

time “for talk”

Instructional Manual

**Sampling and Profiling Standard Australian
English in the Early Years of Schooling**

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Picture sequences by Maria Yoong.

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The project was co-ordinated and finalised by Ms Anna Sinclair, Aboriginal Education Directorate.

A number of teachers, school administrators, parents, Aboriginal community members and students from schools within the Perth metropolitan area were involved in the development of this package. The contribution of all of these people is gratefully acknowledged. Particular gratitude is expressed to the school-based personnel who contributed their time, expertise and critical thinking skills to this project. The willingness of this group of individuals to take part in action research and professional development projects, together with the standard of excellence achieved in their own classroom practice, reflects their deep commitment to developing early childhood education.

In addition, special thanks must go to the students who participated in the research and provided valuable information to their teachers.



Using the Instructional Manual

This manual is the starting point for use of the *Time for Talk* materials. It will introduce you to the sampling tasks and Oral Language Profile, provide you with the opportunity to practice analysing and profiling oral language data, and integrate the *Time for Talk* video into your learning program.

You should work systematically through this volume. As you do so, you will encounter a number of icons which indicate particular tasks or foci.



indicates that the information which follows is important if you are working with children whose first language or dialect is not English



indicates the appropriate time to watch the designated section of the *Time for Talk* video



indicates a learning task which you should complete

Use the sampling and profiling procedures to determine the oral language learning needs of children in your class, then use the companion volume *Time for Talk: Classroom Activities* to plan your oral language program.

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Introduction

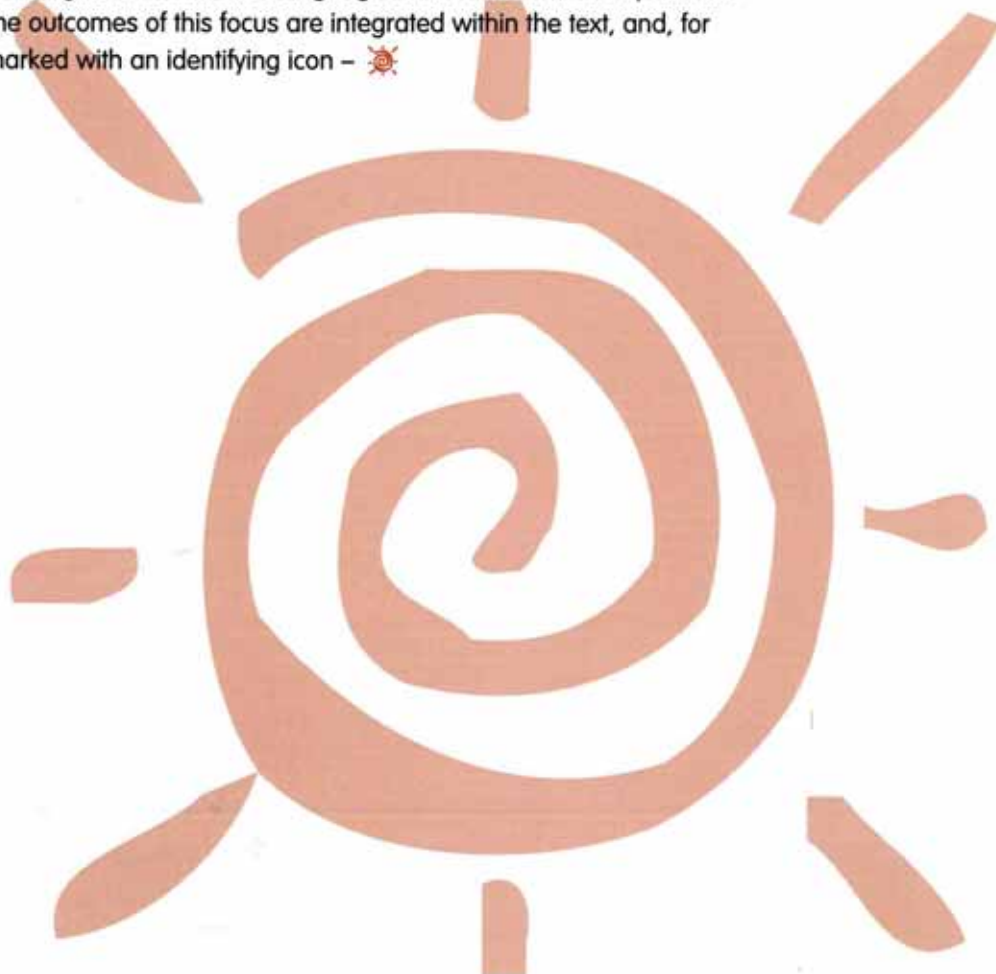
The sampling and profiling materials have been developed to identify:

- key oral language competencies at the K-3 developmental level;
- assessment tasks and strategies that can be implemented to monitor oral language;
- guidelines for analysing and interpreting oral language data;
- documentation strategies for classroom and whole school monitoring of oral language; and
- goal-setting procedures for developing oral language programs in the classroom.

The sampling and profiling materials can be used for general monitoring of language development in the early childhood classroom, and for the early identification of speech and language difficulties in children for whom Standard Australian English (SAE) is the first language.

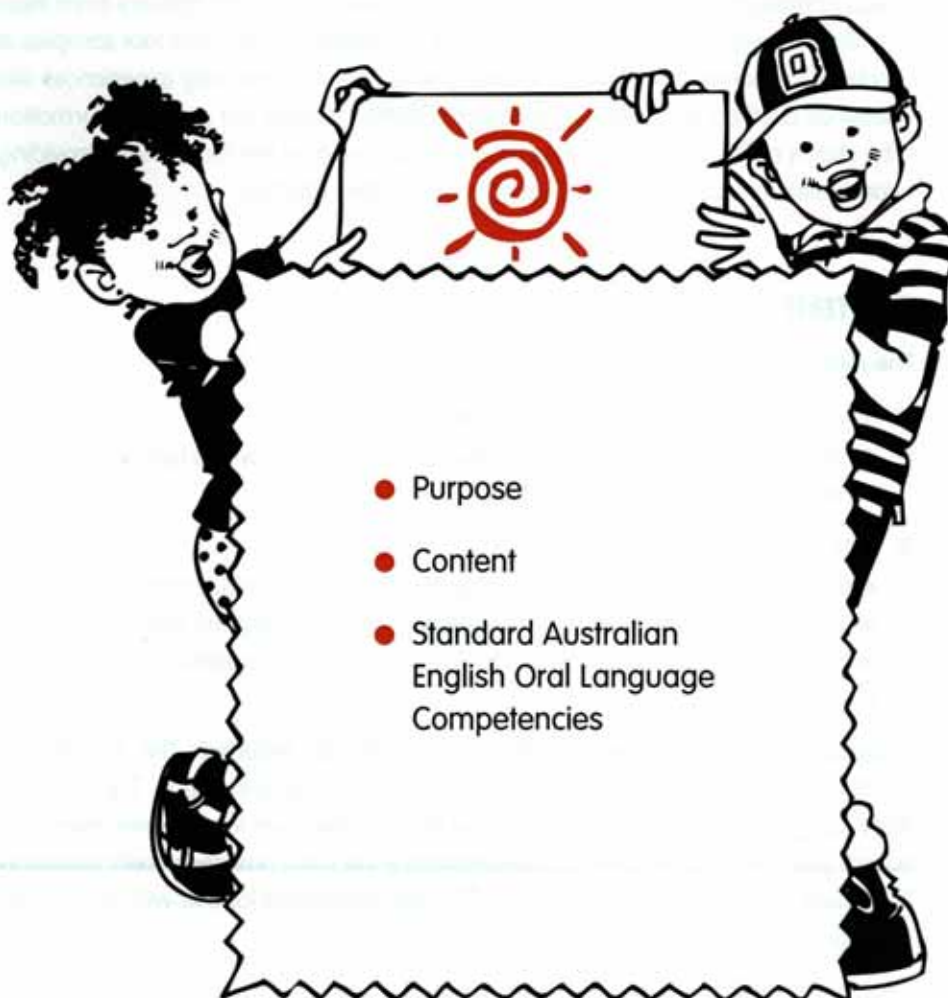
For children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, who come to school with different language backgrounds, the materials can be used to monitor language development in Standard Australian English. The oral language profiles of these children are likely to indicate language difference rather than language learning difficulty.

During 1996 and 1997, ongoing work funded by the Aboriginal Education Directorate and Shean resulted in refinement of previous research. The special needs of children for whom Standard Australian English is not the first language or first dialect were a particular focus of this research. The outcomes of this focus are integrated within the text, and, for ease of reference, are marked with an identifying icon – 



Section “A”

Sampling and Profiling Standard Australian English in the Early Years of Schooling



- Purpose
- Content
- Standard Australian English Oral Language Competencies

Section A


Sampling and Profiling Standard Australian English in the Early Years of Schooling

PURPOSE

The sampling and profiling materials provide a developmentally based framework with linked assessment tasks for monitoring students' oral language development in the K-3 age range.

The sampling and profiling package can be used for a variety of purposes including whole class screening, collection of sample data for a school management information system, or for individual monitoring of children at educational risk.

The profile reflects the principles of appropriate practice at the early childhood level. It is not designed to facilitate explicit comparisons of performance among students, nor to compare their performance to "normal" performance. It is designed to be used as a tool for monitoring students' development across the K-3 years in order to identify needs for language development during this period. The materials provide a common task combined with developmentally-based, qualitative methods of analysis and profiling.

 Those children for whom Standard Australian English is a second language or second dialect come to school with language skills which are different from those of children whose first language is Standard Australian English. This tool samples skill with "school" language in the urban school, and is useful in planning experiences which will allow all children to develop language for literacy. It does not provide information about the child's ability in his/her home language and should not be seen as providing a complete picture of a child's language or cognitive abilities.

CONTENT

The materials consist of two components:

1) *The Oral Language Sampling Tasks*

An Oral Comprehension and Narrative Production task which use a set of narrative stimulus pictures and question script.

2) *The Oral Language Profile*

A developmental summary consisting of a series of indicator statements grouped to reflect four areas of language competence. In each area the indicators are arranged to form a mini-continuum which can be used to track students' progress across the K-3 years.

Three alternative sets of narrative stimulus pictures are included. The "Kite Story" (page 57) is recommended for administration at the beginning of the year. The "Lost Teddy Story" (page 64) is a parallel story version that can be used for re-assessment during the school year, or in subsequent administrations if the child has developed familiarity with the "Kite Story". The "Football Story" (page 72) was developed for use with Aboriginal children in urban areas.

🔍 Research indicates that children are better able to understand and talk about events with which they are familiar and that they are motivated by materials which are culturally relevant. Teachers working in rural and remote areas, or in schools with a high proportion of children from a particular cultural group, are advised to consult with community members to determine whether the content covered in the materials is relevant to particular groups of children within the school. Modification of the content of the stimulus pictures and question script in order to tap into experiences which are familiar to the students is encouraged. Guidelines for undertaking this process can be found on page 30.

STANDARD AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH ORAL LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES


The following table shows the Standard Australian English oral language competencies which can be observed in the two sampling tasks.

<i>Oral Comprehension task</i>	<i>Narrative Production task</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understanding of specific question forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use of well-formed, grammatically correct Standard Australian English sentences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● description of people, objects and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● independent construction of coherent oral text using Standard Australian English structural organisation, i.e. narrative, descriptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use of talk to reflect on experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● awareness of listener and the need to make information explicit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● interpretation of events from different points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use of descriptive language to elaborate and enrich communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understanding of cause-effect relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use of connectors that reflect abstract thinking, eg if, while, unless
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use of language for critical thinking, ie to make predictions and inferences, to problem-solve, substantiate and explain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use of "literate" Standard Australian English story style and specific Standard Australian English story conventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use of general world knowledge to go beyond presented information and add own comments and extensions to task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● monitoring of oral production and ability to self-correct to clarify form or meaning

The monitoring criteria for the Oral Language Profile are drawn from:

- current research literature on language development in the school-aged child;
- comparative language sample data provided by schools; and
- Student Outcome Statement pointers.

The Profile should be considered a sub-set of all the possible aspects of oral language development that might be monitored in the classroom context and reflects an emphasis on those competencies identified in the developmental literature as providing critical information for the acquisition of literacy skills in Standard Australian English.

 The monitoring criteria were selected to provide a developmental window on the Standard Australian English skills of students in the K-3 age group. For those children whose first language is not Standard Australian English, the information gained through use of the Oral Language Profile reflects the child's developing ability to cope with a linguistic code which is different from the one which they use in the home.

The research literature indicates that oral language skills continue to be refined, and new skills are acquired, well into later childhood and adolescence. Hence, the Oral Language Profile should not be viewed as a complete profile of all the oral language competencies that arise during development or are demanded by the school setting, but as a *strategic selection* of key competencies for the purpose of developmental monitoring.



Further background information about the Oral Language Profile, and teacher perceptions regarding its use, are to be found in the first section of the videotape which accompanies this instructional package. You may like to watch this section now.