OLSEL Project
Colorful Semantics Strategy
Supporting Classroom Practice
Outline

• What is Oral language
• Oral language difficulties
• Links to literacy
• What is ‘Colorful Semantics’?
• Aims of program
• ILP development
What is Oral Language?

Receptive Oral Language

Expressive Oral Language
Receptive Language

refers to the understanding of oral language and includes the ability to:

• follow oral instructions

• understand a range of different spoken sentence and question forms

• listen to and comprehend stories

• understand the meaning of spoken words and word relationships.
Expressive Language

refers to language production and includes the ability to:

• use the correct words (*grammatical structures*) in oral sentences

• connect ideas together using conjunction words (eg. *and, because*)

• sequence information to describe an object

• tell stories or recount an event

• name vocabulary
Oral Language Difficulties

Students may have difficulty:
- following instructions.
- remembering and understanding stories in oral/written form.
- formulating and sequencing stories in oral/written form.
- understanding abstract language, e.g. “I want to be able to hear a pin drop in here.”
- responding appropriately to questions.
• use short sentences.
• make grammatical errors.
• tend to use non-specific language, e.g. “thing” and “stuff” and excessive use of fillers, e.g. ‘um’ and ‘like.’
• they can be inconsistent, i.e. “some days they get it, some days they don’t.”
• these difficulties can result in problem behaviour in the classroom and socially in the playground – they can become angry and frustrated.
• children may find literacy development difficult if they do not have adequate oral language skills.
Colourful Semantics

• Colourful Semantics was developed in the UK by Speech and Language Therapist Alison Bryan

• It was brought to Victoria by Speech Pathologist Andrea Hewett (Bairnsdale)

• Presentation adapted from that developed by Marcella Van s (CEO SP)

• The pictures used in this presentation are from Black Sheep Press: www.blacksheep-epress.com
What is ‘Colorful Semantics’?

- A method of teaching children how to understand and construct sentences
  *(syntax vs. morphology – grammar is modeled not explicitly taught e.g. ‘the, -ing, auxiliary verb is’)*

- A therapy technique that uses colour-coded cue cards that ‘show’ the structure of a sentence; each card represents a word or part of a sentence
  - Tunes the child into key words in sentences *(oral/written)*
• CEO ‘Colourful Semantics’ Language Program has been developed with an oral language focus although has potential for use in written language tasks.

• Can be used in 1:1 or group situations.

• Each stage of the program contains steps to follow and accompanying pictures.
Aims of **Colourful Semantics**

*The program develops students ability to:*

- understand instructions and sentences.
- follow discussions.
- communicate their own ideas effectively.
- use different modalities to learn about making sentences.
Aims of Colourful Semantics

• develop competent use of simple and complex sentence structure
• develop a concept of narrative (e.g. what makes up a ‘story’)
• produce grammatically correct sentences in speaking and writing
• develop understanding and use of oral language at a word level, sentence level and pragmatic/dispositional level
• develop literacy skills by building a strong foundation in oral language
Colorful Semantics addresses four of the five key elements being:

• Vocabulary development
• Comprehension and use of longer and more complex sentences
• Story grammar
• Self talk

As a program it does NOT address Phonemic and phonological awareness
A key factor in successful early literacy acquisition is immersion in a rich oral language environment. (Handbook of Early Literacy Research)

Development of communicative competence through immersion in oral language becomes an important building block for early success in literacy. (Rita Watson: Literacy and Oral Language: Implications for Early Literacy Acquisition)

Colourful Semantics is a great way to increase the exposure and use of oral language in the classroom.
Colourful Semantics & Literacy

Colourful Semantics can be used to develop oral language skills by targeting ‘levels of text’ required for reading comprehension:

• **word level** - what words mean, how they are said, awareness of sounds in words
• **sentence level** - how ideas are linked into sentences, grammar.
• **conceptual level** - how ideas are linked into themes
• topic or theme level - how a theme is communicated in a narrative or description
• pragmatic or dispositional level - how the social context affects how ideas are communicated, the attitudes and values of the writer towards the ideas in the text.
The Colour Cue Cards
Level One
'WHO' = orange = nouns

Can include:

- **people** e.g. man, baby, Grandma
- **animals** e.g. horse, dog, butterfly
- **occupations** e.g. clown, hairdresser, doctor
- **pronouns** e.g. he, she, it, they
- **describing words** e.g. big man, brown horse, sad girl
Poster Activity

1. Place “who?” card in middle of the page.
2. Take turns drawing “who?” pictures onto the poster.
3. Draw pictures in their subcategories e.g. zoo animals, family members
family
people
sister
men
stranger
wrestlers
friends
Chelsea

horse
pig
tim

bull
girl

man
cat

fairy princess

fairy
fairies
Tip...

Try this with students who have:

- poor use of grammar (e.g. ESL, SLD)
- limited vocabulary
- omit words when speaking or writing sentences

Use a black and white “The” or “A” card.
‘WHAT DOING’ = yellow = verbs

Can include:

• ‘stand alone’ verbs e.g. run, sit
• verbs associated with an object e.g. wash (car), brush (hair)
• different tenses (past, present, future)
• ‘is’ (auxiliary)
who + what doing

The girl is crying.
who + what doing

The boys are running
who + what doing

*The children are singing*
‘WHAT’ = green = objects/nouns

Can include:
- **Transport** e.g. car, truck, plane, boat
- **Toys** e.g. ball, puzzle, doll, blocks
- **Food** e.g. apple, sandwich, drink
- **Household objects** e.g. phone, brush
- **Furniture** e.g. bed, table, chair
- **Playground** e.g. slide, swing, tunnel
- **School** e.g. bag, pen, book
who + what doing + what

*The children are playing with a puzzle*
The girl is brushing her hair
who + what doing + what

*The boy is catching the ball*
‘WHERE’ = red = location

Can include:

- **position words** e.g. in, on, under, off, next to, behind, between
- **places** e.g. park, zoo, school, backyard, beach
The boy is sitting on the bed.
The mouse is hiding under the table
who + what doing + where

*The children are playing at the park*
who + what doing + where

The boy is at the zoo
The boy is visiting the zoo
who + what doing + where

The boy is sitting on the floor at kinder
The girl dropped her teddy on the ground.
The Colour Cue Cards

Level Two
‘WHEN’ = purple

Can include:
• yesterday, last week, later, now, on the weekend, tomorrow, noon, 5 o’clock, a long time ago
who + what doing + when

Sally is bushwalking all day.
who + what doing + what + when

Jack built a snowman this morning.
who + what doing + what + when

Susan will wash her hair later.
Once upon a time, Merlin the wizard lived in a castle.
Introducing “Is”

• use “is” on its own when being used as a ‘to be’ (copula) verb in a sentence.
  e.g. The boy is tall

• use the “is” cue card before the “what doing” to help students identify it is a separate word e.g. Fred is jumping high

• use the “is” cue card to assist with teaching verb tense e.g. are, was, were, do, does, will e.g. He is sad vs. He was sad

• use “is” at the start of a sentence to teach students questions.
Grammatical Forms to Model
Incidentally…

who & what:
• **plurals**: boys, girls, children, people, mice
• **pronouns**: he, she, they, his, her, their
• **derivation of nouns** (using ‘er’) e.g. painter, teacher, player, singer

what doing & when
• **present tense**: is/are +ing
• present progressive: flies, plays, sees
• past tense: was/were +ing, -ed
• future tense: will
The Other Cues Cards
(Level Three)
‘HOW DOING’ = white = adverbs
Can include:
quickly, gently, like a monkey, in a silly way, well, happily

‘WHAT LIKE’ = blue = adjectives
Can include:
• Feelings e.g. angry, scared, hungry
• Physical attributes e.g. old, tall, pretty
‘WHO TO’ = pink = indirect objects
  e.g. The girl gave flowers to her mother.

Joining words = brown = conjunctions
  e.g. and, because, after, although

‘Not’ = red circle cut out
  e.g. not verb (not playing),
  not adjective (not short)

N.B. ‘never’ = ‘how doing’ (adverb);
  ‘does/did’ etc. = auxiliary verbs e.g. ‘The boy did not run’
Use **Colorful Semantics** to analyse the sentences on your sheets
Identifying Parts of a Sentence

Use the coloured pencils to identify parts of the following sentences according to the ‘Colourful Semantics’ colour cues.

1. *Is the man eating breakfast?*
2. *The man is eating breakfast at the table.*
3. *The man is eating breakfast in the morning.*
4. *In the morning the man is eating breakfast.*
5. *The man is eating breakfast at the table in the morning.*
6. *The man is eating breakfast because he is hungry.*
7. *Because the man is hungry, he eats breakfast.*
8. *The breakfast is being eaten by the man.*
9. *The boy gives flowers to his mother.*
10. *The boy gives his mother flowers.*
11. *The man, who is tall, is eating breakfast.*
12. *The man, who is at the table, is eating breakfast.*
13. *The man, who is running, is tall.*
Goals - Examples

Colourful Semantics can aid *receptive and expressive language* development in the following areas:

- **Vocabulary**
  (e.g. nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives)
  → aides can reinforce class/topic vocab.

- **Comprehension**
  (what words/sentences mean)
Goals - Examples

- *Grammar ➔* various forms (incl. tenses) taught through incidental modeling (grammar changes with word order)
- *Syntax* (sentence construction and word order including conjunctions)
ILP Development

Your school Speech Pathologist can help you with these.

Long Term Goals:
1. Sally will independently produce simple sentences, which will include nouns, verbs and objects on 3/5 attempts
2. Sally will comprehend stories with simple sentences, which include nouns, verbs and objects. She will be able to answer 7/10 questions appropriately to demonstrate this knowledge.
ILP Development

Short Term Goals:
1. To produce 10 new present-tense verbs without prompting.
2. To produce ‘who + what doing + what’ sentence constructions with visual/verbal prompting 9/10 times.
When constructing an ILP it is important to be specific with goals and add an accuracy rating which will allow a simple and effective way to gauge success.
**Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Skills</th>
<th>How monitor?</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. To produce 10 new present-tense verbs. | a. Record current known verbs.  
b. Teach new verbs.  
c. Record progress each session.  
d. Review after 4-5 weeks – how many more verbs are they demonstrating? | a. Use colourful semantics.  
b. Simple Grammar – is/are –ing  
c. other |
| 2. To produce ‘who + what doing + what’ sentence constructions with visual/verbal prompting 9/10 times. | a. Teach structure.  
b. Record progress each session.  
c. Review after 4-5 weeks – how many times out 10 are they achieving structure? | a. Use colourful semantics.  
b. Simple Grammar – is/are –ing  
c. other |
Strategies & Delivery

Strategies:
- Colourful Semantics program/use of cue cards (includes games, making posters etc.)
- modeling and recasting

Mode of Delivery:
- teacher aide 1:1, small group or whole class.
- 20 minutes daily during literacy block.
Using **Colourful Semantics** in the classroom

- Have large copies of cue cards stuck on blackboard or wall, ready to use.
- Put up posters or butchers’ paper containing brainstormed words/pictures for each cue.
- Use colour cards as cues during ‘Show and Tell’
Using **Colourful Semantics** in the classroom

- add appropriate labels to the cue cards, e.g. ‘who’ = noun/subject; ‘what doing’ = verb; ‘what’ = noun/object
  - Students can then use the colour cards to refer to if unsure about a label e.g. adverb, adjective
- use colour cards as cues during narrative, essay, report, debate, sentence formulation etc.
• gesture to cue cards as a story is read and/or discussed.
• have students find the key words in a sentence, text or picture → underline them in colour etc.
• if you think the student will have difficulty grasping an animal/object as the ‘Who’, you may add a picture of a house etc. next to the stick figure person on the cue card.
Cinderella: May I go to the ball?
Stepsister 1: What would you wear?
Stepsister 2: And just look at your hair!
Stepmother: No! You may not go to the ball!
• if students are having difficulty with ‘where’ get them to stand in different positions with a chair/in the playground etc. (e.g. next to the chair) and say where they are.

• write a sentence on the board and have students match up the words with the cue cards. Encourage the students to make the sentence ‘more colourful’ by adding a word or sentence part.
Yesterday we went to the music room to have zebra sandwiches. We listened to Veronika talk about fillings for sandwiches. We like eating
The teenager sat on the log by the river
Colorful Semantics is a useful strategy/tool to use in the classroom to facilitate the development of oral language. Its application is only limited by your imagination.