'content', 'form' and 'use', each of which needs to be well developed for understanding, expression and successful communication to occur (see Table 2.1.2).

The ICPAL language framework for students with language difficulties was developed by Dr John Munro for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Its purpose is to enable teachers to understand, reflect upon, analyse, discuss, teach and plan future teaching of the various components of language. The three components of language identified by Bloom and Lahey are reflected in the first three elements of the ICPAL language framework (Figure 2.1.1).

Table 2.1.2 Components of language
(Bloom and Lahey 1978)

content	Knowledge we have of words and concepts (i.e. semantics)
form	Sounds, words and sentences that make up a language (i.e. syntax, morphology and phonology)
use	The way we use words and sentences to communicate, interact with others and learn (i.e. pragmatics and social discourse)

Figure 2.1.1 Comparison of language frameworks
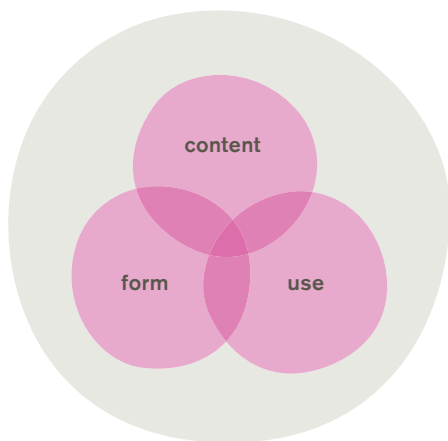
Bloom and Lahey (1978)
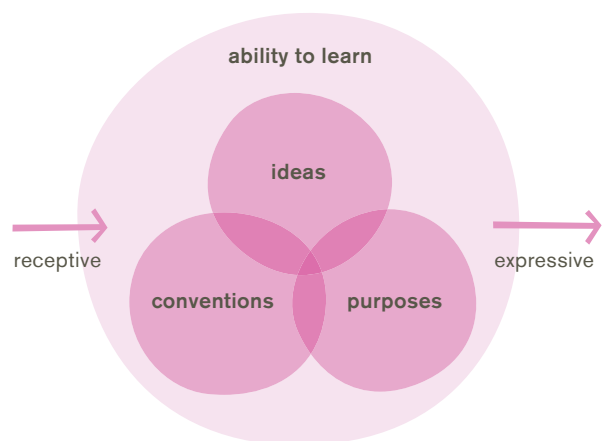
ICPAL (Munro 2005)

The ICPAL language framework

In the ICPAL language framework, 'ideas', 'conventions' and 'purposes' are associated with the learner's 'ability to learn', in both the expressive and receptive modes of language. This model is encapsulated in the mnemonic ICPAL.

Table 2.1.3 ICPAL definitions

I	Ideas	The meanings of words, sentences, discourse and topics of language
C	Conventions	Rules governing the sounds, words, sentences and genres of language
P	Purposes	Use of oral language within social interaction
AL	Ability to Learn	Necessary skills and their prerequisites for the acquisition of oral language

A student may experience problems in one or more of the areas implicit within the ICPAL language framework.

Expressive and receptive language modes

Expressive and receptive language both require the communicators to actively engage in the communication process. Receptive language is not a passive process, but requires the listener to bring to the message their own understandings of language.

'Expressive language' refers to the use of language to convey a message, including the use of grammatical structures, vocabulary and syntactic structures.

'Receptive language' refers to the ability to understand language when it is conveyed by another, including the understanding of concepts, grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure.

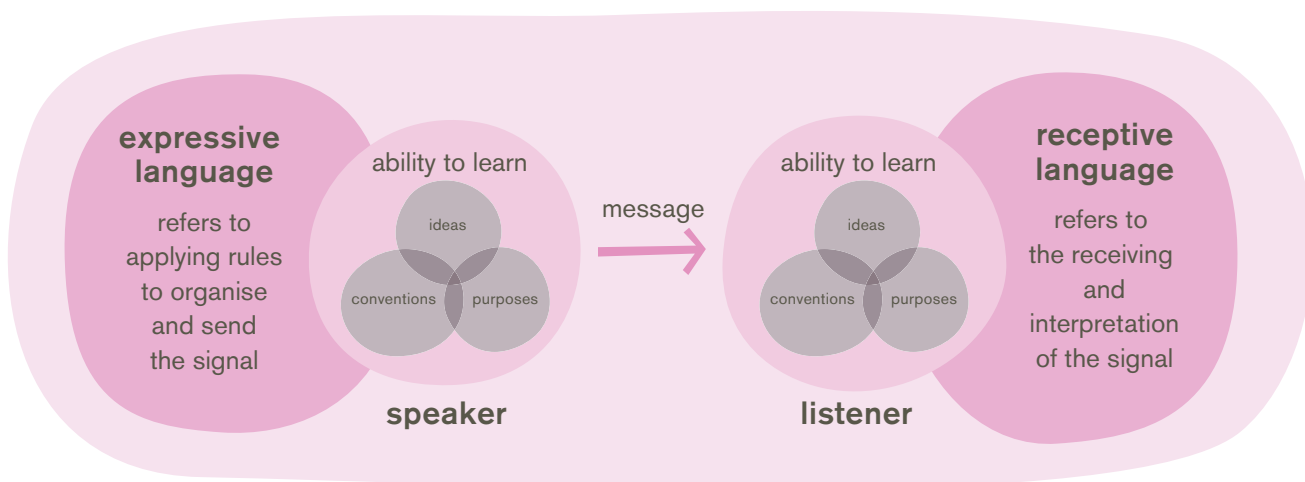**Figure 2.1.2** How expressive and receptive language work

Table 2.1.4 The ICPAL language framework

Ideas	**Words**	Words have meaning
		Parts of words have meaning
		Vocabulary as a meaning network
	Sentences	Simple sentences describe an event
		Variations of simple sentences describe an event
		More complex sentence ideas
	Discourse	The genre, or cohesion of the spoken message
	Topic	The main theme
Conventions	**Phonological**	The rules governing the combining of sounds in words
	Grammatical	The rules governing the combining and unpacking of words in sentences
	Genre	The rules governing the combining of sentences in discourse
Purposes	**Managing and directing**	How to start, maintain and end conversations
		How to take turns
		How to stay on topic
	Listening and speaking between the lines	How to 'read' in a message its intended meaning
		How to use idioms and metaphors
		How to extend a language exchange
	Adjusting to context and audience	Judging how much information to give
		Judging what others might know during the conversation
		Selecting appropriate words and conventions
		Using the context to assist understanding
		Linking ideas in relation to a particular context
	Using language for different goals	Identifying goals for an oral communication
		Inferring goals for an oral communication
		Using language to extend a language exchange
		Using language to request, agree, confirm, compliment, etc.
Ability To Learn	**Ability to perceive oral language**	Auditory perception
		Auditory discrimination
		Short-term auditory memory
	Ways of learning	Ability to use symbols
		Ability to conceptualise and categorise
		Ability to link ideas (e.g. cause and effect)
		Ability to sequence and order
		Ability to transfer knowledge
	Opportunities to learn	A range of experiences in which expressive and receptive language skills can be applied and learned

Table 2.1.5 ICPAL and other language terms

I	Ideas	messages, meanings, vocabulary, morphology, semantics
C	Conventions	rules, grammar, phonology, syntax, prosody
P	Purposes	functions of language, pragmatics
AL	Ability to Learn	knowing how to learn, metalinguistics, metacognition

Individually or collaboratively, begin creating an electronic presentation (e.g. MS PowerPoint) about the main features of the ICPAL model that you can use when explaining the concepts to other teachers or to parents. You will be able to add to the presentation as you progress through the remainder of Module 2.

A detailed schema of the ICPAL language framework is included in Appendix 3.

Going further

There are numerous literacy teaching and learning theories and perspectives about which you may have heard or read. These include:

- Skills approach
- Critical discourse analysis
- Multiliteracies
- Instructivist approach
- Growth and heritage approach
- Constructivist approach
- Critical literacy
- Critical–cultural approach
- Genre theory.

There are also language models other than the one developed by Dr John Munro. These include the Bloom and Lahey (1978) model and the Stackhouse and Wells (1997) model.

If you are interested in finding out more about these theories, perspectives or models, use a reputable online resource to source information.

Drawing on the information you have sourced, develop a presentation for other teachers on the main aspects of the theory, perspective or model.

Module 2.2:
The ICPAL language framework: Ideas and Conventions

Module 2.2 provides a detailed description of concepts, terms and examples for the first two components (i.e. Ideas and Conventions) of the ICPAL language framework for students with language difficulties.

Resources

1   Speech Pathology Australia: 'Fact sheet 2.2 Learning to speak and listen – what to expect in the first five years' (available at: www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

2   Resource 2.1 Semantic map

Timing

90 minutes

Module glossary (terms in italics are separate glossary items)

clause	A group of words, containing a subject and a verb, which forms part of a sentence
content words	Words that carry meaning by themselves (e.g. 'dog', 'glide', 'round', 'quick')
Conventions	The C in the ICPAL language framework: rules governing the sounds, words, sentences and genres of language
discourse	Connected oral or written communication more extensive than a single sentence
function words	Words that connect content words together (e.g. 'a', 'the', 'however', 'then')
genre conventions	Linguistic rules and conventions for linking sentences into larger text units (e.g. oral recount, giving instructions, monologue)
grammatical conventions	Linguistic rules (conventions) for combining words into sentences. See *morphology*
ICPAL language framework	Ideas, Conventions, Purposes and Ability to Learn in both the expressive and receptive areas of (oral) language
Ideas	The I in the ICPAL language framework: meanings of words, sentences, discourse and topics of language
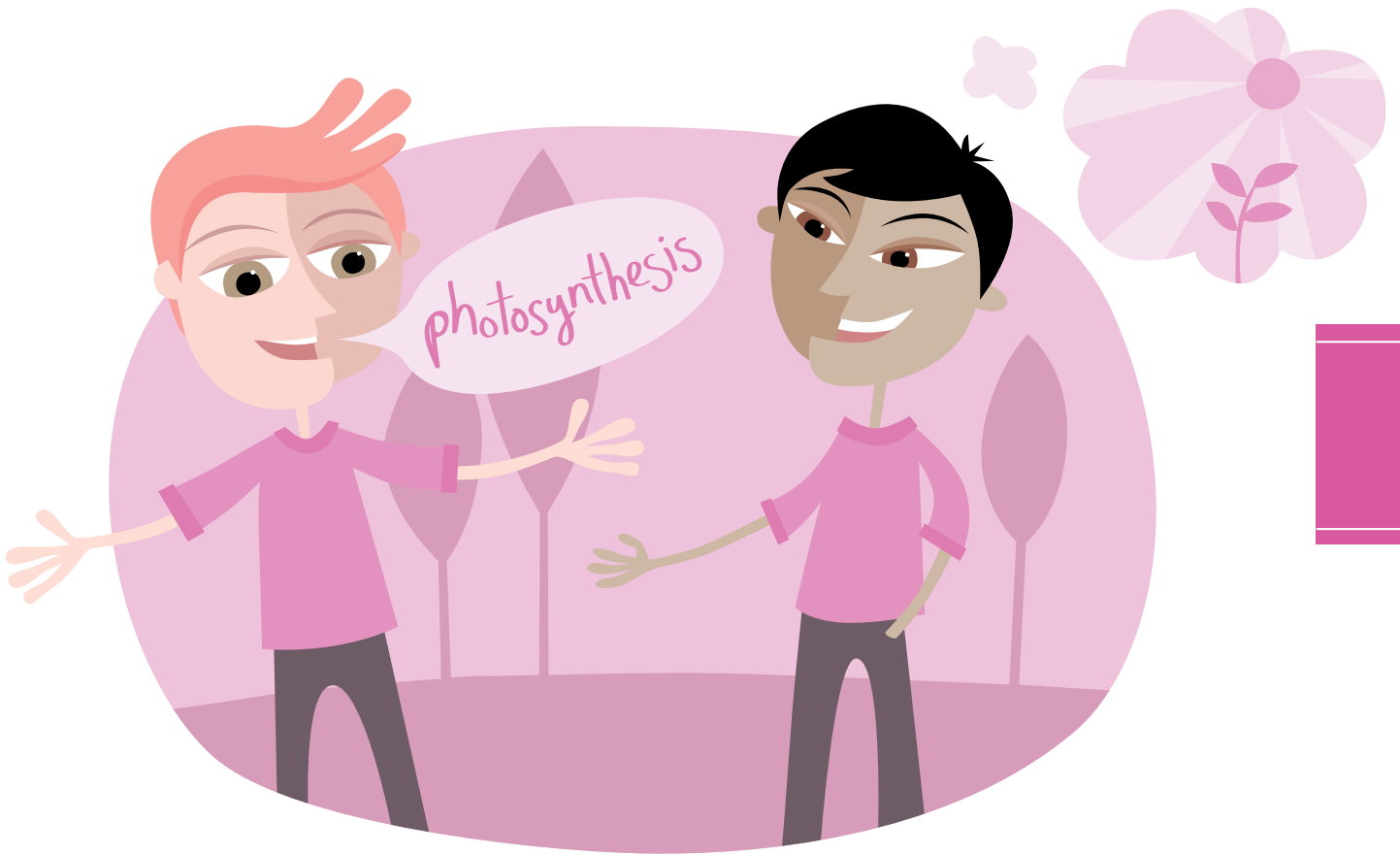
intonation	Rise and fall in pitch of the voice in speech. See also *prosody*
meanings	Understanding and expression of exact desired ideas at a word, sentence and discourse level
morpheme	Smallest unit of meaning that is either a word in its own right (free morpheme), e.g. '<u>cook</u>', or part of a word (bound morpheme), e.g. 'cook<u>ing</u>'
morphology	Linguistic study of patterns of word formation in a language; system of word-forming elements (*morphemes*) and processes in a language
phonological conventions	Rules for combining sounds to make spoken words
prosody	Patterns of *intonation* and stress placed on sounds, syllables and words in oral language
referent	What or who a word or symbol refers to
subordinate clause	Dependent clause that is not complete by itself

ICPAL:
Ideas in language

Ideas or 'meanings' are communicated through language. Meaning is communicated by words, single sentences, sets of sentences or discourse, and by topic or theme of the conversation. The sequence is not hierarchical, in that meaning is communicated in all of these ways simultaneously.

Figure 2.2.1 and Table 2.2.1 both describe the Ideas component of the ICPAL model of language. In the table, the second column lists the linguistic component, while the third column expands the concept.[6]

Table 2.2.1 Ideas within the ICPAL model of language

Ideas	words	words have meaning
		parts of words have meaning
		vocabulary as a meaning network
	sentences	simple sentences describe an event
		variations of simple sentences describe an event
		more complex sentence ideas
	discourse	the genre, or cohesion of the spoken message
	topic	the main theme

Figure 2.2.1 Ideas

ideas
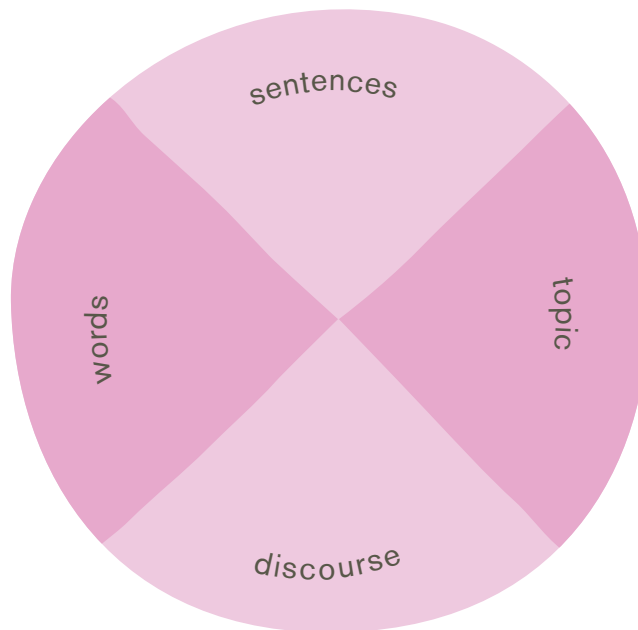
Words

The first component of 'ideas' is 'words'. The meanings of single words are stored in each child's or young person's 'word bank'. Another name for a word bank is 'vocabulary'.

Morphology

A 'morpheme' is the smallest unit of meaning in language. The term 'morphology' refers to the study of the morphemes of a language and of the way in which they are joined to make words:

- each unit of meaning is called a 'morpheme'
- morphemes are the smallest units of meaning
- the words *vet*, *white*, and *toy* are morphemes
- the study of the use of morphemes in language is called morphology.

Types of morphemes

There are two types of morphemes:

- free morphemes: these are individual words
- bound morphemes: these are parts of words that have meanings by themselves, but are always attached to a morpheme.

The following word pairs demonstrate the use of bound morphemes:

skip	skip*ped*
apple	apple*s*
act	act*ion*
run	run*ning*

The second word in each pair has its meaning modified by the added morpheme. The added morpheme (i.e. *-ed*, *-s*, *-ion*, *-ing*) is not able to stand alone and can only be used when added to words.

The correct and appropriate use of bound morphemes follows particular rules so that they agree with other ideas in the sentence.

Understanding morphemes is important for students with language difficulties, as they link individual words and parts of words into sentence meanings and conversations. Knowing a word includes knowing what the word sounds like and what the word means. Both are important in determining whether words are the same or different.

Two types of word meanings

There are two types of word meanings:

• content words

• function words.

Content words are words that carry meaning by themselves, such as *hat*, *jump* and *red*. Function words are words that connect the content words together, such as *in*, *about*, *the* and *although*.

Table 2.2.2 Content words

Type of content word	
noun	objects, persons, animals, places, things and abstract ideas
verb	actions or states of being
adjective	what things are like; they describe, identify or quantify nouns
adverb	such things as how, when, where, etc. actions are done

Table 2.2.3 Function words

Type of function word	
prepositions	*in*, *about*, *under* they link nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence
articles	*the*, *a*, *an* they refer to a particular subject previously mentioned (*the*), or in general (*a*, *an*)
conjunctions	*and*, *though*, *but* they are used to connect phrases, clauses and sentences

Content and function words are acquired by children and young people at different stages of development. They may be acquired before beginning Prep, during the stages of schooling and throughout life. Linguists differ about when children develop basic competency in content and function words.

Gentner (1982) argues that nouns tend to predominate in a child's early vocabulary, whereas Bloom's research (Bloom 1974) suggests that the use of verbs is more common.

Look carefully at Tables 2.2.2 and 2.2.3. Write the name of each function or content word on a sticky label. Individually or collaboratively, sort these according to when you think a child acquires basic competency in the use of content and function words. Test your knowledge using the information in a current and reliable table of developmental language norms (your regional LSP facilitator or speech pathologist will be able to help you to locate one), or in 'Learning to speak and listen – what to expect in the first five years' (Speech Pathology Australia n.d. (b)).

You might consider recording and comparing the language responses of children in an Early Years classroom to identify linguistic achievements and deficiencies in the use of content and function words. Testing a child's ability to recount a simple narrative is a possible approach.

Vocabulary

The words that a child knows are linked together in that child's vocabulary. When the child says or hears words, they usually can't help but think of related words. The words the child hears stimulate other words that are linked to their vocabulary.

International research indicates that children in kindergarten will learn up to nine new words per day, accumulating a receptive vocabulary of as many as 14, 000 words by age six. By Year 1, children are capable of understanding up to approximately 20, 000 words.

The networks of meanings that make up the child's vocabulary influence how they comprehend and respond to what they hear. A child with a limited network in a particular area (e.g. less meaning links) may struggle.

Vocabulary as a meaning network

Networks of meanings are important in classroom activities. When a student hears particular words (e.g. words in a story being read aloud), they can think immediately of related words. The links help them to think ahead and to predict. The links also help them to put something new into their own words in order to make sense of it.

thinking

The way a child relates or links individual ideas influences how they use language. Their ability to relate objects or events changes dramatically as they develop. This affects their network of word meanings (i.e. their vocabulary), their sentence meanings and their text meanings. Even adults may struggle with vocabulary or content with which they are unfamiliar. Clearly, a child with a limited network in a particular area may also struggle.

Semantic maps allow children and young people to graphically connect words and schematic relations. Use the semantic map activity in Resource 2.1 (page 59) to understand the concept, and then adapt the handout in a class activity.

Developmental sequence for learning word meanings

Initially, children understand that two objects are similar because they look or sound the same (i.e. they have similar 'perceptual features'). They link perceptual features with words. They can understand that a *car* and a *bus* are similar because they look similar and make similar sounds. They have difficulty using their understanding of meanings to decide how a *bus* and a *horse* would be similar.

As children develop, they understand that two objects are similar because they do similar things or can be used for the same function. They can understand how a *horse* and a *bus* can be similar, even though these two things have different perceptual features.

Later, children understand that two objects are similar because they share similar 'abstract' or 'generic' features. They understand the concept of *means of transport*. Figure 2.2.2 illustrates this development.

Figure 2.2.2 Word meanings and relationships
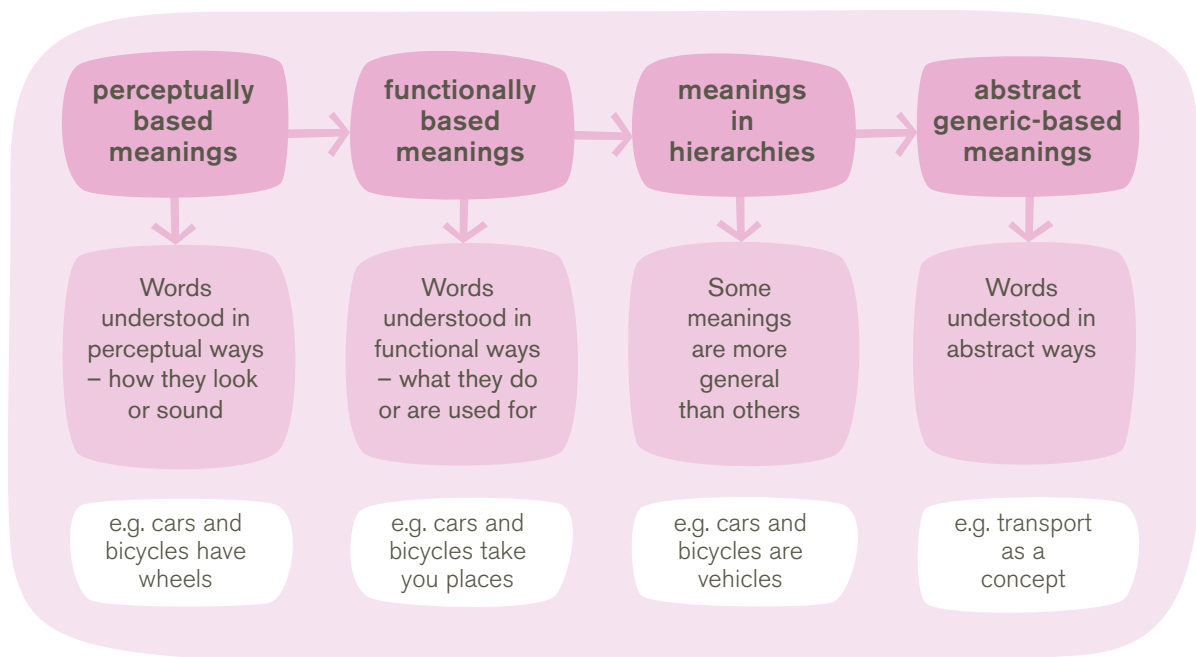
The meanings that the children have for individual words change as they develop intellectually. With this change, children can see new relationships between objects, and hence attach a more mature meaning to terms.

As a teacher, you may use levels of word meanings that are not available to your students. The level of meaning the students can use at any one point in time can influence their comprehension and their ability to understand what they are asked to do. New situations may make little sense to them.

There are two important aspects to making meaning links:

• the richness of the child's or young person's meaning networks

• the number of meaning links available to a language user.

Sentences

The second component of the 'ideas' used in language is 'sentences'. Single words by themselves cannot effectively convey the variety and complexity of meanings children communicate in conversation. By combining words in sentences, children are able to create new and varied meanings to effectively communicate ideas.

Simple sentences

Simple sentences refer to a single event.

Table 2.2.4 Examples of simple sentences

Simple sentences			
describe an event	ask a question	give an instruction	comment on a situation
I finished my work.	*When is it my turn?*	*Give me back my book.*	*That's not fair.*

Complex sentences

Complex sentences relate two or more ideas or events. A complex sentence has one main clause and at least one subordinate clause. Children in the Early Years need to be able to understand and produce sentences of these more complex types.

Table 2.2.5 Examples of complex sentences

Complex sentences			
A relationship between two events	Refer to two attributes at once	Exclusive relationships	Generalisation
He spoke while she was talking.	*Which cat is black and drinks tea?*	*All the children went except Fred.*	*All cats begin life as kittens.*
He spoke after she was talking.			

Cause and effect	Conditional relationship
She did it because the bell rang.	*He will be eaten if he meets the wolf.*

Elaborated sentences

Children's use of elaborated sentences follows their basic mastery of simple and complex sentences. Elaborated sentences provide more than just basic information (e.g. *The old dog lay under a shady tree,* rather than *The dog lay in the shade*). The use of elaborated sentences may begin before a child starts school. Typically, it occurs in 6 to 8 per cent of the speech of five-year-old children; 10 per cent of six-year-old children; and 14 per cent of eight-year-old children.

> Attempt a classroom activity that allows you to analyse how well a student understands the meaning of a more complex sentence. You will be able to identify whether a student understands and can talk about the 'main event' and 'other events'.
>
> You can also identify the types of sentence meaning students can understand by speaking aloud sentences of each type and then asking students to:
>
> • act out what you said, for example, with puppets
>
> • select the picture or picture sequence that matches what you said
>
> • say in their own words what the sentences said.

Discourse

The third component of 'ideas' used in language is the set of sentences or 'discourse'. Discourse refers to the sequence of spoken sentences in a conversation, a story, a description, a set of instructions or an explanation.

The discourse is the meaning you get by integrating the sequence of sentence ideas into a discourse or text idea. The sequence of sentences describes a more elaborated idea than each sentence meaning in isolation.

The cohesion of the text or genre

A discourse has the following characteristics:

• conversation or interaction flows

• separate sentence meanings are linked

• a high level of predictability exists between most of the sentences.

In the following passage, while each sentence makes sense, the discourse as a whole doesn't.

A large car met the jet after it had landed. Two security guards came up the steps into the aircraft and escorted us to the car. One afternoon as I was sitting outside my tent, I heard raised voices. The day was warm here and we removed our jackets. I saw a most curious sight. We carried them with our computer bags. Mr Atkins, his face purple with anger, strode towards us. (Munro 2005, p. 14)

Children and young people with difficulties in the area of 'discourse meaning' may have difficulty staying on track in conversations, and in predicting, during speaking and reading.

During spoken communications, children learn to expect that sentence ideas should be predictable, or should 'flow'. Responses are expected to follow from what has been said earlier. Examples of how children develop a discourse include extending or elaborating what has been said earlier, supporting it, providing examples and arguing against it.

When children understand a text meaning, they can link individual ideas across sentences. Discourse planning is the ability to express ideas in an organised, specific and coherent manner.

understanding

Children and young people with language difficulties often have difficulty planning and sequencing what they are going to say in order to make an idea clear to the listener. Although the student's vocabulary level may be appropriate for their age, they often do not use their vocabulary effectively; they tend to use lots of pronouns and vague referents, such as *He gets the stuff all over it*, with no previous reference to who *he* is, what the *stuff* is, or what *it* is.

What problems in discourse planning (i.e. in organising and sequencing language) may cause problems for a student in an Early or Middle Years classroom? A recounting and reporting activity in the classroom may allow you to record and identify examples where a student has problems with planning and sequencing oral language. You might like to read and adapt the following story-retelling activity.

In this classroom task, students have to retell the following story in their own words.

Catching a butterfly

Brett put on his cap and set off for the park. He was going to trap a butterfly to keep it for a pet. In his bag, he had a map and a net. He was going to catch the butterfly with his net. Brett looked at his map of the park and went to the tree near the shed. He saw a butterfly on the tap. He got his net and walked quietly up to the tap. Whoosh! Down came the net. Brett looked in it but there was no butterfly. It had flown away. Brett tried all afternoon to trap other butterflies but had no luck. He went home without a pet. Maybe he would be lucky tomorrow.

Topics

The final component of the 'ideas' used in language is 'topics' or themes. The topic is often a summary of a discourse. Spoken messages such as a conversation, a story, a description, a set of instructions or an explanation usually have a topic or theme.

Working out the topic of a text is not always straightforward. Listeners at any time may need to:

- make 'informed guesses' about the possible topic
- test their guesses at any time and modify these if necessary
- retain in their short-term memory enough specific knowledge about the text to make a judgment.

Knowing the topic allows students to stay 'on topic' and say things that are relevant.

Earlier, you explored how a semantic map can be used to teach the connections between words (Resource 2.1). These maps can also be used for teaching about topics or themes.

More sophisticated graphic organisers can be used for language teaching and learning in the Middle and Later Years. Concept maps, issues maps and lotus diagrams are only some of the graphic organisers available as classroom teaching tools (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2007)[7].

ICPAL: Conventions of language

The conventions of language enable children and young people to understand each other by successfully using expressive and receptive language. They describe how people combine and unpack sounds in words, words in sentences and sentences in discourse.

Students at all stages of schooling use these conventions for saying words, linking words into sentences and linking sentences into narratives or dialogues.

Figure 2.2.3 and Table 2.2.6 describe the Conventions component of the ICPAL language framework. In the table, the second column lists the linguistic component, while the third column expands the concept.[8]

Table 2.2.6 Conventions within the ICPAL model of language

Conventions	phonological	The rules governing the combining of sounds in words
	grammatical	The rules governing the combining and unpacking of words in sentences
	genre	The rules governing the combining of sentences in discourse

The phonological, grammatical and genre conventions are all essential for competency in the Early and Middle Years in the 'Speaking and Listening' dimension of the English domain.

You may have started an electronic presentation (e.g. MS PowerPoint) about the main features of the ICPAL language framework in Module 2.1. Add information about conventions to your presentation as you progress through the second part of Module 2.2.

Figure 2.2.3 Conventions

○ conventions
● ideas
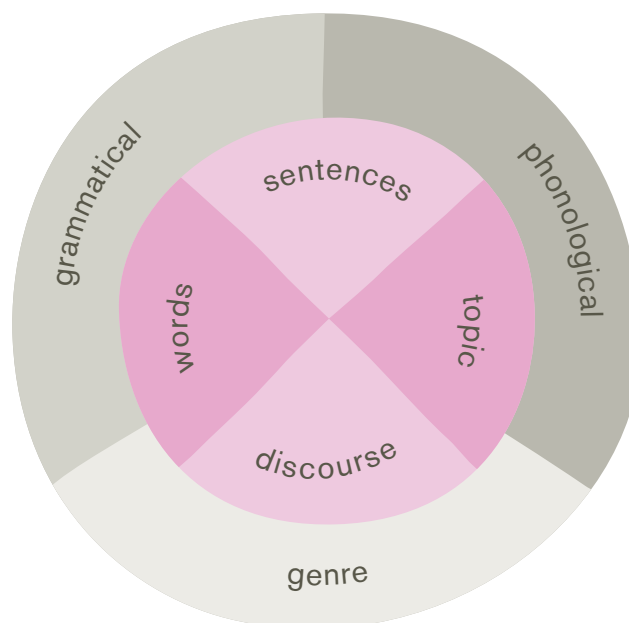
Phonological conventions

Phonological conventions are used to combine sounds to make spoken words.

To say words accurately, speakers need to know the sound pattern for the words and articulate that pattern. To accurately comprehend words heard, listeners need to know the sound pattern for the words, and perceive and recognise that pattern.

Learning and storing the sound patterns that make up words requires the child or young person to have 'phonological knowledge'. This includes the separate sounds and how they are combined to form syllables and words.

When a child or young person mispronounces *escaped* as *excaped*, this could be due to either:

- what the child or young person has stored about the sound pattern that makes the word; or
- their ability to articulate the word.

Phonological knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for development of early literacy skills. The ability to link sounds with letters depends on the ability to recognise sounds and sound sequences in words.

Students who have difficulty with phonological conventions may have difficulty pronouncing words, particularly longer words, and/or have difficulty using sound knowledge for spelling and reading.

Strings of sound patterns

In spoken English, some children learn that some sounds are more likely than others to follow a particular sound. Usually they intuitively acquire this phonological knowledge. A student experiencing language difficulties may be unable to predict strings of sound patterns because of language delay, or because they know different kinds of sentence strings from those used in English.

Look at the words in Table 2.2.7 and think about how easily you might predict how the combinations or strings of consonants and vowels will sound.

Table 2.2.7 Strings of sound patterns

Set 1	Set 2	Set 3
chop, mix, tender, sauce, heat	dtom, jeut, bpa, neua, kreuangthet	canh, xao, xa, pho, xoi

A Thai or a Vietnamese speaker might easily predict how the sound strings combine in sets 2 and 3, whereas an English speaker might need assistance.

In such cases, pronunciation difficulties may reflect cultural differences, rather than a speech or language disorder. Students with language difficulties due to a language background other than English may need structured teaching about the conventions relating to the strings of sound patterns in English.

Stress and intonation

Sound patterns are linked to stress and intonation patterns in sentences. This is called the prosody of a sentence. In language, changing the stress can change the sentence meaning. The words in the sentence *Shut the door* can be differently stressed to alter the sentence meaning (e.g. *Shut the door!* versus *Shut the door?*).

Grammatical conventions

Grammatical conventions are the rules the child or young person uses to combine (that is, use) and unpack (that is, understand) words in sentences. Every language has conventions or rules that the language users need to know in order to communicate with each other.

Grammatical conventions help children and young people to understand and say sentences accurately, including knowing how to use:

- verb tense appropriately to indicate when an event occurred (e.g. *I talk*, versus *I talked*, *I was talking* or *I will talk*)

- word endings, such as s to show the plural forms of nouns and -ed to show the past tense of weak verbs (e.g. to say *He walked slowly* instead of *He walk slowly*)

- pronouns such as us or they (e.g. to say *They gave it to me* instead of *Them gave it to me*)

- word order correctly (e.g. to say *He got in the car* instead of *Him the car go in*).

Children and young people who have not learned grammatical conventions will have difficulty understanding and producing correct grammatical structures.

Genre conventions

Genre conventions can also be described as 'discourse conventions'. They are rules about how particular goals are achieved through language. Genres are specific types of language used for different purposes in varying contexts and interactions.

When speaking and listening, children, young people and adults expect sentences to flow in a cohesive manner. Cohesion is achieved when the speaker links the ideas in sentences with conjunctions to indicate the connections between sentences, and with pronouns to refer to people, places and/or objects previously mentioned.

Children and young people at different stages of language development learn that specific types of language are used for different purposes in varying contexts and interactions. At the most basic level, children and young people use conventions or rules for linking words in simple, complex and elaborated sentences. When using genre or discourse conventions, children and young people use appropriate conventions for linking sentences into larger units such as narratives (e.g. stories, explanations, descriptions).

The specific texts or genres needed for successful participation and interaction will have an underlying purpose (e.g. to describe, explain, narrate or instruct). They will also have a particular structure or organisation (e.g. a story may have an orientation, initiating event, complication, response, resolution of the problem and an evaluation). As a result the text or genre is likely to require the use of certain vocabulary and linguistic features such as particular verb tenses.

Some of these genres occur in both the oral and the written mode. Sometimes, teachers may ask the child or young person to produce these genres in the written mode without paying sufficient attention to skill levels in the oral mode. There are a number of these dual-mode genres that are crucial for school success.

Teachers of the Early Years and of the Middle Years may describe the forms of genre differently. Look at Table 2.2.8 and identify those terms with which you are familiar or unfamiliar. With which of these genres might students with language difficulties have the least or most problems?

Table 2.2.8 Comparison of genre terminology in two stages of schooling

Early Years terminology	Middle Years terminology
Describing: Classify and describe the characteristics of the world	Explanation: Tell how or why something happens. Cause and effect relationships
Narrative: Create a story to share	Narrative: Explore an actual or imagined experience. A series of sequential events and actions
Recounting and reporting: Give an account of what happened or provide information or details about a specific topic	Recount: Tell what happened to inform or entertain. Usually based on direct experiences. Most common form of writing
	Report: Provide factual information in a concise and accurate way
Instructing: Tell how to do something	Procedural: Instruct or direct behaviour through a sequence of steps (e.g. recipes, manuals)
Discussing and reasoning: Put forward a point of view	Persuasive: Promote or argue points of view

Going further

Your regional LSP facilitator or speech pathologist will be able to help you locate a current and reliable table of developmental speech and language norms. Use these norms to develop a set of resources (e.g. presentations, posters, etc. to describe the development of ideas and/or conventions). These can be used when illustrating language development to other teachers or to parents.

Module 2.3:
The ICPAL language framework: Purposes and Ability to Learn

Module 2.3 completes the analysis of the four components of the ICPAL language framework. Key concepts, and terms and examples within Purposes and Ability to Learn, are explained and explored.

Resources

1   Appendix 2 Language Support Program Implementation Survey

2   'Teaching and Learning Resource' (available at: vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au)

3   Resource 2.2 Managing and directing language

4   Resource 2.3 Misuse of the communication context

Timing

90 minutes

Module glossary (terms in italics are separate glossary items)

Ability to Learn	The AL in the ICPAL language framework: necessary skills and their prerequisites for the acquisition of oral language
auditory figure–ground differentiation	Ability to attend to one sound (e.g. the teacher's voice) in the presence of other background noise or sound (see also *auditory selective attention*)
auditory gestalt or closure	Ability to identify partially heard or distorted auditory stimuli, such as part of a word or phrase (e.g. recognise 'hel_copter' as 'helicopter')
auditory perception	Ability to identify, interpret and attach meaning to sound
auditory selective attention	Ability to attend to one sound for processing while inhibiting others (see also *auditory figure–ground differentiation*)

aural	Related to the sense of hearing
pragmatics	Social use, purpose and implied meaning of oral language, which is dependent on situational context. See also *Purposes*
prosody	Patterns of *intonation* and stress placed on sounds, syllables and words in oral language
Purposes	The P in the ICPAL language framework: use of oral language within social interaction; *pragmatics*
short-term auditory memory	Ability to retain and immediately recall information that has been heard; temporary storage of information (approximately 30 seconds)

ICPAL: Purposes of language

It is possible for a student in a conversational situation to have the ideas and conventions, but not communicate successfully because they lack the appropriate social purposes of language.

A student may pronounce words clearly, have a large vocabulary, use long, complex sentences and correct grammar, but have difficulty adapting or changing their language to suit the social context of the interaction, have little variety in language use, or may say inappropriate or unrelated things during conversations.

They may also be able to make demands, ask questions and greet people, but have difficulty organising language to talk about what happened in the past. During conversation, this same student may appear to pull topics out of the air and may not use statements that signal a change in topic (e.g. *That reminds me*). Peers may avoid having conversations with the student. These problems can impact on the student's social relationships.

Knowledge of how to use language is called the pragmatics of language. Pragmatics is defined as the social use of language. In our social interactions, we know how to use different functions of language depending on the circumstances. There is a range of social skills that we use to engage in conversation, and to understand and communicate our social purposes. These skills include eye contact, tone of voice and body language.

Students not only need to develop social and communication skills, but also need to understand when these skills should be used (e.g. different skills are required when speaking to the principal from those used on the football field). These skills, like all language skills, need to be learnt, and with students experiencing language difficulties will need to be explicitly taught.

Figure 2.3.1 and Table 2.3.1 both describe the Purposes component of the ICPAL model of language. In the table, the second column lists the linguistic component, while the third column expands the concept.[9]

Figure 2.3.1 Purposes
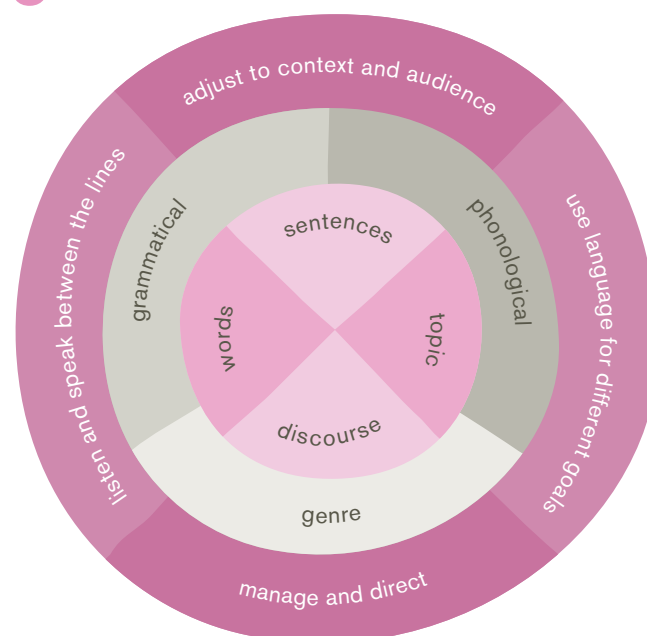
- purposes
- conventions
- ideas

Table 2.3.1 Purposes within the ICPAL model of language

Purposes	managing and directing	How to start, maintain and end conversations
		How to take turns
		How to stay on topic
	listening and speaking between the lines	How to 'read' in a message its intended meaning
		How to use idioms and metaphors
		How to extend a language exchange
	adjusting to context and audience	Judging how much information to give
		Judging what others might know during the conversation
		Selecting appropriate words and conventions
		Using the context to assist understanding
		Linking ideas in relation to a particular context
	using language for different goals	Identifying goals for an oral communication
		Inferring goals for an oral communication
		Using language to extend a language exchange
		Using language to request, agree, confirm, compliment, etc.

You may have started an electronic presentation (e.g. MS PowerPoint) about the main features of the ICPAL language framework in Module 2.2. Use the information you are reading about purposes to add to your presentation.
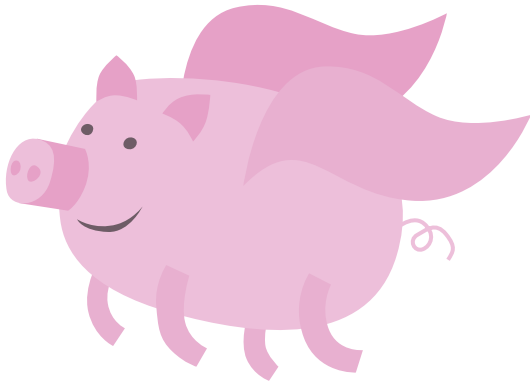
Managing and directing

Children and young people require a range of skills to negotiate a conversational interaction. These include how they start, maintain and end conversations; how they take turns; and how they stay on topic.

Without the ability to manage and direct expressive and receptive language, a student will not be able to approach another student in the school grounds, ask a teacher for help, follow the rules of games, or make meaningful contributions to conversations or classroom activities.

You might like to use 'Resource 2.2 Managing and directing language' (on page 60) as a template to identify factors that may inhibit a student's capacity to engage in successful conversations. Use the template in the classroom to identify the nature of the problem and later to prepare for directed interventions.

meaning

Listening and speaking between the lines

Effective communication requires children and young people to comprehend and use:

- language to imply a message and to read into it the intended meaning or outcome
- idioms and metaphors
- what has been said in more abstract or imaginative ways.

Listening and speaking between the lines requires the child or young person to go beyond the superficial meaning of words. It involves the process of inferring, going beyond what has been said, and linking ideas in conversations in non-literal ways.

In order to communicate effectively, children and young people often need to integrate information they already have into the current context. This can be information referred to earlier in the conversation, or to previous shared or assumed experience, to develop a broader interpretation than just the surface meaning of the words.

Intended meanings

If the teacher says, *There is too much noise in this classroom*, students need to understand that this is not simply a statement, but a request for action (i.e. *Be quiet!*).

Using language to imply a message and to read into it the intended meaning or outcome, includes indirect requests, such as *Is it cold in here?* or *Do you want to stay in at lunchtime?*

Idioms and metaphors

Idioms and metaphors occur in almost all languages. They add to the richness and poetry of language and create added depth of meaning. When a teacher says *He's pulling your leg* to indicate that a particular interpretation may not be the intended one, a student who does not recognise the idiom, or who is unable to progress beyond the literal meaning, will misunderstand the message contained in the communication.

Teachers frequently use idioms and metaphors as part of their classroom dialogue (e.g. in classroom management situations). Students with language difficulties may not understand these. As a consequence, they may not provide acceptable responses.

Examples of idioms used within Australian classrooms might include: *You let the cat out of the bag. I want to hear a pin drop. Put on your thinking caps. I'll be waiting until the cows come home. You swallowed it hook, line and sinker.*

Analyse a text that you use for teaching and learning. Does it contain examples of idiomatic or metaphoric language? After identifying examples, think about how you could use the study of the text to build a student's knowledge of idioms and metaphors.

Extending a language exchange

Extending a language exchange involves:

- being able to speak in more abstract and interesting ways
- linking new ideas with what you already know in order to make inferences and interpret language more broadly
- linking ideas across sentences to be able to infer meaning and understand pronouns.

Adjusting to context and audience

There are various ways in which children and young people learn to modify their oral language according to who is listening. This may include:

- judging how much information to give at any time (i.e. 'reading' the audience to decide what they might be interested in knowing)
- judging what others might know during a conversation (i.e. 'reading' the knowledge of the audience)
- selecting the most appropriate words, sentence meanings, conventions and intonation patterns
- knowing when they haven't given enough information for the particular audience
- using the context to assist in understanding the intended meaning of spoken language (e.g. using body language and gestures).

Most students learn throughout schooling to adjust the level of formality, choice of words and their general demeanour, depending on the listener and the context.

Students with language difficulties who have not learnt these skills may appear cheeky, rude or provocative. They need to be specifically taught these skills and require considerable practice before the skills are consolidated, particularly in situations where the student feels under pressure.

Below are some possible examples of how a student may 'misuse the communication context'.

You might like to use Resource 2.3 on page 61 as a template for curriculum planning.

Scenarios

- The student had difficulty judging how much information to give at any time, based on what others might know during a conversation. They either said too much or too little.
- The student did not take account of their 50-year-old audience. The terms and perspectives would have been more appropriate for a 20-year-old audience.
- The student assumed the class knew more than they did about the topic and gave insufficient information.
- The student misinterpreted the body language of their class members and didn't adjust to their increasing irritation and disengagement.
- The student had difficulty 'listening between the lines', inferring what the other students were actually saying, and instead interpreted everything said literally.
- The student did not use 'conversation protocols' satisfactorily (e.g. turned to talk to others in ways that were inappropriate for the particular context, or did not take turns effectively).
- The student had difficulty initiating conversations effectively (e.g. used opening lines that did not work).

Using language for different goals

Students learn to use language for many and varied goals and functions. Key issues in classroom language might include the following scenarios.

> The immediate goals of students at any time may differ from those of the teacher. To be able to infer the goals of the student, teachers need to tune in to how students are using language at the time. The goal of a teacher may be for the student to complete a task and communicate this orally. A student may, at that time, have the goal of informing the teacher of recent experiences and attempt to use language to do this.

> Students differ in how they go about achieving their goals by using language. Two students may want to avoid a task but go about using language in quite different ways to achieve this.

> Students can infer the goals of others from the language used. Some students with language difficulties may not be able to infer a teacher's goal when the teacher uses sophisticated techniques such as a lowering of the voice, a change in emphasis or tone, rhetorical questions or sarcasm.

Teachers and students often use intonation in sentences and discourses to communicate intentions. The following sets of statements have stress on different words (shown in italics). What might the goal be for the stress in each of the following statements?

Think about how you could teach Middle Years students with language difficulties about using language for different goals, and trial some of these teaching strategies in the classroom. An example you might use would be descriptions of houses (e.g. informative and imaginative descriptions of houses – a real estate advertisement, a factual report, a fictional account).

Table 2.3.2 Stress and intonation

Statement stress	Goal for use of stress
Walk there please	
Walk *there* please	
Walk there *please*	
I didn't come for that	
I *didn't* come for that	

Using the four components of purposes in an integrated way

The purposes of language are more complex and less obvious to learn and to recognise than are other aspects of language. Knowledge of purposes gives children and young people the power to communicate effectively in a range of contexts according to their goals.

In the classroom, knowledge of purposes assists you to direct and to motivate effective language learning. By teaching and modelling aspects of the 'social purposes of language', you can help students to become more effective language users and to use language to manage and direct their own learning. The effectiveness and quality of your interactions with a student with language difficulties will be determined in part by your own knowledge of purposes.

Awareness of the social purposes demonstrated in the classroom will assist you to motivate students to learn, to understand their dispositions to particular classroom events, and to understand the power relationships between teachers and students, and within the student group.

Through an awareness of students' abilities and limitations in the area of purposes, you can more clearly interpret student behaviour, and plan teaching to facilitate more effective classroom management strategies.

ICPAL:
Ability to Learn

In Modules 2.2 and 2.3 you have been finding out about ideas, conventions and purposes of language in the ICPAL framework. Ability to Learn explores how these areas of knowledge about language fit together.

Knowing the elements necessary for students to learn language will help you both to teach language and to better understand the needs of students in your classroom with language difficulties. Difficulties in language use, either receptive or expressive, may be linked to one of the aspects of language learning.

Students' ability to use language at any given time is influenced by their capacity to learn it. Knowing the elements necessary for students to learn language successfully will help you understand language difficulties.

Figure 2.3.2 Ability to Learn

- ability to learn
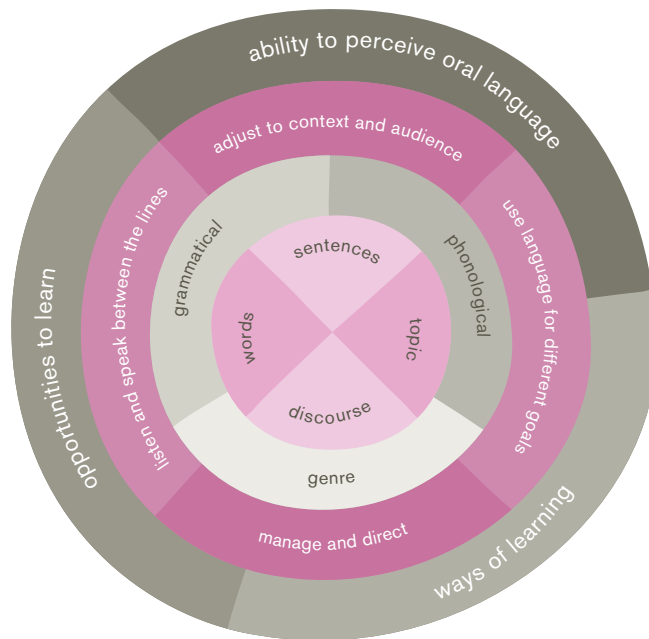- purposes
- conventions
- ideas

Figure 2.3.2 and Table 2.3.3 both describe the Purposes component of the ICPAL model of language. In the table, the second column lists the linguistic component, while the third column expands the concept.[10]

Table 2.3.3 Ability to Learn within the ICPAL model of language

Ability to Learn	ability to perceive oral language	Auditory perception
		Auditory discrimination
		Short-term auditory memory
	ways of learning	Ability to use symbols
		Ability to conceptualise and categorise
		Ability to link ideas (e.g. cause and effect)
		Ability to sequence and order
		Ability to transfer what has been learned
	opportunities to learn	A range of language experiences in which expressive and receptive language skills can be applied and learned

You may have started an electronic presentation (e.g. MS PowerPoint) about the main features of the ICPAL language framework in Module 2.2. Use the information about ability to learn in Module 2.3 to add to your presentation.

Examine the components of Table 2.3.3. Do you recognise these labels and terms? If you are participating in a collegiate professional learning activity, you might like to start a 'graffiti wall' to collect your existing knowledge and ideas.

A graffiti wall allows you to collect knowledge and ideas from members of a group or class. Large sheets of paper are placed on the wall of the room. Participants write their responses, draw pictures and record their thoughts on the topic (Victorian Curriclum and Assessment Authority 2007). At the end of Module 2.3, add what you have learned to the wall.

Ability to perceive oral language

In order to have meaningful language experiences, students need to be able to detect the language sounds, to distinguish them from other noises that occur at the same time and to retain them briefly so they can be processed.

Students with language difficulties may have problems with the perception of language due to auditory problems such as auditory perception, auditory discrimination and/or short-term auditory memory problems. Such problems can affect a range of students with language difficulties and may affect a student's progress at any stage of schooling.

Table 2.3.4 Auditory perception, auditory discrimination and short-term auditory memory

		Technical term	
Auditory perception	Ability to identify, interpret and attach meaning to sound, including the ability to adequately hear the range of sounds that make up speech	hearing acuity	Auditory processing skills
Auditory discrimination	Ability to attend to a particular spoken message when there are competing sounds (e.g. what the teacher is saying when students are rustling papers in the background)	auditory figure–ground differentiation	
	Ability to direct or maintain attention to a particular spoken message and listen to it selectively when other people are speaking	auditory selective attention	
	Ability to make or form a complete interpretation of a message when only part of it is heard. In a classroom, a spoken message may be interrupted by other noise, so the student hears part of it, and is required to 'complete the message' from other clues	auditory gestalt or closure	
Short-term auditory memory	Ability to retain and say immediately the information that was heard	short-term auditory memory	

Ways of learning

There are five 'ways of learning' in Ability to Learn in the ICPAL language framework. These are the ability to symbolise; the ability to conceptualise and to categorise; the ability to link ideas; the ability to sequence and to order; and the ability to transfer what has been learned. All of these, apart from the ability to symbolise, will probably be familiar to you.

Ability to use symbols

The ability to use symbols is a basic cognitive skill that underpins all language learning. Language allows children to represent ideas and events that are not present. They learn to use sound patterns to symbolise these ideas and events. The spoken word 'kitten' doesn't sound like the animal it represents, but conveys meaning to other English speakers because of the shared nature of language. Children are also able to symbolise actions such as *run* and *eat*. If students are unable to use symbols, they will not be able to talk about objects, actions or ideas when they are not present.

Ability to conceptualise and categorise

Concepts are a key aspect of language learning. One type of concept that is critical for language learning is the 'concept of a word'. For example the concept of 'kitten' carries with it a number of attributes (e.g. *small*, *fluffy*, *drinks milk*) and refers to a category of items rather than one particular item. Children form the concept of kitten by learning the characteristics that distinguish kittens from other items, such as dogs or chairs. Vocabulary and meaning networks are built on the understandings of the concepts that underlie words, and how these concepts relate to one another.

Ability to link ideas

Language allows children to relate two or more ideas or events. When children use words in sentences, they demonstrate the relationships between the ideas represented by the words. The meaning represented by sentences can be related using complex sentences, as discussed in the section on ideas. For example, one such relationship that can be demonstrated within a sentence is 'cause and effect' (e.g. *I am late because my mum forgot to wake me up*). Sentence ideas are also linked by an overarching topic.

Ability to sequence and order

The ability to plan, organise, sequence and carry out processes is an essential underlying cognitive skill in language and all learning. Difficulties in sequencing words and sentences may reflect a language difficulty, or be a component of a wider cognitive difficulty that a student may have, and that influences all aspects of their daily lives. In terms of language, students may demonstrate difficulty in ordering words in sentences, sentences in discourse and ideas in narratives. In other learning areas, this may manifest itself as a difficulty in organising time, possessions, place and in structuring their work.

Ability to transfer what has been learned

Children and young people learn to transfer their learned understandings of language to other situations, and apply them in new contexts. They intuitively analyse and make links between their experiences. This enables them to use learned language in new and creative ways.

A number of teaching and learning resources can be used for teaching and understanding the 'ways of learning', for example: ability to symbolise – Y chart; ability to conceptualise and categorise – Sunshine wheels; ability to link ideas – Flow diagrams, Cause and Effect wheels, Issues maps; ability to sequence and order – Microsoft PowerPoint. Select an unfamiliar one of these. Use the 'Teaching and Learning Resource' (Victorian Curriclum and Assessment Authority 2007) and experiment with how the resource might be used to teach students with language difficulties.

Opportunities to learn

Students need to experience language in a range of contexts. The cognitive abilities described in 'Ways of learning' allow children and young people to make sense of their bank of language experiences, and build knowledge of the ideas, conventions and purposes of language. They can then transfer these skills and understandings of language to new experiences and contexts.

Your acquired knowledge, as a teacher, of how language develops will assist you to identify ways to facilitate students' learning of language. Students require:

- a range of quality language experiences that provide opportunities to extend their knowledge of ideas, conventions and purposes

- positive feedback that helps them learn to value language as a way of communicating, to experiment with language and to build confidence in using it

- encouragement and modelling to imitate oral language

- a range of experiences in which they pair what they say with actions they do.

> In Module 2.2 and again in this module, you were encouraged to think about developing a presentation for other teachers or parents about the ICPAL language framework. Recheck your presentation against the components of the ICPAL language framework (Appendix 3) to see whether you have missed anything.

Figure 2.3.3 Transfer of language skills to new experiences and contexts
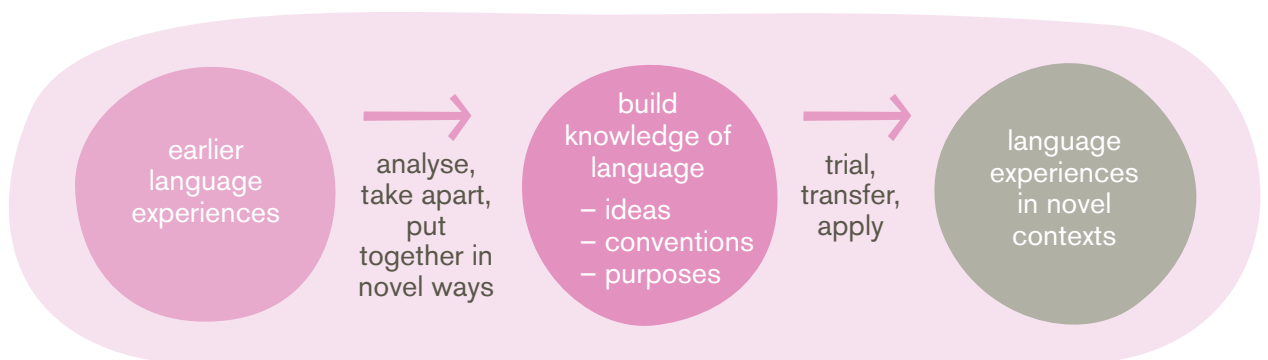
Going further

Research at the Royal Children's Hospital in Victoria indicates that when children are referred for investigation because they do not appear to listen, are inattentive or have literacy problems, 80 per cent of children tested have a delay in the ability to process auditory information.

> The *Auditory Processing Assessment Kit: Understanding how children listen and learn* (Rowe, Pollard & Rowe 2006) was developed for classroom teachers and health professionals working with students in Prep to Year 10. The kit does not provide a diagnosis; rather it assesses how a child is functioning. Audit your school's resource libraries for this resource or source it from a region and use it to further develop your understanding of auditory processing.

Resource 2.1: Semantic map

Which words would you expect to hear in the three sentences following the passage starting: 'The security of a baby's …?'

'The security of a baby's attachment to its parents can have a great impact not only on social development, but on cognitive growth and emotional wellbeing. Throughout the remainder of their lives, those individuals who managed to develop secure attachments to their caregivers in infancy are likely to enjoy many advantages over their peers' (Seal 2008).

Sentence 1	Sentence 2	Sentence 3

Choose two words that can link together and put these in the semantic map below.
What other words can you link to these?
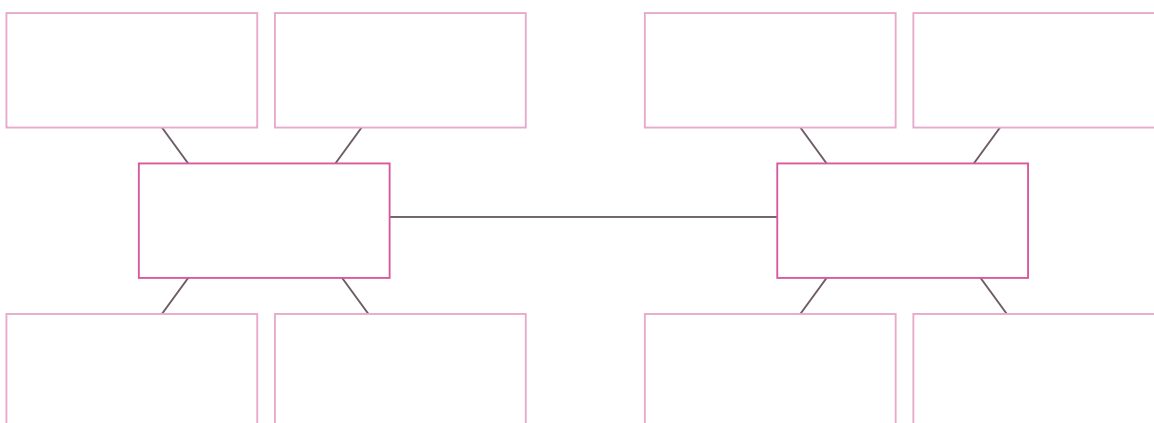
Resource 2.2: Managing and directing language

You might like to use this resource as a template to identify factors that may inhibit a student's capacity to engage in successful conversations. Use the template in the classroom to identify the nature of the problem and later to prepare for directed interventions.

Components	Example	Teaching strategy
How they initiate, maintain and terminate conversations		
How they take turns		
How they 'stay on topic'		

Resource 2.3: Misuse of the communication context

This resource presents some possible examples of how a student may 'misuse the communication context'. You might like to use this resource as a template for curriculum planning.

Scenarios	Teaching and learning strategy
The student had difficulty judging how much information to give at any time, or judging what others might know during a conversation. They either said too much or too little.	
The student did not take account of their 50-year-old audience. The terms and perspectives would have been more appropriate for a 20-year-old audience.	
The student assumed the class knew more than they did about the topic and gave insufficient information.	
The student misinterpreted the body language of their class members and didn't adjust to their increasing irritation and disengagement.	
The student had difficulty 'listening between the lines', and inferring what the other students were actually saying, and instead interpreted everything said literally.	
The student did not use 'conversation protocols' satisfactorily (e.g. turned to talk to others in ways that were inappropriate for the particular context, or did not take turns properly).	
The student had difficulty initiating conversations effectively (e.g. used opening lines that did not work).	

Module 3:

Identifying and Profiling Students with Language Difficulties

The Language Support Program (LSP) Professional Learning Guide has been developed to assist teachers, coordinators and school leaders to understand about language, language disorders and language difficulties, and how the ICPAL oral language framework can guide a Language Support Program.[11]

This is the third learning module within the Professional Learning Guide. It comprises two sections that address the following key questions about the school-based support of students with language difficulties:

1 What curriculum resources, guidelines and assessment tools will be useful for identifying students with language difficulties in the Early and Middle Years of schooling?

2 What is an Individual Learning Plan, and how can it be used to ensure effective teaching for students with language difficulties?

Prerequisites[12]

Usually, Module 3 will be undertaken after completing Module 2.

Outcomes

Learning outcomes are identified at the beginning of each module. They apply to all the sessions in the module. Learning outcomes will usually be met by engaging with the content of the module and completing relevant learning opportunities identified.

By the end of Module 3, you will be able to:

• recognise and use sound curriculum planning (i.e. curriculum, assessment, pedagogy) to meet the needs of students with language difficulties

• understand and use authentic assessment tools in profiling students with language difficulties

• know about Individual Learning Plans and be able to use one when needed in a Language Support Program.

Timing

For the benefit of users engaging with a module within a self-paced or collegiate professional learning program, an estimation of the time it should take to complete a module section is provided at the start of each section. Additional research and practical classroom-based activities are not included in this time estimation.

Module 3.1 timing – **90 minutes**

Module 3.2 timing – **60 minutes**

Resources

Recommended resources are specified at the start of each section of a learning module. This allows participants to source any external resources required before the professional learning begins. In most cases, however, required resources are included in this guide and presented after the reference to them in the text. Larger resources may be found at the end of a module.

Resources follow a predictable numbering system where the first numeral identifies the module and the second numeral identifies the number of the resource within the module.

Glossary of key terms

In each module, descriptions of key terms used are listed at the front of the module, and are also highlighted in colour the first time a term is used. The complete listing of key terms used in the guide is included in Appendix 1.

Module 3.1:
Resources for identifying and profiling students

Module 3.1 of the Language Support Program (LSP) provides a general introduction to identifying and profiling students with language difficulties, using curriculum knowledge and analysis and sound assessment practices. Advice about referral to other professionals is also provided.

Resources

1   A curriculum document for P–12

2   'English Developmental Continuum P–10' (available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/ studentlearning/teachingresources/english/englishcontinuum/default/htm)

3   Resource 1.3 SWOT Analysis

4   Resource 3.1 LSP oral language observation profile

5   Resource 3.2 Sample curriculum standard and the template

6   Resource 3.3 Classroom observation profile

Timing

90 minutes

Module glossary (terms in italics are separate glossary items)

ICPAL language framework	Ideas, Conventions, Purposes and Ability to Learn in both the expressive and receptive areas of (oral) language
Indicators of Progress	Points on the learning continuum that highlight critical understandings required by students in order to progress through curriculum standards

Curriculum and the ICPAL language framework

Module 2 focused on providing a definition of language, a discussion of language frameworks generally, and a specific analysis of the ICPAL language framework. Module 3.1 assumes that you will be able to apply this knowledge of the aims and content of the ICPAL framework and relate it to the formal curriculum, with which you will be familiar.

Curriculum planning allows teachers to take account of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in catering for the learner, including students with language difficulties. It recognises that catering for the learner requires a holistic view of the formal and informal curriculum.

Figure 3.1.1
The learner is at the centre of all decision-making about learning
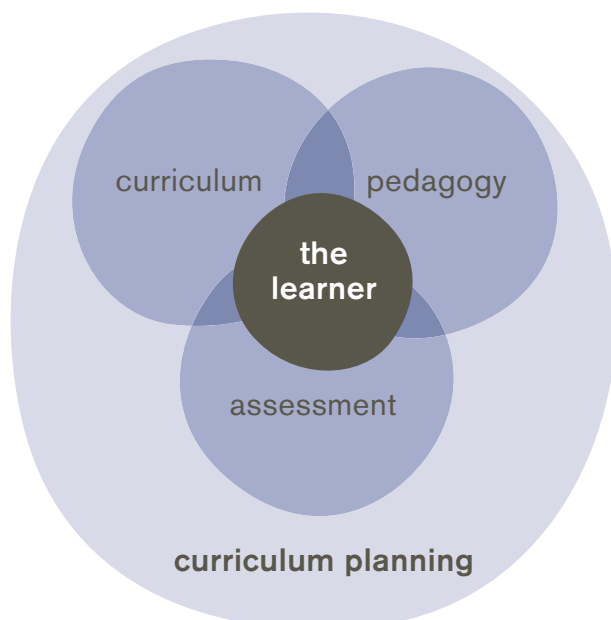
The formal curriculum

The formal curriculum is comprised of curriculum documents usually developed by a curriculum authority or board of studies, which define the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours within a curriculum discipline or domain. This sense of 'curriculum' contrasts with the more general idea of curriculum that encompasses all formal and informal teaching and learning in a school.

Depending on the stage/s of schooling in which you teach, you may be familiar with some or all of the formal curriculum documents that describe student learning outcomes at particular level/s. If you teach in a primary school, you will more likely be using curriculum documents covering a range of disciplines or domains. If you are a teacher in a secondary school you will have a detailed knowledge of some curriculum disciplines or domains, but not others.

If you are individually engaging with Module 3.1, locate and refer to one curriculum document (e.g. mathematics) as you progress through the session.

If you are participating in a collegiate professional learning activity you might like to locate, refer to and compare curriculum documents from a number of disciplines or domains. Each participant might take responsibility for, and report back to other participants about, a particular discipline or domain.

The formal curriculum will usually provide high-level standards that students within a discipline or domain are expected to reach during specific years or at specific levels of schooling. Curriculum resources can also provide you with more detailed scope and sequence documents against which student progress can be mapped. These can be part of the formal curriculum, or they may be Curriculum Support Materials.

Students acquire language in all disciplines or domains within the formal curriculum, and as a consequence, all teachers must see themselves as teachers of language. For example, students with language difficulties may potentially experience particular problems with the language of science (e.g. domain-specific words, sentences, discourse and topics). If you teach science, you need to be able to understand how to identify when students are experiencing language difficulties, and develop and use appropriate curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment practices to meet these needs. This may be less of an issue if you are a primary school teacher, where you teach both the English and science (or technology) curricula.

If you are using a curriculum document other than English, try to identify any general references to language or literacy in the document. Then select a curriculum level appropriate to a class level at which you teach (e.g. Year 5, or Year 7), to see if there are any specific references to literacy and/or language learning at that level.

While formal curriculum documents will usually refer to literacy or language learning, frequently these references may be implicit rather than explicit.

Using the ICPAL language framework across the curriculum

You will remember that the components of the ICPAL language framework are Ideas, Conventions, Purposes and Ability to Learn. These components can be used to analyse and unpack implicit language content from any curriculum document for a curriculum discipline or domain. You may like to reflect on the 'ideas' or meanings that students need to know and be able to use, which are implied in a specific curriculum document.

Use or adapt the sample curriculum standard and the template provided in Resource 3.2 on page 81 to identify the language learning that takes place in a physical education classroom during the Middle Years of schooling. Focus on 'ideas' and meanings (i.e. words, sentences, discourse, topics) that are implied in the standard.

Curriculum support materials

While the formal curriculum may list standards or outcomes at each level of the curriculum, it is often necessary to know the 'Indicators of Progress' in order to recognise actual and detailed levels of language proficiency that a student is expected to reach. On such occasions, all teachers, not just teachers of English, need to be able to comprehend and appreciate Indicators of Progress in the English curriculum.

An example of Indicators of Progress that reflects the ICPAL framework is the 'English Developmental Continuum P–10' (EDC P–10) (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2008a) developed by Dr John Munro, who also developed the ICPAL language framework. The EDC P–10 has been designed to assist Victorian teachers to:

- deepen their understanding of the English domain
- monitor individual student progress towards achievement of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* in English
- enhance teaching skills to enable purposeful teaching
- identify the range of student learning levels within English classes
- develop a shared language to describe and discuss student progress.

The EDC P–10 provides evidence-based Indicators of Progress linked to teaching strategies. These are aligned to the progression points and the standards for the English domain of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards.*

Access a copy of the English Developmental Continuum P–10 online. Familiarise yourself with its parts. Explore how it links a curriculum standard to achievement in 'Reading', 'Writing' and 'Speaking and Listening' at a curriculum level.

You can see the relationship between the ICPAL language framework and the language of the EDC P–10 in Table 3.1.1.

Table 3.1.1
ICPAL and the English Developmental Continuum P–10

ICPAL	English Developmental Continuum P–10	
Ideas	Ideas communicated:	meanings of words, sentences, discourse and topics of language
Conventions	Conventions of language:	rules governing the sounds, words, sentences and genres of language
Purposes	Purposes of communication:	use of oral language within social interaction
Ability to Learn	Communicating orally:	necessary skills and their prerequisites for the acquisition of oral language

If you are participating in a collegiate professional learning activity, select a particular level (e.g. Level 4) for 'Speaking and Listening'. Read as a group how the standard is explicated into progression levels. Divide up, and individually or in pairs, read how the progression levels are further divided into 'Ideas communicated', 'Conventions of language', 'Purposes of communication' and 'Communicating orally' in order to describe 'Indicators of Progress' and 'Teaching Strategies'.

Using the curriculum to identify students with language difficulties

A developmental continuum such as the EDC P–10 is most effective when used to identify and plan for personalised student learning. It can support purposeful teaching for individuals and small groups of students with similar learning needs. It is linked to teaching strategies that are designed to be used by teachers in their classroom. The strategies are designed to be modified to suit the learning experience.

> If you completed Module 1.1, you will or may have completed 'Resource 1.1 Student observation activity'. Reread what you wrote about the student. Would your observations allow you to be specific about the student's oral language difficulties?

Observation and checklists

At this point in the Professional Learning Guide, you should be ready to read, discuss and use more sophisticated tools for identifying students with language difficulties. The remainder of Module 3.1 introduces you to three of these tools.

Students with language difficulties will often have difficulty with a number of regular classroom learning activities. For some students, it will be obvious that their difficulties are language based, while for others, the teacher may merely have some inkling about the underlying reasons for the student not performing at the expected level.

Decisions will need to be made to identify: first, those students who have oral language difficulties; second, the areas of oral language difficulties that are displayed in the classroom; and third, goals and strategies to support the student's progress.

To assist in making these decisions certain procedures can be adopted. Teachers' knowledge of curriculum and of the ICPAL language framework will facilitate informed observation and identification of students with language difficulties in daily classroom activities.

When using assessment tools to identify such students, teachers need to bring to the observation and judgment of the students' oral language capability the following factors:

- the chronological age of students, and the students' general level of ability
- the expected level of language competency as expressed in the formal curriculum standard
- relevant indicators of progress related to the standard
- previous teaching and learning leading up to the observation/s
- the number of observations that would be required to determine whether the student could meet the standard
- the area and extent of the language difficulty.

> If you are participating in a collegiate professional learning activity, use a think-pair-share activity to discuss each of these factors and how they might affect the use of Resources 3.1 or 3.3 for profiling students with language difficulties.

The Early Years

During the Early Years, students with language difficulties can often be readily identified because of their difficulty with ideas, conventions and purposes in everyday conversational language with peers and teachers. A profile of these students' language difficulties can be gathered using 'Resource 3.1 LSP oral language observation profile'.

> If you are a teacher of an Early Years class, compare 'Table 3.1.2 Classroom observation profile' and 'Table 3.1.3 LSP oral language observation profile'. How do they differ from 'Resource 1.1 Student observation activity'? Which template do you find easier to use? Which would you find more useful?

Table 3.1.2 Classroom observation profile

How well the student:	Context (e.g. listening to a narrative, learning new topics, guided reading, small-group maths, etc.)			
	Date	Date	Date	Date
perceives and attends to spoken language				
comprehends vocabulary				
uses appropriate words				
says words accurately (articulation)				
understands sentences				
produces meaningful sentences				
produces grammatically correct sentences				
listens and retains what is heard in longer spoken discourse				
asks and answers questions				
learns new language				
uses language to communicate with peers				
uses language to learn				
stores knowledge in long-term memory				
narrates, recounts, says longer presentations				

Table 3.1.3 LSP Oral language observation profile

Name of student: Year level: Date:

From your observations, compared with other students of the same age, does the student exhibit any of the language behaviours described?

		Yes	No
1 IDEAS	**Words – Does the student:**	**Yes**	**No**
	1.1 have limited understanding of words?		
	1.2 have difficulty with word relationships? (e.g. synonyms, antonyms, multiple-meaning words)		
	1.3 take a comparatively long time to recall or say many words?		
	1.4 frequently use 'simple' non-specific words and phrases? (e.g. *good, big, sort of, stuff*)		
	1.5 have difficulty learning new words?		
	Sentences – Does the student:	**Yes**	**No**
	1.6 have difficulty following instructions?		
	1.7 respond inappropriately or not respond to questions?		
	1.8 have difficulty understanding or producing short sentences?		
	1.9 use relatively more short sentences and fewer longer, more complex sentences?		
	Discourse – Does the student:	**Yes**	**No**
	1.10 have difficulty identifying the topic or theme of spoken texts?		
	1.11 have difficulty logically connecting a sequence of sentences around the same topic?		
	1.12 struggle to recount or retell stories and events in a cohesive manner?		
	1.13 have difficulty providing explanations for actions or events?		
2 CONVENTIONS	**Phonology – Does the student:**	**Yes**	**No**
	2.1 mispronounce many words; say sounds in the wrong order? (e.g. *ephalant, hostible*)		
	2.2 have difficulty breaking words into sounds?		
	2.3 have difficulty identifying sound patterns across words? (e.g. *rhyme, alliteration*)		
	Grammar – Does the student:	**Yes**	**No**
	2.4 use incomplete sentences?		
	2.5 use incorrect word order?		
	2.6 have difficulty with subject–verb agreement? (e.g. *The boys is playing.*)		
	2.7 have difficulty with word endings? (e.g. plural *–s*, past-tense *–ed*, adverb *–ly*)		
	Genre – Does the student:	**Yes**	**No**
	2.8 have limited awareness of noun–pronoun relationships across sentences? (e.g. *The boys are playing. They are very noisy.*)		
	2.9 struggle using conjunctions to logically connect sentences?		
3 PURPOSES	**Using language to achieve purposes – Does the student:**	**Yes**	**No**
	3.1 struggle to start, maintain and end conversations? (e.g. taking turns with peers, topic maintenance)		
	3.2 have difficulty interpreting and using non-verbal communication? (e.g. eye contact, facial expression, gestures, tone of voice)		
	3.3 misinterpret non-literal language? (e.g. pull up your socks)		
	3.4 have difficulty adjusting language to the listener? (e.g. best friend vs principal)		
	3.5 have difficulty using language for a variety of different purposes? (e.g. seeking assistance, expressing ideas, greeting)		
4 ABILITY TO LEARN	**Perceiving, attending to and using oral language – Does the student:**	**Yes**	**No**
	4.1 have difficulty using language to help them engage in and complete a task? (e.g. use self-talk)		
	4.2 become inattentive or easily distracted, especially when background noise is present?		
	4.3 have difficulty recalling spoken information?		
	4.4 rarely seek clarification when required?		

Source: Adapted from 'Oral language observational profile', in Munro 2005, pp. 83–4.

The Middle Years

As students progress into the Middle Years, many students with language difficulties will have learned informal, conversational language skills, and therefore may not be as easy to identify. Middle Years students with language difficulties will come to the teacher's attention because of literacy, learning or behavioural issues. Although they have learned informal, conversational language, these students often have significant difficulty in a number of more academic language areas (e.g. making inferences, organising language, processing abstract language).

Assessment

When you make judgments about a student's demonstration of, or especially their inability to demonstrate, an oral language skill, you are making an assessment.

Assessment for improved student learning and deep understanding requires a range of assessment practices to be used, with three overarching purposes:

- Assessment FOR learning occurs when teachers use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching.

- Assessment AS learning occurs when students reflect on and monitor their progress to inform their future learning goals.

- Assessment OF learning occurs when teachers use evidence of student learning to make judgments on student achievement against goals and standards.

Substantial research exists on the characteristics of good practice for assessing student learning. This research is summarised in the following set of principles:[13]

1   The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student performance.

2   Assessment should be based on an understanding of how students learn.

3   Assessment should be an integral component of course design and not something to add afterwards.

4   Good assessment provides useful information to report credibly to parents on student achievement.

5   Good assessment requires clarity of purpose, goals, standards and criteria.

6   Good assessment requires a variety of measures.

7   Assessment methods used should be valid, reliable and consistent.

8   Assessment requires attention to outcomes and processes.

9   Assessment works best when it is ongoing rather than episodic.

10 Assessment for improved performance involves feedback and reflection.

Are you familiar with assessment principles such as these? They seem easy to understand yet they sometimes require unpacking. Test your understanding by thinking about the implications of each principle. You might like to download the 'ten assessment principles', at http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/assessprinciples.html to assist you.

planning

Referral to other professionals

Once a student has been identified as having language difficulties, the teacher, in consultation with the Language Support Program Team (and if applicable, the Student Support Group) must decide whether these can be addressed through targeted teaching, or whether the student's difficulties warrant referral to another relevant professional, such as a speech pathologist or psychologist.

In deciding whether referral to other professionals is required, the team will consider the student's learning across the curriculum; their developmental history; their language background; information received through discussion with the student's parents; and the teaching strategies that have already been put in place to support the student. The use by the teacher of the assessment tools (Resources 3.1 or 3.3) to profile students in the classroom would provide valuable information for discussion with other professionals.

Clinical diagnosis of a language disorder can only be made by formal standardised assessment, carried out by an interdisciplinary team including a speech pathologist and a psychologist. In order to make a diagnosis of a language disorder, the speech pathologist and psychologist would need to establish that the student's language abilities are significantly below the level of his or her non-verbal cognitive abilities.

Going further

Identification and profiling is not a one-off event; rather schools need to adopt processes for tracking students over time.

> If you are a school leader or an LSP coordinator, audit and describe your school's processes for ongoing identification, profiling and communication to teachers about a student with language difficulties. If you are unsure whether these meet best practice, consult with regional staff and specialists.

A number of other templates or checklists have been produced that you might like to use to identify a student or students with language difficulties (see below). These can direct and clarify your classroom observations of students.

Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF−4)[14]	The *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals* (CELF−4) is designed to be used by trained speech pathologists and other professionals. It is a comprehensive language test used to measure a student's ability to understand words and sentences, follow directions, recall and formulate sentences and understand relationships between words and categories.
Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF−4) Screening Test	Quickly and accurately screens children who may be experiencing language difficulties, using the most discriminating items from the CELF−4. With accredited training from Harcourt Assessment, for the first time User Level T (teachers) can use this test.
Language for Learning − A Checklist for Language Difficulties Primary Level	Developed by speech pathologists from the Language Learning Disability − Special Interest Group (Victoria).
Language for Learning − A Checklist for Language Difficulties Secondary Level	Available for purchase through Oz Child Education Services, email: edservice@ozchild.com.au

Module 3.2:
Supporting students through curriculum planning

Module 3.2 of the Language Support Program provides advice about how schools and teachers can use sound curriculum planning approaches to 'profile' students with language difficulties. You will learn about how to profile using the approach outlined in guidelines for 'Individual Learning Plans'.

Resources

1   Student Support Group Guidelines
    (available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/disability/guidelines.htm)

2   Resource 3.4 Understanding the student

3   Resource 3.5 Goal setting

4   Resource 3.6 Program planning

5   Resource 3.7 Implementation

Timing

60 minutes

Module glossary (terms in italics are separate glossary items)

| ICPAL language framework	Ideas, Conventions, Purposes and Ability to Learn in both the expressive and receptive areas of (oral) language

If you have completed Module 3.1, you already have a general understanding about identifying students with language difficulties through curriculum knowledge and assessment practice. Module 3.2 relates these to the role of pedagogy, and describes how curriculum planning can meet the needs of students with language difficulties.

Figure 3.2.1
The learner is at the centre of all decision-making about learning

curriculum

pedagogy

the learner

assessment

curriculum planning
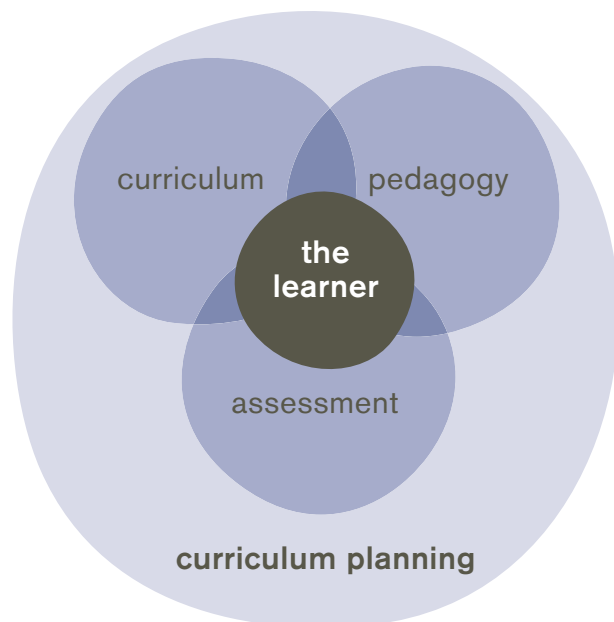
Student Support Groups

Teachers will welcome the role of others in assisting them to identify, profile and teach students with language difficulties. Schools are encouraged to establish a Student Support Group (SSG) for any student with additional learning needs. An SSG is a cooperative partnership involving parents, school representatives and professionals that ensures coordinated support for each student's educational needs through the development of specific educational goals and a tailored educational program.

More detailed advice about school-level implementation of an SSG is included in Module 5.2.

Before progressing further in Module 3.2, it will assist you if you source a current print copy of the *Student Support Group Guidelines 2008* (Department of Education and early Childhood Development 2008e) or download an online copy. You will be able to refer to it as you complete Module 3.2.

The role of the classroom teacher

When or if an SSG is established within a school Language Support Program, the classroom teacher will be responsible for providing the SSG with current information regarding the student's progress and assisting in determining future educational goals. Other staff supporting the student (e.g. Language Support Program assistants) will contribute under the direction of the nominated classroom teacher.

Individual Learning Plans

The following process, and the tools provided for developing Individual Learning Plans, may assist you in profiling and supporting students with language difficulties. The extent of the student's language difficulties will determine which of the processes are used.

It is advisable when developing an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) to follow a specific planning and implementation sequence.

Table 3.2.1 Stages in an Individual Learning Plan

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Identifying the student's needs	Determining adjustments that need to be made to the curriculum	Completing and implementing an Individual Learning Plan	Monitoring and evaluation

Stage 1: Identifying the student's needs

Teachers bring to an ILP expertise in designing and delivering a curriculum program. Teachers are also able to identify and meaningfully liaise with others (e.g. parent/guardian/carer, consultants) when profiling a student's strengths, skills, learning preferences and abilities, and identifying the most appropriate learning style.