Oral Language Learning : The Primary Years

Application of the ICPALER model to the learning needs of a child who has oral language difficulties. Diagnose the needs of the child and recommend teaching procedures.

History / Background
As a literacy teacher, I assess, teach and monitor students in the early years. Each year the formal pre and post literacy testing data gives an indication as to which students are weak in areas such as oral language, sight word recognition, reading processes, writing vocabulary, hearing and recording sounds in words, and concepts about print. The Clay observation survey is a useful tool as an initial springboard for teachers to further analyse particular areas of literacy development for specific students.

The oral language component of this testing assesses the student’s capacity to listen to the teacher and repeat sentences of one, two and three events. Although administering the Record of Oral Language (Clay et al., 2007) does give an indication of the student’s speaking and listening skills, further observation and more in depth analysis of oral language in a variety of situations will give a clearer picture of oral language development.

Student X’s difficulties became apparent to me when he was in Prep. He commenced prep at the age of 5 years and 3 months. His oral language skills impacted not only on his literacy development, but his ability to communicate with the teacher and peers, both in the classroom and the playground. There were significant issues from his pre school life that became apparent.

He was first assessed after concerns were raised about his speech and language development during pre school screening in 2007. According to the Clinical Assessment of Language Fundamentals – Preschool (CELF-P) his receptive language scored within normal limits. However, his expressive language was assessed using the Renfrew Action Picture Test (RAPT) and his performance demonstrated significant delay.

Student X attended weekly speech therapy sessions for three terms of 2007. In 2008 student X commenced school, and early in the year he was referred to Student Well Being by his teacher. At the initial student well being meeting, all staff who worked with student X expressed concern about not only his oral language development, but his difficulties with interacting with other children and his inability to complete expected tasks in the classroom, including maths, literacy and handwriting.

Student X was referred to the Catholic Education Office Student Services for educational assessment. His educational assessment included the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT2), the Digit Span test and the Short Term Auditory Memory Test (STAM), the Oral Narrative Test and the Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test. In summary, this assessment indicated that:

- His below average verbal score suggested that language development, understanding of verbal comments, information and word knowledge skills were not at the average range for a student his age.
- In the oral narrative test student X was asked to retell a story that had been read aloud to him. He was able to recall 2 of 20 details of the story
- In the SPAT test, student X had difficulty segmenting words, rhyme production, identification of initial phoneme in words, identification of final phoneme in words
- Student X's non verbal skills including the ability to solve problems, to understand designs and reason by analogy were within the average range expected for his age.
- The composite score was in the low average range falling between the verbal and non verbal scores.
- From this educational assessment it was concluded that further cognitive evaluation was not warranted, as student X was operating well above the range for intellectual disability. It was also suggested that the range between verbal and non verbal scores was not suggestive of a language disorder.

In addition to his educational assessment, student X was assessed three times by a speech pathologist during his prep year. His assessment results are summarized in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Average Range</th>
<th>Just Below Average</th>
<th>Moderately below average</th>
<th>Significantly below average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receptive Oral Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Oral Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Memory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was recommended that student X continue speech therapy in 2009.

At the beginning of 2009, student X’s parents had a pediatric assessment. The pediatrician noted student X’s poor concentration, angry outbursts, disorganization and inability to listen to instructions. Apart from the recommendation to continue with speech therapy, the conclusion was that student X was not suffering from autism or ADHD, but should have a psychological assessment to investigate further his academic and behavioural problems.

In April this year, the psychological assessment was administered, and the following key points were significant:

- It was a challenge to keep him on task, and as the tasks became more challenging, student X became obstinate or would give up and say “I don’t know.”
- He struggled with understanding questions and they needed to be repeated several times.
- The Weschler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-111) indicated that his general cognitive ability is borderline.
- Verbal scores were in the low average range, as were his performance and processing speed scores.
- The full scale score for this assessment placed student X in the borderline range. These results did not qualify student X for any type of integration funding. It was recommended that student X receive ongoing extra support, and that he requires simple visual information. The additional recommendation was that activities need to build on general knowledge and verbal fluency.

For the first semester this year, student X has received literacy support in a small group, before starting on the Reading Recovery program. Parent helpers also work with student X regularly to extend his oral language with picture and book chats.
Screening

Over a sustained period of time I have observed student X in the classroom, talked to his teachers, met with his parents and administered screening procedures. There are significant observations noted by myself and other teachers.

The use of the observing oral language behaviours checklist (OOLB) helped to focus on language behaviours that were apparent whilst student X was listening to stories, doing gross motor and perceptual motor activities, doing art, talking to the class and in spontaneous conversations. It also showed that student X was not at the expected level for his age on the developmental sequence for ideas and conventions in oral language (DSIC). His oral language knowledge correlates with the 5 year old age range, rather than the 6 – 7 year age range where he should be located.

During all the screening and observations to assess student X’s language knowledge, there were significant behaviours worth mentioning.

Student X:

- Is willing to engage in using language
- Does not interact with peers successfully so wanders around the playground by himself most days, seemingly happy
- Seems oblivious to his difficulties with working independently ie. often asks people “Why are you working with me?” “Why does everyone want to work with me?” Does not see himself as different to others in his class
- Hovers around the teacher after instructions are given to class, waiting for further explanation
- Can only cope with simple tasks in the classroom. Needs instructions one by one to successfully complete a task. For example, if he was completing a word search the first instruction would be “find the word little.” Then student X returns to the teacher for the next instruction. He can complete tasks in these small steps, but is overwhelmed without this scaffolding
- Cannot remember people’s names. For example he is in his 52nd lesson of reading recovery and refers to the teacher as ‘she’ or ‘her.’
- Loses temper quickly eg if someone bumps him accidentally, he will yell at them and get really worked up and angry
- Cannot follow routine. Has had the same routine getting ready for school every morning, but needs reminding. Mum even has a picture sequence of what to do up on the fridge
- Has poor eye contact whilst speaking and listening.
- Will turn off a conversation and lose interest often. eg teacher will be talking to him, and he will then look at something completely unrelated and say “Why does the drink bottle have an orange lid?”
- Is keen to contribute to classroom discussions, but often says something unrelated, on a tangent
- Is inconsistent in the classroom eg he can remember a string of random numbers, can see patterns in maths, but can’t remember words

As a starting point, the OOLB checklist along with sustained observation provide evidence that student X has difficulties in all areas of the ICAPALER framework. His strength was in the gross motor task. Unlike any other situations, here student X was able to recognize and comprehend vocabulary, name parts of the body, act out up to 4 event instructions and give a sequence of instructions (eg he instructed me to “stand
The next step in screening to analyse his language in more depth was the ICPALER oral language screening profile (Appendix 2) The average oral language rating calculated was 2.375. This rating of less than 2.5 may suggest immature oral language development. This score correlates closely with student X’s previous assessments where he was diagnosed as being borderline and just below average, but not significantly below average.

The in depth ICPALER oral language observational profile (Appendix 3) consolidated this, but allowed the more in depth diagnosis of components of the ICPALER framework.

Observations, screening procedures and background history had established 3 main factors:

- Language difficulties are present in all areas of the ICPALER framework- they are broad based
- Student X has difficulties with both expressive and receptive language
- Articulation is one aspect of oral language that is in place

### Analysis and the ICPALER framework

Table 2 represents the oral language profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICPALER Profile</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expression</td>
<td>reception</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Score for Category

| Using language to achieve purposes | 3.6 |
| Use of language to learn          | 4.6 |
| Articulation & speech patterns    | 2.7 |
| Perceive & attend to speech       | 4.4 |

The data suggests that student X is having difficulties with vocabulary development, receptive more than expressive. He has difficulties recognising sound patterns in words, and is unable to recognize words that rhyme. He has difficulties naming, and recalling names for common objects such as an orange. He will often substitute the word with a similar meaning eg watermelon, or a description, ‘it’s the fruit that grows on trees.’ He is unable to suggest synonyms eg will suggest ‘dog’ as a synonym for ‘cat’. He very often cannot match pictures or items with words. eg will call many items ‘things.’ This suggests that he has difficult retrieving words from his stored memory. Student X does have articulation, speech and speaking patterns in place.

Student X is also having difficulties with sentence conventions, both expressively and receptively. For example, his ability to repeat sentences accurately is reflected in his extremely low score of 13 for the Record of Oral Language. In the classroom, Student X needs visual aids often to follow instructions. Student X has difficulty understanding events linked by cause and effect or time and space. This is evident in his inability to use
words such as ‘before’ and ‘after’ in a sentence. He needs the additional support of pictures and actions to help him say and understand more complex sentences.

The data also suggests difficulties in the area of discourse, where the scores are high in every aspect. The conversations with student X in many different authentic situations suggest that he finds it very hard to maintain a ‘thread of meaning’ across sentences. These difficulties are reflected very clearly in Student X’s inability to converse with peers appropriately, his absence of knowledge about adjusting his language to fit the audience and context and his subsequent isolation in the playground.

All of these difficulties impact on his use of language to learn, thus his ability and capacity to learn. He did not demonstrate any ‘self talk’ even when instructions are given in the classroom.

Particular areas of difficulty needed to be analysed further, to determine exactly what student X does have in place.

I asked student X to retell a familiar story to me, by taking me through the book and using the pictures as prompts. He then retold the story to me without using picture cues. (Appendix 4) I also recorded a sample of his conversation to analyse further the types of word meanings he finds easy and difficult. (Appendix 5) These tasks, along with observations and lots of picture sequencing and naming tasks, were used to compile a profile of his word meaning use. Table 3 summarises the types of word meanings that student X used in picture sequencing, retelling and in conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of errors Student X makes</th>
<th>Number of errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content word errors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow (donkey), people (animals),</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watermelon (orange), thing (juicer),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clothesline (thing you hang clothes on),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wheelchair (dad’s got one of those),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheep (baa), donut (hoola hoop),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flippers (shoes you swim in),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>house (picnic area), paint (wet stuff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Function word errors</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in, he, was, they, are, them, what’s, she’s, his, he’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bound Morpheme Errors</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data suggests that student X has difficulties with content words. For example, in the picture sequencing student X could not name a ‘clothesline’ but could tell me it was ‘a thing you hang clothes on.’ In Art he asks for the ‘wet stuff,’ not the ‘paint.’ This may be indicative of a difficulty with the retrieval of words from his stored memory. Student X has difficulties with function words, which affects his grammar usage. For example, in several conversations he used ‘what’ for ‘that.’ eg ‘It’s a thing what you hang clothes on.’ In all samples of conversations, student X did not have difficulties with bound morphemes. This is an area of oral language he has in place.

Many of these errors re occur frequently. There are regular patterns in student X’s language, and although this is a small sample, the errors in content and function words are consistently frequent in all his conversations. Further analysis of the discourse aspect is represented in Table 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of discourse</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Indicator in Expressive Language</th>
<th>Indicator in receptive language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recall all or most of the main ideas in a message</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has difficulty, may mention 1 or 2 main ideas eg retelling a story</td>
<td>Can recall and understand key ideas sometimes eg gross motor activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall and use sentence ideas in correct sequence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Only if he has scaffolding with visual cues. Can not often repeat sentences of more than one event as evident in Record of Oral Language</td>
<td>Cannot follow more than one instruction in class. Cannot comprehend the order of sentence ideas. Needs sentence repeated often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue a key idea across a sentence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Does not stay on track. Tangentially links ideas</td>
<td>Sometimes interprets &amp; responds to what is heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipate or predict what might be said or heard next</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has difficulty gauging appropriate responses to others</td>
<td>Demonstrates that he can sometimes predict what comes next eg. Narrative text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data suggests that student X has difficulties in the expressive and receptive areas of discourse. He needs visual scaffolding to recall and use ideas in a message. For example in retelling the big book narrative *Who Sank the Boat?* Student X was able to recount 13 main ideas using picture cues. Without this scaffolding he was only able to recall 3 main ideas. However the ideas were not linked across sentences and the conversation did not flow.

Similarly in the classroom the teacher uses visual prompts for all communication with student X as she knows he will not recall the main ideas using only auditory skills. This is illustrated with his success in recalling and expressing the main ideas in gross motor tasks, where visual stimulus is present. Student X may struggle to organize and link the ideas that are necessary for effective discourse because of his limited vocabulary knowledge and meaning network.

An alternative way to assess student X’s progress in listening and speaking is to use the VELS indicators of progress. The VELS speaking and listening continuum is important to explore, as it pinpoints age appropriate oral language expectations, whereas the ICPALER framework is a useful tool for a range of ages.

Student X is in grade 1 and at this stage of the year the expected VELS level for this age is level 1.5. After analyzing the VELS speaking and listening continuum, along with the data about student X’s language development, it is evident that he cannot demonstrate the behaviours necessary to attain level 1.5. His oral language development suggests that he is working towards level 1. This level is equivalent to prep, a year behind his age appropriate level. Student X has a few behaviours that he is working towards achieving at higher levels. At level 1 student X is operating effectively in some areas, however needs to work towards the following areas.

Communicating Orally:
- Sequencing main events and ideas coherently in speech
- Reflecting on how talking about their ideas with others and listening to what others think can help them to learn new ideas

Conventions of Language:
- Saying and comprehending word meanings and linking sentences in larger meaning units
• Using his knowledge of oral language for purposeful communication in a number of areas

Purposes of Communication:
• Asking and answering questions for information and clarification, making relevant contributions during class discussions
• Working out rules for turn taking and contributing in groups

Ideas communicated:
• Retelling stories and order events using story language
• Following simple and then more complex directions
• Listening with sustained concentration

These aspects of language correlate with the data collected using the ICPALER framework. Again, there is evidence that Student X has broad based difficulties.

Inferences
Student X lacks the concept of a word, the meanings of words and the use of vocabulary as a meaning network. The network of meanings that make up his vocabulary influence how he comprehends and responds to what he hears. It also impacts on his ability to express a sentence using the correct conventions.

Student X has many of the behaviours that are indicative of problems with auditory processing. These observable behaviours are:
- His lack of automaticity in retrieving words eg naming objects in a picture or book
- His difficulties with processing amounts of information eg sentences with more than one event
- His need for scaffolding with actions and imagery to link words to meanings, and store this information eg could only do simple retell of story with picture cues, could follow instructions involving gross motor actions

Student X may also have difficulties in his ability to learn. This is demonstrated repeatedly when he is attempting to think to learn the language. He has difficulties consistently in the following areas:
- Retaining and saying the heard information, using his short term auditory memory eg Record of Oral language
- Sequencing and ordering ideas, in his conversations, retelling and ordering picture stories
- Learning and storing language, he can learn a new word such as clothesline using imagery and actions, but will be unable to remember it the next day
- Conceptualising and categorizing, he does not understand the concepts that underlie many words – or the characteristics that distinguish items eg. oranges from watermelons
- Linking ideas, he does not relate ideas using more than one event sentences often, and cannot link ideas across sentences
- Transferring his knowledge of language to other situations, and applying it to new contexts is difficult for him, even conveying a message to another person is difficult
- Using his meaning network, integrating his language knowledge is difficult because of his limited vocabulary knowledge and his inability to retrieve word labels or symbols. This means that he finds it hard to sequence, recall and
automatise new words. This in turn decreases his ability to link symbols in new ways.

Although there are certain aspects of the framework that I have analysed further and explored with the data from Student X, it is important to remember that all aspects of the ICPALER framework need to be used in integrated ways.

Further Assessment

The First Steps Speaking and Listening Continuum would be a further assessment that could be used with students experiencing oral language difficulties. Teachers could use the continuum to plot individual progress, and identify focuses for explicit oral language teaching.

Other checklists can be used to further identify students with language difficulties. For student X it would be useful to refer him to a trained professional to administer the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF – 4). This language test measures several aspects of language development.

The Language for Learning – A Checklist for Language Difficulties Primary Level, developed by speech pathologists, could be another screening procedure for teachers to use.

Language Learning Intervention

In developing language learning intervention for student X, I would recommend the use of narrative discourse as a platform that offers opportunities to teach the aspects of the ICPALER framework in an integrated way. Button et al (2005) discuss the notion that stories provide models for language and literacy and the opportunity for children to reflect upon their language as well as upon their lives.

In developing an intervention strategy there are a number of key aspects that need to be considered and included:

- aspects of the ICPALER framework need to be practiced simultaneously in order to automatise what the student knows about oral language.
- Teaching and learning activities need to be organized systematically, and instruction needs to be implicit and explicit (Kirkland, 2005)
- Intervention sessions need to comprise of visualizing, actions and reviewing to build ideas into his language
- Students need positive feedback to help build their self efficacy as learners and users of oral language
- Lessons need scaffolding such as pairing actions with concepts or linking a visual image with concepts
- Scaffolding support can be decreased as student ability increases. Students can move from familiar events to less familiar concepts.

Each teaching session needs to comprise 3 phases of teaching and learning:

- Orientation: students say what they already know about the topic and plan how they are going to speak
- Students learn the new speaking and listening knowledge and link it with what they already know. They learn to use language and communication conventions.
- Consolidation and review – students talk about new knowledge, automatise, review, monitor and reflect on new and known knowledge.

In planning the following language learning intervention, all aspects of the ICPALER framework are integrated, with a specific emphasis on word meaning network, sentence conventions and discourse development. The ICPALER oral language profile in depth (OLSPD) highlights Student X’s difficulties in these areas.

Following is a suggested 10 session language learning intervention with suggested activities. These sessions would be 30 minutes in duration, as this would match student X’s maximum concentration span. For some of these session I have used the book *Alexander’s Outing* by Pamela Allen. Student X loves animals and this book is great for retelling, sequencing and vocabulary development, and has supportive visual images.

*It is important to note that positive feedback to help the student see himself as a successful language learner, is an integral part of all these sessions.**

**Session 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orienting Phase</strong></td>
<td>Use cards with animal photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name the animals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take in turns to choose 3 cards and say a sentence about the animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>While Learning Phase</strong></td>
<td>Give student sentence starters to focus on sentence conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning new language &amp; conventions</td>
<td>The orangutan is........</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can see the........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up in the tree........</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now say the sentence again and act out. “Let’s be an orangutan up in a tree.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidation and Review Phase</strong></td>
<td>Use cards to turn over and rename animals fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turn over sentence starters to take turns to say a sentence about any animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take turns to act out an animal. Other person has to guess which one you are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Say the animal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Session 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orienting Phase</strong></td>
<td>Use animal cards again. Name animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Put into categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animals with fur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animals with feathers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animals with scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask “How did you know?” “What can you see that helped you to know?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While Learning Phase</td>
<td>Re phrasing a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revisit sentence starters, say one again: Up in the tree.......... Now we are going to say the sentences in a different way. 'The orangutan is....' Model first, have photo cards as visual cue Now you try: Give sentence starter as prompt Take turns to say a sentence for each picture in a different way (you can’t say it the same way as the other person)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consolidation and Review Phase</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take turns to say a sentence about an animal card. The other person has to say the sentence back in a different way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Session 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orienting Phase</td>
<td>Use picture sequence cards (animals) Review names of animals Student puts pictures in order. Ask student to find, point to the picture that….. Students put pictures in order and talk about what’s happening in each picture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>While Learning Phase</th>
<th>Link ideas in 2 or more event sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model using 2 pictures from sequencing and joining ideas together in one sentence Eg The orangutan is up in the tree and she is eating some fruit Now student has a go using 2 cards as visual cue Introduce other conjunctions such as but because then Use these with a range of picture sequences. Model first for each sequence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consolidation and Review Phase</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student talks about the new idea they have learnt. Give an example of how they joined 2 ideas together in a sentence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Session 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orienting Phase</td>
<td>Introduce picture story book Alexander's Outing Look at front cover and predict what the story might be about Describe what the front cover shows Make a mental picture of the cover, the cover is hidden and student says what they see in their minds Suggest words for how the ducks might move, feel, sound.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **While Learning Phase** | Review 2 event sentence  
Say a 2 event sentence about the front cover |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Predicting              | Look through the pictures and predict what the story might be about  
Identify key concepts and related vocab eg the bottle tree  
Read the story.  
“Close your eyes and picture the ducks on their journey” (at intervals)  
Ask 4 W & H questions eg Where are the ducks going? How did the ducks get across the road safely? |
| Identifying main ideas  |                                                                                             |
| **Consolidation and Review Phase** | Pictuer the story in your head. Retell the story using pictures as prompts.  
Ask student how making pictures in your head helped you to retell the story  
Review new concepts eg bottle tree, iron gates, crowd, fountain  
Play game eg point to the tree, the fountain, the gate |
| **Session 5** |                                                                                             |
| **Speaking and Listening** | **Teaching and learning activities** |
| **Orienting Phase** | Link vocab from previous session to visual cues  
eg point to the ...........(bridge)  
Show me the ..........(gate)  
Say the words to me  
Ask student to link new words by saying new word in a sentence or answering a question.  
Eg What is a gate? A bridge?  
A gate is a door in a fence.  
A bridge is a road going over the water.  
Ask questions to recall main ideas in the story eg What happened at the beginning of this story?  
What happened before Alexander fell in the hole?  
How did the story end? |
| **While Learning Phase** | Ask student to link 2 ideas from the story in a sentence, using visual image Model first  
eg “Everybody is looking down the hole while the duck is quacking”  
Show student joining words on flashcards and review from previous session eg while, as, but, and, first, then  
Now look at a picture in the story and tell me a sentence with 2 ideas in it. Use the |
### Session 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orienting Phase</strong></td>
<td>Choose a picture from previous session and say 2 or 3 event sentence about it using flashcard words from last session. Select 2 or 3 simple words from text eg big, small. Talk about other words that mean the same thing eg large, little.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>While Learning Phase</strong></td>
<td>Act out words in the story to help store new words. Eg flapped, quacked, straggled, commotion. Act out, say it to me. “Pretend you are a duck flapping your wings.” Think of synonyms we can use eg The duck was scared / frightened in the hole. Model other sentences &amp; have a go at paraphrasing sentences using new vocabulary / synonyms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidation and Review Phase</strong></td>
<td>See if student can retrieve new words. Repeat actions linked to new vocabulary. Take turns –other person has to use word to name action (retrieval of new vocab) Eg flapping, prancing. Ask “What helps us remember the word?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Session 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orienting Phase</strong></td>
<td>Have new vocabulary on cards. Use gross motor action sequencing to review and retrieve new vocabulary. Take turns to choose a word card and instruct other person to show you meaning. Eg Flap your arms like a duck, make a commotion, stand like a fountain, open the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While Learning Phase</td>
<td>Teaching and learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sequencing ideas</strong></td>
<td>Photocopy/scan some pictures from the story. Talk about what is happening in each picture Now see if student can sequence pictures Model language you may use to talk about the pictures eg First......After that.....Then.......At the end....... Student has a go at using this vocab to talk about what is happening in the sequence of pictures Ask questions using these words Eg What does the first picture show you? What happens after Alexander pops out of the hole?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using function words – before, after, first</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consolidation and Review Phase</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mix up sequence cards. Student puts them back in order. Retell sequence of events by taking turns to talk about each card</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Session 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orienting Phase</strong></td>
<td>Revisit pictures from last session. Student puts pictures in sequence. Re read picture story book, student joins in reading with some new vocabulary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>While Learning Phase</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discourse meaning and production</strong></td>
<td>Take turns to retell what you remember about the text as a whole. eg One day the ducks went for a walk.....they.... Student has to listen to what has been said and plan what they are going to say next to keep the story going Prompt with new vocabulary eg after that.....then..... (if they get stuck use picture cues from text)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consolidation and Review Phase</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use animal photo card to play game. Take turns to talk about the animal using 2 two event sentences. Model first. This consolidates the ability to maintain a discourse and stay on the topic &amp; use 2 event sentences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orienting Phase</strong></td>
<td>Listen and guess game. Student has hidden picture or model of an animal. They describe the animal and its features. Other person guesses. Take turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>While Learning Phase</strong></td>
<td>Use picture of animal scene for one person to describe to the other person. Person responds to description by re creating the scene with animal figures. Eg the horse is next to the tree and the cow is behind the horse. Take turns. Student to retell the scene, what is happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidation and Review Phase</strong></td>
<td>Play game to reinforce linking ideas across sentences. Talk about animal scene, each person takes turns to keep the link going. Aim for 3 events. Eg The horse is next to the tree but …. the cow is in the barn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Session 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orienting Phase</strong></td>
<td>Discuss what do you need to do when you are talking to people? Eg eye contact, taking turns, waiting for others to finish, listening to others, planning what you want to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>While Learning Phase</strong></td>
<td>Student brings poster of an animal they are interested in and have some prior knowledge about. Have picture chat and identify key features. Write these on cards. Model how to use these as cue cards to present information about the animal. Student has a go. They see if they can talk for a minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidation and Review Phase</strong></td>
<td>Student tells their whole class about the animal, using cue cards and poster as support. Finish with game of “I went shopping….”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Evaluation**

The orienting, while learning and review and consolidation phases offer opportunities for assessment of, as and for learning. The use of a checklist with space for comments should be used throughout all sessions to be able to assess whether the student can remember new knowledge taught over time. Thus assessment is an integral component of these sessions.

These sessions need to be flexible to cater for the needs of the student and their capacity to learn and remember new knowledge. The ongoing feedback and reflection in these sessions allows for self assessment as well.

Looking for evidence of oral language development in the classroom, and talking to the teacher is another way of assessing language development.

Re administering the ICPALER language screening profile would be a useful assessment tool to evaluate progress after intervention.

Weigal (2005), suggests that the parent or teacher who has the ability to talk about language and give constructive feedback to the child, is benefitting multiple areas of language development including effective discourse. In this intervention positive feedback not only benefits language skills, but continues to help students to build their self efficacy as learners and users of oral language.

**References**


Allen, P (1994) *Alexander’s Outing*. Penguin books, Australia


APPENDICES

1. ICPALER Oral language screening profile (brief)
2. ICPALER Oral language screening profile (in depth)
3. Retell of Big Book
4. Sample of Conversation
ICPALER Oral language screening profile (brief)

Name of child: Student X

From your observations, how often does the child show each language behaviour below? Rate each one on a 5-point scale from never (1) not often (2), sometimes (3), often (4), very often (5)

Ideas: Vocabulary: how often does the student
1. recall and use the most appropriate words for a particular context or purpose?
2. recall the meanings of words and phrases effectively?
3. show a restricted or immature vocabulary, use 'baby words'?

Ideas: Sentence comprehension and production: how often does the student
1. say and understand most sentences that describe one event?
2. say and understand sentences that describe two events?
3. say and understand sentences that link two events using words such as ‘while’, ‘because’?

Ideas: Discourse and topic comprehension and production: how often does the student
1. act out what they are told, follow correctly two or more spoken instructions in class?
2. describe accurately the sequence of events in an experience they have had?
3. recall, keep track of the ideas mentioned in a story they have heard?

Conventions: phonological: how often does the student
1. say most or all sounds accurately?
2. use and comprehend stress patterns to communicate?

Sentence conventions: how often does the student
1. say and understand sentences that are grammatically correct, for example, say words in a correct order?
2. use various types of words correctly, for example prepositions, adverbs, pronouns?
3. respond to and use a range of sentence types and can recognise and use questions, instructions, descriptions?

Discourse and topic conventions: how often does the student
1. use and comprehend connectives such as "also", "first" or "but" in speech to connect sentences?
2. use and comprehend the link between nouns and pronouns and verb agreement across sentences?
3. sequence the main ideas in a story or a recount in an appropriate order?

Using language to achieve purposes: How often does the student
1. use language appropriately in social contexts to achieve their purposes, for example, know how to engage effectively in a conversation, speak politely?
2. interpret nonliteral language correctly rather than literally eg pull up your socks?
3. take account of their audience, what listeners know?

Ability to learn language: How often does the student
1. learn how to say new words without delay rather than needing excessive teaching and practice?
2. learn successfully from auditory information, doesn’t need accompanying visual cues to learn?
3. retain auditory information well and not ask for instructions to be repeated?

Articulation: how often does the student
1. speak with natural oral language fluency?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of ratings for the 24 items = 57</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average oral language rating: Divide the total of ratings by 24 = 2.375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An average rating of 2.5 or above suggests average or above oral language use. A rating of less than 2.5 may suggest immature oral language development. In this case you may decide to use the Oral language observational profile (in depth) to see the actual problem areas.
ICPALTER Oral language observational profile (in depth)

Name of child \[\text{Student X}\]

From your observations, how often does the child show each language behaviour below? Rate each one on a 5-point scale from never (1) not often (2), sometimes (3), often (4), very often (5). The rating here is comparative, you are comparing the child’s language use with that of their same-grade typical peers.

**Vocabulary expression.** How often does the student
1. show a limited expressive vocabulary, recall comparatively few words? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
2. have difficulty recalling and using synonyms? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
3. take a comparatively long time to recall or say most words? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
4. have difficulty recalling and using the most appropriate word, uses ‘simple’ generic words eg good, big, sort of, stuff? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
5. take a long time to learn how to say new words, frequently mispronounces them? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
6. show immature vocabulary, uses ‘baby words’? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]

**Vocabulary reception.** How often does the student
1. have difficulty recognizing examples of the words typically known by age peers? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
2. show a limited receptive vocabulary, have difficulty matching pictures or items with words? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
3. have difficulty learning to recognize what new words mean, need more teaching to learn them? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]

**Phonological and phonemic expression** How often does the student
1. articulate sounds or words inaccurately, say sounds in incorrect orders? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
2. have difficulty saying in order the sounds they hear in a spoken word? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
3. have difficulty blending a sequence of sounds into a word? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
4. suggesting rhyming words? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]

**Phonological and phonemic reception** How often does the student
1. misunderstand words that have a familiar sound pattern? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
2. have difficulty recognising a sound pattern that is shared by two or three spoken words? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
3. have difficulty ‘acting out’ the sounds in a spoken word by tapping once for each sound in the word? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
4. recognising words that rhyme? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]

**Sentence conventions expression.** How often does the student
1. say mainly comparatively short sentences? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
2. mis-use prepositions and/or adverbs, substitute incorrect words \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
3. have difficulty using pronouns that peers use, such as ‘it’, ‘that’, ‘which’ in spoken sentences \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
4. make grammatical errors, say words in an incorrect order? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
5. use speech that has immature grammar? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
6. have difficulty imitating, or repeating accurately sentences that were heard? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
7. omit key grammatical categories for example, “I go tooilet”? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
8. use tense incorrectly, has difficulty with verb- tense agreement? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]

**Sentence conventions reception.** How often does the student
1. understand comparatively short sentences only? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
2. have difficulty comprehending relationships that use pronouns, such as ‘it’, ‘that’, ‘which’? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
3. mis-understand prepositions and/or adverbs? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
4. misunderstand conjunctions only? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]

**Sentence meanings expression.** How often does the student have difficulty
1. saying sentences that describe more than one event? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
2. saying variations of one event sentences, for example, asking a question or instructing? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
3. describing in a sentence two events that occur in sequence or using a linking word such as ‘while’? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
4. say more complex sentence ideas such as inclusive / exclusive relationships linked by ‘all’, ‘except’, ‘but’? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]

**Sentence meanings reception.** How often does the student have difficulty understanding
1. simple sentences that describe one event? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
2. variations of one event sentences, for example, recognising a question or an instruction? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
3. sentences that describe two events using a subordinate clause? \[\text{[] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]}\]
4. the relationship between two events in a sentence that are linked by words such as ‘while’ or ‘before’?
5. sentences that use inclusive or exclusive relationships such as ‘all’, ‘except’, or ‘but’?

**Discourse conventions expression**: how often does the student have difficulty
1. using connectives such as “also”, “first” or “but” in speech to connect sentences.
2. linking nouns and matching pronouns and making verbs agree in their tense across sentences.
3. sequencing the main ideas in a story or a recount in an appropriate order.

**Discourse conventions reception**: how often does the student have difficulty
1. understanding connectives such as “as well” or “however” to connect sentences?
2. linking pronouns with their matching nouns across sentences?
3. using verb tenses to understand how events occurred across sentences?

**Discourse meanings expression**: how often does the student have difficulty
1. describing accurately the sequence of events in an experience they have had?
2. mentioning the context and the main characters in a story early in a presentation?

**Discourse meanings reception**: how often does the student have difficulty
1. acting out what they are told, follow correctly two or more spoken instructions in class?
2. recalling, keeping track of the ideas mentioned in a story they have heard?
3. knowing how to use the context and the main characters in a story they hear.

**Topic meanings expression**: how often does the student have difficulty
1. when asked to talk about a particular topic, doing this, for example, when asked: Tell me about your car (your pets)?
2. staying on an agreed or a specified topic when contributing to a spoken message and is more likely to say ideas that are irrelevant?

**Topic meanings reception**: how often does the student have difficulty
1. saying what a spoken message is about, for example, saying the topic of a story or a conversation?
2. recognising when an idea they hear does not fit with the topic of a spoken message?

**Articulation, speech and speaking patterns**: how often does the student
1. speak hesitantly or without natural oral language fluency?
2. use stress patterns ineffectively?
3. speak either excessively slowly or rapidly?
4. show stutter, stammer patterns?
5. show an influence of tone on speech?
6. have difficulty making have difficulty correctly understood throughout how they use language?
7. prefer to talk rather than to communicate in other ways?

**Using language to achieve purposes**: how often does the student
1. interpret incorrectly nonliteral language such as idioms, for example, Pull up your socks?
2. use language in a range of ways, for example, to express feelings, rather than in restricted ways, for example, speak only when they want something.
3. understand what other people say and mean?
4. have difficulty using the words most appropriate to a context, eg, to be polite?
5. have difficulty with the rules of conversation, eg., initiating conversation with peers, taking turns, give and take, know when to stop, or respond to social cues from the audience?
6. have difficulty following a conversation, eg., go off the topic, forget what has been said?
7. have difficulty keeping a conversation going, communicate in groups?
8. talk a lot but convey little meaning?
9. make inappropriate assumptions about what the audience knows, is egocentric?

**Use of language to learn**: how often does the student have difficulty
1. learning to use new words to label unfamiliar events or items?
2. having their attention directed through language?
3. actually doing actions that match what they say they will do?
4. converting instructions they hear into self-talk for themselves?
5. internalising oral language, forming sub vocal patterns?
6. learning in group situations, learn better in one-to-one situations?
Perceiving and attending to spoken information. How often does the student
1. be insentitive or easily distracted especially when background noise is present? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
2. learn better when visual cues accompany auditory information? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
3. have more difficulty learning when two or more speakers participate in the talk? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
4. have difficulty recalling auditory information, ask for instructions to be repeated? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
5. misunderstand what is said, especially if it was said rapidly? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
6. have more difficulty understanding the teacher when the teacher moves around the room than when remaining stationary? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
7. have difficulty understanding speech when it is said at a normal level? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
8. become frustrated when trying to learn auditory information? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑
9. seem unaware of their language difficulties and not seek clarification? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑

To work out the profile for a student, you add up the ratings in each category and write this in the second column of the table below. Then you divide each total by the number of items in each category. These are shown in the 'divide by' column below. Write the average rating score for each category in the last column below. Again, any category that has an average rating score of more than 3.0 needs further attention. These categories will probably require further teaching.

### Oral language summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>total score</th>
<th>divide by</th>
<th>Average rating score</th>
<th>Need for teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary expression</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary reception</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonological and phonemic expression</td>
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<td>2.25</td>
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<td>Sentence conventions expression</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of language to learn</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceiving and attending to spoken information</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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</table>

You can collate these results on a chart that shows the IC PALER profile.

### IC PALER profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Discourse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>expression</td>
<td>reception</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideas</td>
<td>3·8</td>
<td>4·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventions</td>
<td>5·25</td>
<td>4·75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average score for category

Using language to achieve purposes 3·6
Use of language to learn 4·6
Articulation and speech patterns 2·7
Perceive and attend speech 4·4

The aspects that you may need to target in teaching are those that have a rating score of more than 3.0. You can find the recommended teaching activities in the next chapter.
Big Book Retell (using pictures as cues)

Book: Who Sank the Boat? By Pamela Allen

You can see everyone walking
You can see everyone walking near the boat
He’s getting on the boat. He’s fat
It’s nearly going to fall
The cows (donkey) getting in but he’s too fat too
Those two hopped in
The pig was nearly going to fall in the water
The rope broke
The lamb knew where he was going to sit
The mouse jumped
Everyone fell
All wet
The boat’s broken

Retell without pictures

It’s about when all of the people fall in the water.
It’s about them hopping in the boat.
They all go in the water.
Sample Conversation about the beach

*What do you like to do when it’s hot?*
Go to the beach

*Why do you like to go to the beach when it’s hot?*
Because it’s gonna be warm when it’s a hot day.

*What do you like to do at the beach?*
I go like a surfboard and fall in the water.
Snorkels can make you swim. They can make you breathe. Because you can put the hole up there and they make you breathe. I got a hoola hoop – a big hoola hoop what’s got a bottom in it and you can go inside it. There was a guy falling off and he come and he get back on. He can’t get back on.

*What was he on?*
The thing what I just said to you

*What was that?*
The hoola hoop, the big one. He had to go in there.

*What did he do?*
He tried to get back on

*Did he get back on?*
My mum carried him on, he’s a big boy.

*So you have a hoola hoop of your own?*
I don’t know what it’s called, I just want to call it a hoola hoop

*Can you carry it?*
No! No one can pick it up

*So how do you take it to the beach?*
It’s got these handles what you can carry them. You got these handles and you walk them down to the water

*How many people do you need to carry it?*
Plenty of people

*So who usually carries it down to the beach?*
Me

*On your own?*
I don’t need any help. I actually throw it in the water.

*All by yourself?*
Mmm. Yes!