**Literacy Numeracy Secretariat and
Self Identification Oral Language Project
(LNS/SIP)**

Report on 2008-09

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Report on 2008-09

Introduction

This is a report on the testing and data collection carried out in 2008-09 as part of Phase 3 of the LNS/SIP Oral Language Project. LNS/SIP is a research project to develop and evaluate strategies and approaches to oral language assessment and instruction that will assist the language development of all students and help close the literacy achievement gap between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal Junior and Senior Kindergarten students.

LNS/SIP is a three-year project comprising four activities:

1. Project Planning
2. Development/adaptation of assessment tools
3. Development and implementation of instruction programs
4. Evaluation

Schools in three Boards participated in SIP in June – August 2007, namely:

- Keewatin-Patricia District School Board
- Kenora Catholic District School Board
- Rainy River District School Board

In September 2007, the Northern School Resource Alliance and schools in a further five Boards joined LNS/SIP, namely:

- Lakehead District School Board
- Superior-Greenstone District School Board
- Superior North Catholic District School Board
- The Northwest Catholic District School Board
- Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board

In addition, it was agreed that the project would be expanded to include ongoing monitoring of the results of assessments used as part of the longitudinal study on oral language conducted by LNS over the period 2004-07.   In 2004-05, The Ontario Ministry of Education, via the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, allocated funding for "Improving Student Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy K-6". NOEL boards undertook a variety of projects in literacy and numeracy. In 2005-06 a number of boards chose to focus on oral language as a promising strategy to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners. The vision to raise the bar and close the gap, through equity of outcome sharpened the focus in 2006-07 to a regional oral language strategy coupled with culturally relevant practices. Through the research and coordination of the oral language strategies implementation project, the need for an even more specific, focused approach became evident.

The aims of LNS/SIP Oral Language Project are:

1. To better understand the oral language, and especially the 'receptive' language development of Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1 students and its relationship to literacy development, and in particular, to reading comprehension.

2. To better understand the extent to which Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1 Aboriginal students differ from Non-Aboriginal students in terms of their oral language skills.

3. To develop and evaluate efficient processes for ongoing, systemic collection of information relevant to guiding instruction and evaluating programs to improve oral language outcomes and close the achievement gap for Aboriginal and other 'at risk' Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1 students.

4. To develop and evaluate an effective instructional program for improving oral language instruction for all Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1 students, and in particular Aboriginal and other 'at risk' students.

5. To provide information and protocols of relevance to policies for Voluntary Self-Identification within the Ontario schools context.

Method

During 2008-09, the emphasis was on further developing and validating oral language assessment tools, on delivering professional learning sessions aimed at assisting schools to use assessment data to improve instruction, on building internal capacity within the boards and on supporting and monitoring schools in implementing changes to classroom practice. In addition, modifications to the delivery model were made that would support wider implementation across the Province.

Over the period September 1-12, 2008, a short screening test, the Oral Language Assessment (OLA) Form B was administered by class teachers to all students in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1 classes in participating schools. District School Board staff entered the results into the NOEL MISA system to enable the automatic generation of online reports for individual schools. Those students deemed to be 'at risk' (based on their OLA scores) were further assessed using the Sentence Memory section of the Auditory Processing Assessment (APA). In addition, teachers recorded the Text Level of all students in Senior Kindergarten (SK) and Grade 1, indicating the Benchmarking Kit (DRA or PM) used for this purpose.

At the end of the school year, over the period June 2-13, 2009, the same pattern of assessment was repeated, with all students being assessed on the OLA, with 'at risk' students being further assessed using the APA, and with both Text Levels and DRA scores of students in SK and Grade 1 being recorded.

During the year, a group of Aboriginal educators assisted in developing an alternative form of the OLA (Form C) using culturally appropriate language. This version was administered by class teachers to samples of around 70 Aboriginal students in each of JK, SK and Grade 1, in addition to the regular OLA Form B.

Finally, in order to better understand levels of implementation within classrooms and the factors affecting change, a series of visits were conducted and observations made in a sample of – schools. In addition, principals in all schools within the project were invited to complete a Principals Change Questionnaire.

The Oral Language Assessment (OLA)

Table 1 summarizes the number of students with valid OLA pre-test and post-test data. Data were received after the June testing for a total of 5234 students. There were 4829 students in 99 schools with complete pre- and post-test OLA scores, of whom just over 22 percent self identified as Aboriginal.

**Table 1. Numbers of Students with Valid Phase 2
Pre- and Post-Test OLA Scores**

	Number	Percent
All	4829	100.0
Male	2477	51.3
Female	2352	48.7
Junior Kindergarten	1559	32.3
Senior Kindergarten	1569	32.5
Grade 1	1701	35.2
Aboriginal	1083	22.4
Non Aboriginal	3746	77.6

The OLA (Crévola and Vineis, 2004) is a short screening test, consisting of 15 sentences, comprising three sets of five sentence types. A student receives a score of '1' for every sentence repeated correctly. The possible range of total scores is thus from 0-15. Table 2 summarizes basic statistics for the OLA for those students with complete pre-test and post-test results. There was a correlation of 0.79 between students' scores at the beginning and end of the school year.
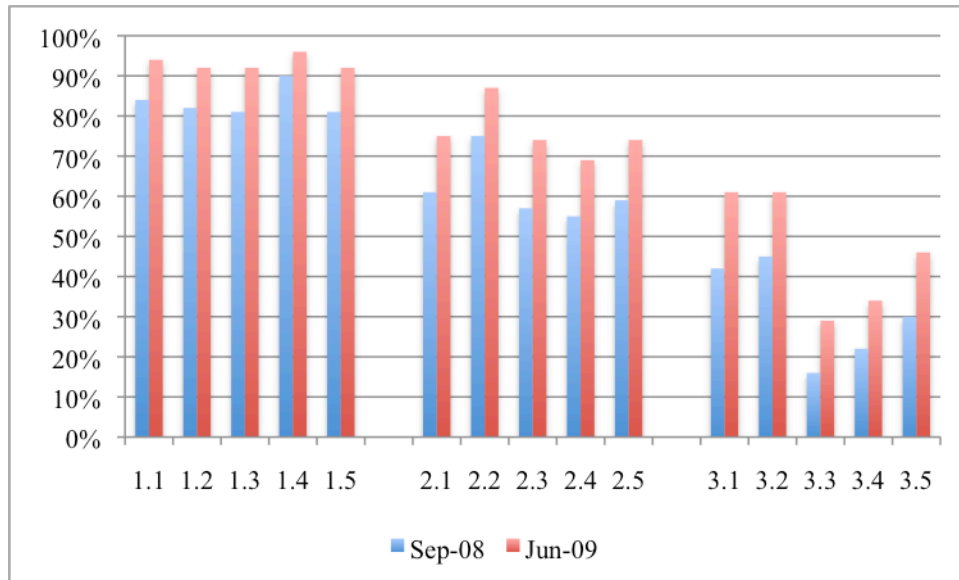

Table 2 Summary Statistics for the OLA: September 2008 and June 2008

	Mean	Standard deviation	Reliability
September 2008	8.79	4.03	0.88
June 2009	10.78	3.35	0.85

It can be seen that on average, students answered about two fewer questions correctly in the September (beginning of year) testing than they did in the June (end of school year) testing. There was also a slightly narrower spread of marks at the end of the school year (as indicated by the standard deviation of scores), and a correspondingly decreased index of reliability. The reliability of the OLA was estimated to be 0.88 in

September and 0.85 in June[1]. From this it can be inferred that the new version of the OLA (Form B), first used in September 2008, provides a very reliable instrument given that it is comprised of just 15 items.

Figure 1 provides a plot of the percent of students correctly repeating each sentence of the OLA for those students with complete results in both September 2008 and June 2009. It can be seen that there was a fairly uniform increase in the proportions correctly answering each item between the beginning and end of the school year.

**Figure 1. OLA September 2008 and June 2009:
Proportion correctly repeating each sentence**

Table 3 provides a more detailed scale analysis statistics for the 15 items comprising the OLA for both the September 2008 and June 2009 administrations. The pattern of results for June 2009 closely follows that for September 2008. All items had positive item-total correlations.

The two graphs in Figure 2 show the percent correctly repeating each sentence and item-total correlations for both the June and September administrations of the OLA. It can be seen that the items behaved in very much the same fashion on both occasions, but with sentences in September naturally being easier in June. Overall, it can be concluded that the OLA (Form B) provides a consistent and reliable measure of students' receptive oral language.

[1] As measured by Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3. OLA: Item Statistics June 2007 and September 2007

No.	Item	Proportion correct		Item-Total Correlation	
		Sept 2008	June 2009	Sept 2008	June 2009
1.1	The puppy's tail is curly.	84%	94%	0.56	0.56
1.2	Mommy is baking a cake.	82%	92%	0.57	0.57
1.3	The teacher told them a story.	81%	92%	0.61	0.61
1.4	There are the children.	90%	96%	0.50	0.50
1.5	She's eating her lunch slowly.	81%	92%	0.59	0.59
2.1	That red bike over there used to be my uncle's.	61%	75%	0.66	0.66
2.2	The girl in the car is waving her hand.	75%	87%	0.64	0.64
2.3	Over the weekend Jane bought us some cookies.	57%	74%	0.62	0.62
2.4	Here comes the machine that digs the big holes.	55%	69%	0.61	0.61
2.5	The bird built a nest high in the tree.	59%	74%	0.55	0.55
3.1	Be careful when you are crossing the busy highway.	42%	61%	0.55	0.55
3.2	The bear and her cubs were looking for berries.	45%	61%	0.52	0.52
3.3	The naughty puppy chewed my sister's new blue hat.	16%	29%	0.36	0.36
3.4	There are the toys that we were playing with at my house.	22%	34%	0.41	0.41
3.5	My friends like to play games on our computer.	30%	46%	0.43	0.43
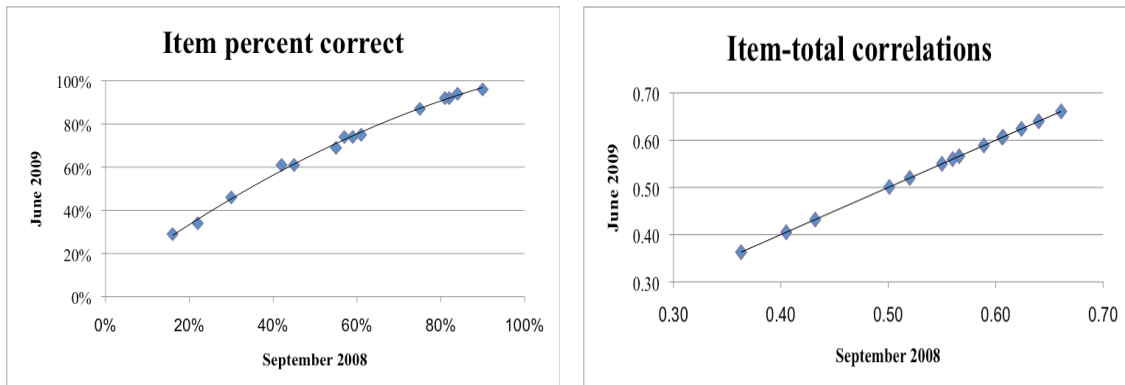
Figure 2. Item percent correct and item-total correlations for the OLA: September 2008 and June 2009

To check for any evidence of bias, the item difficulties for the June 2008 administration were calculated separately for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students. The results are summarized graphically in Figure 3.
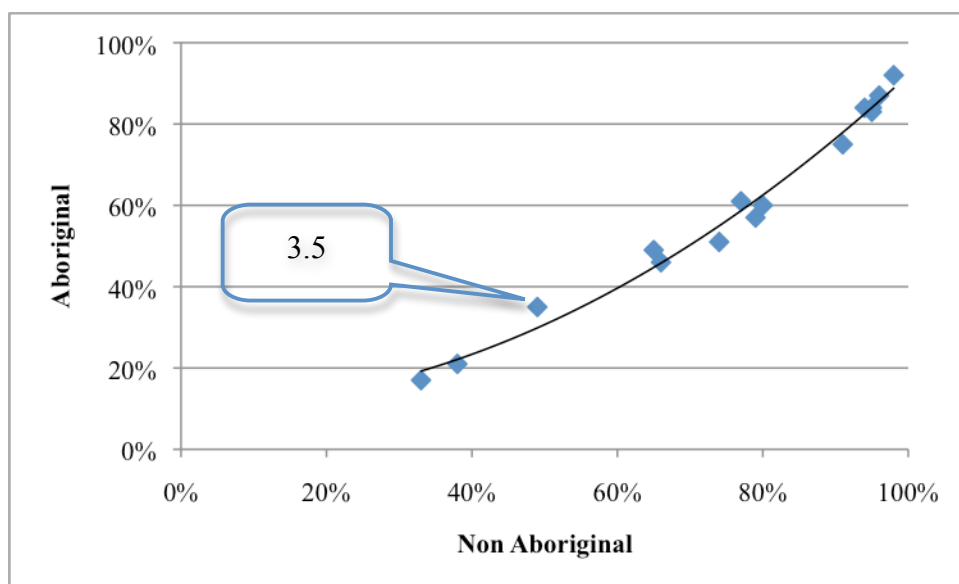
**Figure 3. Item difficulties for Aboriginal and
Non-Aboriginal students, June 2009**

In Figure 3, the black line represents a line of best fit through the percents correct for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students. Most of the points on the graph are close to this line, indicating that they performed similarly for both groups. The only notable exception was for the last sentence, Item 3.5 (My friends like to play games on our computer), which proved relatively easier for Aboriginal students.

These results suggest that the OLA (Form B), which uses standard English sentence structures and non specific context vocabulary, is appropriate for use with both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal students

OLA – Score Distributions

This section describes the pattern of total scores of students at the beginning and end of the 2008-2009 school year for the whole group and for subgroups of students. As noted earlier, complete records were available for a total of 4829 students.

Overall Distribution

Table 4 gives the total scores on the OLA of all students in SIP September 2008 and June 2009.

The first column gives the different possible scores on the OLA, ranging from 0-15. The second and third columns indicate the percentages of students at each score point. The fourth and fifth columns give cumulative percentages. The last two columns give percentages of students within the ranges 0-5, 6-10 and 11-15.

Table 4. Frequencies, Percentages and Cumulative Percentages of Scores on the OLA: September 2008 and June 2009

Score	Percent		Cumulative Percent		Percent	
	Sep 08	Jun 09	Sep 08	Jun 09	Sep 08	Jun 09
0	4.8	1.0	4.8	1.0	22.3	8.8
1	2.4	.8	7.2	1.9		
2	2.9	.9	10.1	2.8		
3	3.2	1.5	13.3	4.3		
4	3.8	2.0	17.1	6.3		
5	5.1	2.5	22.3	8.8		
6	5.2	3.5	27.5	12.3	35.8	28.5
7	5.8	4.3	33.3	16.5		
8	6.6	5.0	39.9	21.6		
9	8.3	6.6	48.2	28.2		
10	10.0	9.2	58.1	37.3		
11	11.9	11.2	70.0	48.6	41.9	62.7
12	10.8	14.4	80.8	62.9		
13	10.0	15.3	90.8	78.2		
14	6.5	13.5	97.3	91.7		
15	2.7	8.3	100.0	100.0		

The information from the second and third columns is shown graphically in Figure 4, using smoothed curves to give a visual impression of the overall distributions. The increase in scores between September and June is very evident. As such, these results present a very positive picture for this combined group of JK, SK and Grade 1 children.

Progress is evident across the full range of scores, but with the greatest growth occurring in the score range 4-9.
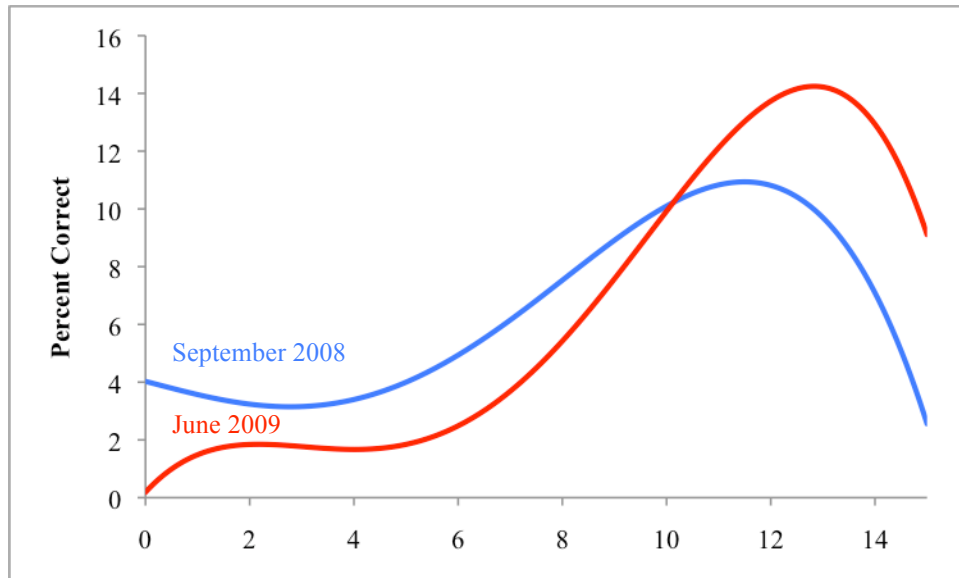
Figure 4. Distribution of OLA Total Scores: SIP, June 2009

Distribution by Grade

As expected, further breakdown of the overall distribution revealed that there were significant differences in the results for students in JK, SK and Grade 1, but with a great deal of overlap. The results are displayed in Table 5. Complete records were available for 1559 JK, 1569 SK students and 1701 Grade 1 students.

Table 5 indicates that scores increased at all three grade levels. Focusing first on the data for JK students, it can be seen that the over the school year the proportion of students scoring between 0-5 decreased from 40.1% to 16.4%. Significantly, at the end of the school year there were still 2.3% with a score of zero. It is critical for schools to identify who these students are and to ensure they are provided with intensive intervention both within the classroom and from Speech and Language specialists. JK students scoring 5-10 on the OLA are operating at a receptive language level above that typical for their chronological age. This implies the need for teachers to be aware of their instructional language when interacting with these students, whose needs will be different from those scoring in the range 0-4. The variation in the complexity of language structures that can be understood means that teachers must adjust accordingly to the students' current receptive language ability.

The data for SK students reveal 7.5% at the end of the year are still scoring in the range 0-5. This means that when they proceed to Grade 1, their teachers will need to ensure that they receive some short-term intervention designed to rapidly improve their receptive language abilities. Teachers will also need to keep in mind that these students will have great difficulty in following all but the simplest of instructions. At the other end of the scale, there were 64.1% of SK students scoring in the range 11-15, indicating above average receptive language abilities. Once again, teachers need to adjust the

language they use with these students, which will differ greatly from that appropriate for low scoring SK students.

The data for Grade 1 students indicates 3.1% of students scoring in the range 0-5. These students are at great risk in their receptive language development. Teachers need to identify these students and ensure that Speech and Language specialists are involved in developing specific intervention programs for each of these students. Within the classroom, teachers need to be aware of the importance of modifying their instructional language by slowing down, repeating instructions, keeping instructions short and simple. They also need to provide daily opportunities for these students to engage in small group and one-on-one interactions designed to improve both their receptive and expressive language.

Table 5. Percentages and Cumulative Percentages of Scores on the OLA by Grade: September 2008 and June 2009

Score	Junior Kindergarten				Senior Kindergarten				Grade 1			
	Sep 2008		Jun 2009		Sep 2008		Jun 2009		Sep 2008		Jun 2009	
	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %
0	9.6	9.6	2.3	2.3	3.0	3.0	0.6	0.6	2.0	2.0	0.2	0.2
1	4.6	14.1	1.8	4.1	2.2	5.2	0.6	1.3	0.7	2.7	0.2	0.4
2	6.3	20.4	1.7	5.8	1.9	7.1	0.8	2.1	0.8	3.5	0.4	0.7
3	6.0	26.4	3.0	8.8	2.4	9.6	1.2	3.3	1.2	4.8	0.3	1.0
4	5.6	32.0	3.4	12.2	4.2	13.8	2	5.3	1.9	6.6	0.8	1.8
5	8.1	40.1	4.2	16.4	5.2	18.9	2.2	7.5	2.4	9.0	1.3	3.1
6	7.6	47.7	6.5	23.0	4.7	23.6	3.1	10.5	3.6	12.6	1.0	4.1
7	8.2	55.9	6.5	29.5	5.2	28.9	4.4	14.9	4.1	16.6	2.1	6.1
8	7.6	63.5	7.8	37.3	8.2	37.1	4.3	19.2	4.2	20.8	3.2	9.3
9	8.2	71.7	8.5	45.8	9.6	46.7	6.9	26.1	7.2	28.0	4.6	13.9
10	8.7	80.4	11.0	56.8	11.2	57.9	9.8	35.9	10.1	38.0	6.9	20.8
11	7.6	88.0	12.3	69.1	13.1	71.0	12	48.0	14.6	52.6	9.5	30.3
12	5.8	93.8	12.7	81.8	11.6	82.6	15.9	63.9	14.8	67.4	14.4	44.7
13	4.3	98.1	10.1	91.9	9.6	92.2	15.9	79.8	15.6	83	19.6	64.3
14	1.5	99.6	5.5	97.4	5.6	97.8	14	93.8	11.8	94.7	20.4	84.7
15	0.4	100	2.6	100	2.2	100	6.2	100	5.3	100	15.3	100
0-5	40.1		16.4		18.9		7.5		9.0		3.1	
6-10	40.3		40.4		39.0		28.4		29.0		17.7	
11-15	19.6		43.2		42.1		64.1		62.0		79.2	

The three graphs of Figure 5 displays the distribution of OLA total scores by grade in graphical form. They reveal the wide spread in oral language ability in JK, SK and Grade 1 classes and the considerable overlap between the three grades.
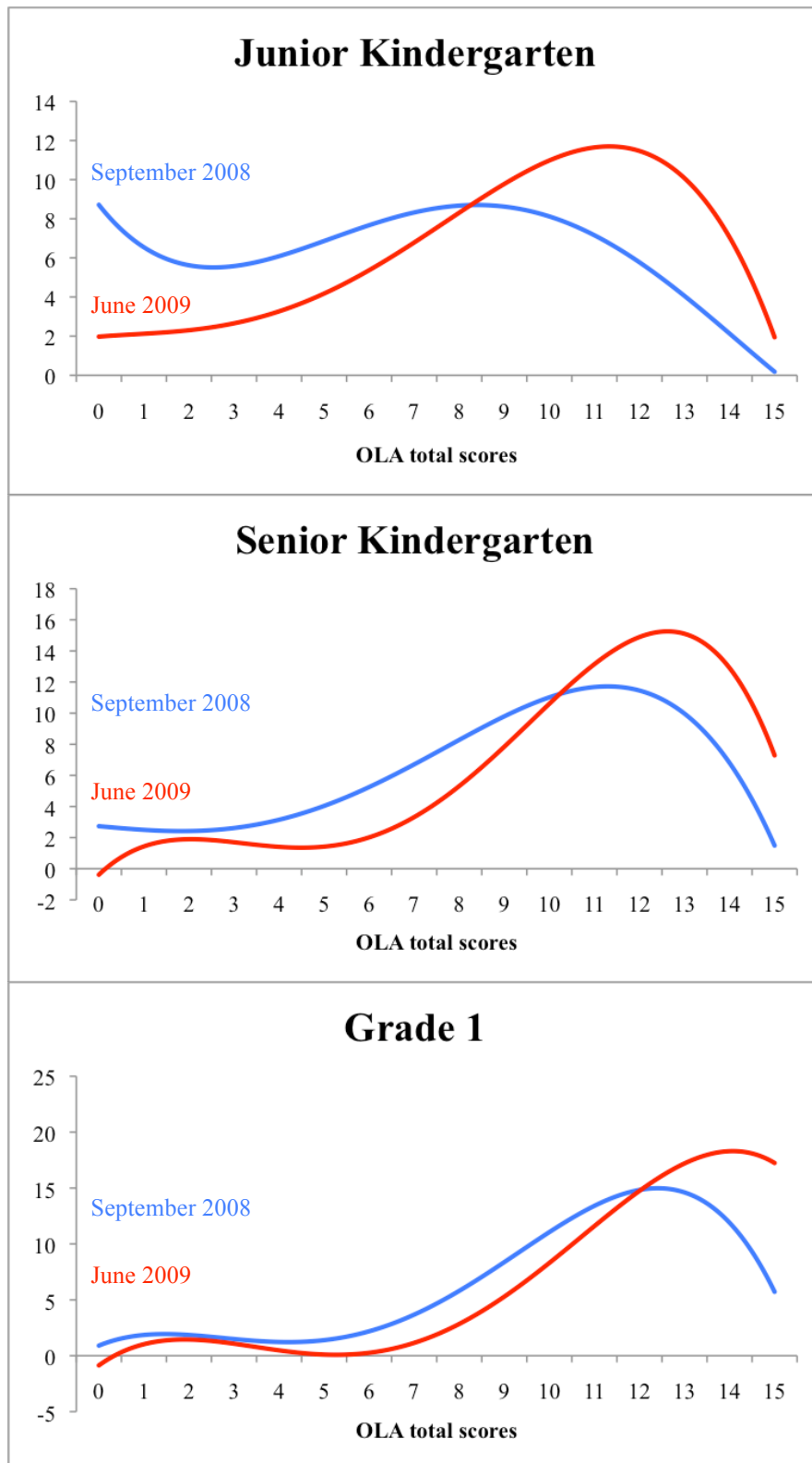
**Figure 5. Distribution of OLA Total Scores by Grade:
September 2008 and June 2009**

Distribution by Gender

A breakdown of total OLA scores by gender was carried out. The results are displayed in Table 6. Complete records were available for 1733 boys and 1657 girls.

Consistent with findings noted in earlier reports, gender differences were not large, although there were somewhat larger proportions of lower-scoring boys. The distribution of scores by gender is shown in Table 6.

A notable feature of these data is the way in which the gap between boys and girls (the so-called 'gender gap') was reduced over the course of the school year, especially for lower-scoring boys.

Table 6. Frequencies, Percentages and Cumulative Percentages of Scores on the OLA by Gender: September 2007

Score	Boys				Girls			
	Sep 2008		Jun 2009		Sep 2008		Jun 2009	
	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %
0	5.8	5.8	1.1	1.1	3.7	3.7	0.9	0.9
1	3.1	8.9	0.9	2.0	1.8	5.4	0.8	1.7
2	2.9	11.8	1.3	3.2	2.9	8.4	0.6	2.3
3	3.2	15.1	1.9	5.1	3.1	11.5	1.0	3.4
4	4.2	19.2	2.6	7.8	3.5	15.0	1.4	4.7
5	5.4	24.6	2.7	10.4	4.8	19.8	2.4	7.1
6	5.2	29.8	2.9	13.3	5.2	25.0	4.0	11.1
7	6.1	35.9	4.3	17.6	5.4	30.5	4.2	15.3
8	7.1	43.1	5.4	23.1	6.0	36.5	4.6	20.0
9	8.5	51.6	7.1	30.2	8.0	44.6	6.1	26.1
10	9.5	61.1	9.2	39.4	10.5	55.1	9.1	35.2
11	11.8	72.9	12.0	51.4	11.9	67.0	10.4	45.6
12	9.9	82.8	13.9	65.3	11.8	78.8	14.8	60.4
13	9.0	91.8	14.4	79.7	11.1	89.8	16.3	76.7
14	5.7	97.4	13.0	92.7	7.3	97.2	14.0	90.7
15	2.6	100	7.3	100	2.8	100	9.3	100
0-5	24.6		10.4		19.8		7.1	
6-10	36.5		29.0		35.3		28.1	
11-15	38.9		60.6		44.9		64.8	

This can be seen more clearly in Figure 6, which displays the distribution of total scores by gender in graphical form, once again using smoothed curves to give a visual impression of the overall distributions.
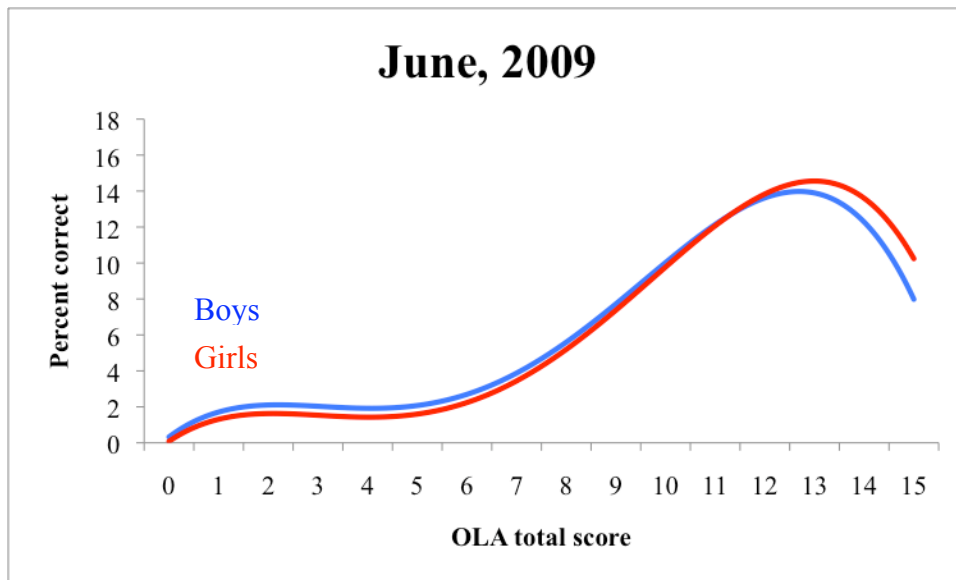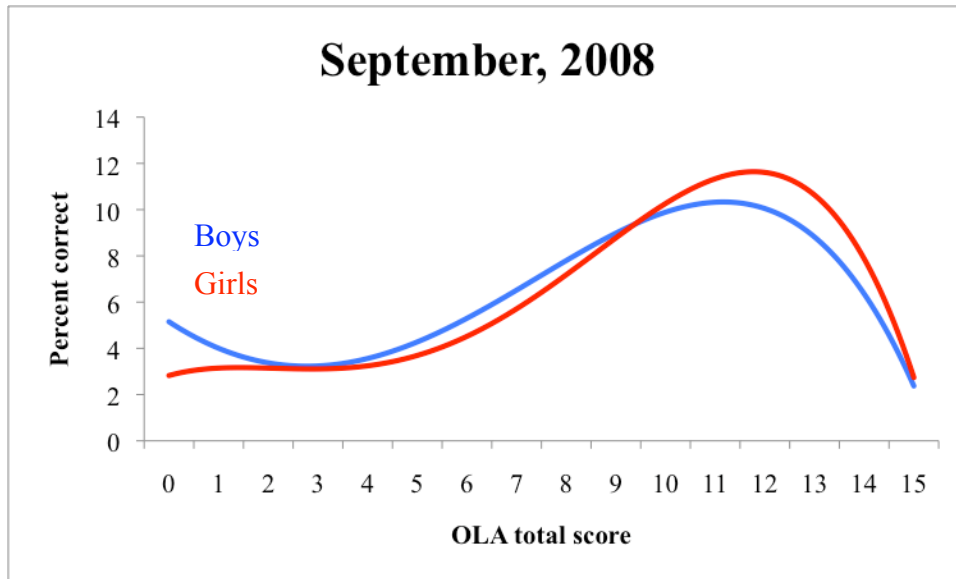
Figure 6. Distribution of OLA Total Scores by Gender: September 2007 and June 2008

While the gender gap is not a major concern, it is nevertheless important that teachers are conscious of the larger numbers of low scoring boys and this is taken into account when they work with them in both whole class and small group settings.
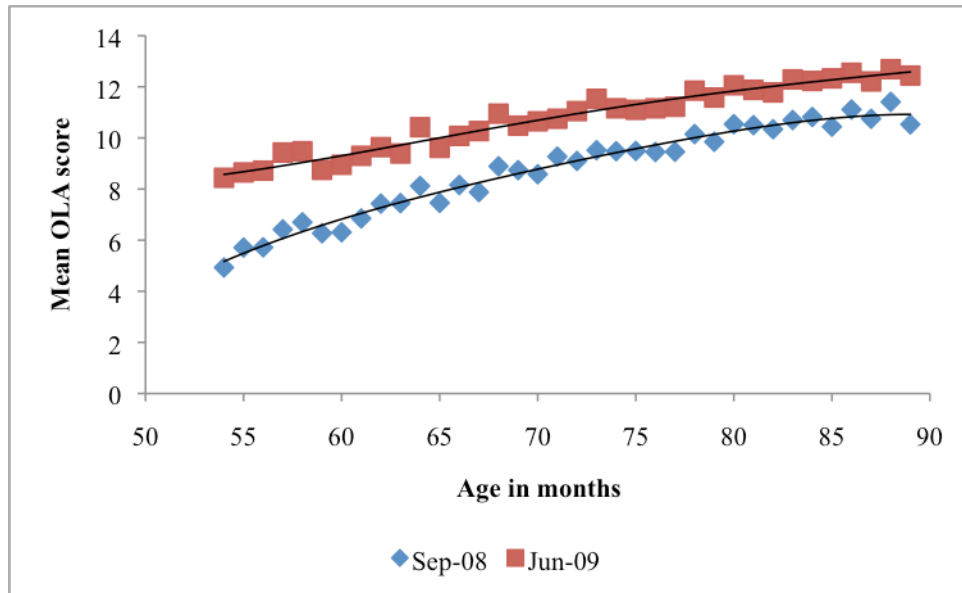
Distribution by Age

Making use of data on the ages of students, analyses were carried out to explore the relationship between age and OLA scores. The relevant data are summarized in Table 7, which gives mean OLA total scores at both the beginning and end of the school year of students at different ages by month. Ages for which there were 25 or less students were deleted from the table.

Table 7. Mean OLA scores by Age: OLA, September 2008 and June 2009

Age in Months	Number of students	Mean OLA Score	
		September 2008	June 2009
54	107	4.93	8.44
55	126	5.71	8.65
56	112	5.72	8.72
57	119	6.42	9.43
58	132	6.70	9.48
59	142	6.27	8.75
60	146	6.31	8.95
61	121	6.85	9.30
62	129	7.43	9.64
63	132	7.45	9.39
64	120	8.12	10.42
65	127	7.46	9.61
66	129	8.16	10.08
67	145	7.88	10.27
68	133	8.89	10.95
69	137	8.74	10.48
70	142	8.58	10.65
71	162	9.27	10.75
72	125	9.10	11.05
73	149	9.52	11.53
74	123	9.48	11.16
75	121	9.49	11.10
76	124	9.45	11.16
77	98	9.46	11.22
78	124	10.15	11.85
79	107	9.85	11.58
80	127	10.54	12.06
81	164	10.50	11.88
82	149	10.34	11.78
83	141	10.70	12.29
84	153	10.82	12.23
85	151	10.44	12.33
86	144	11.11	12.55
87	135	10.75	12.21
88	123	11.41	12.69
89	131	10.53	12.44

The above information is displayed graphically in Figure 7. It can be seen that in general, older students were more advanced than younger students. However, at the end of the school year, the gap in mean performance had closed significantly for the

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younger students. In other words, younger students made more rapid progress over the course of the school year.

Figure 7. Distribution of Average OLA Total Scores by Age: September 2007 and June 2009

Distribution by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

A key aim of this project is to better understand the extent to which JK, SK and Grade 1 Aboriginal students differ from Non-Aboriginal students in terms of the oral language skills required to be successful readers and writers. Thus use was made of self-identification data to compare the performance of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students on the OLA.

There were 3746 non-Aboriginal students and 1083 students who self identified as Aboriginal students.

The distribution of scores for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students is summarized in Table 9 and graphically in Figure 8. The data reveal that Aboriginal students scored at a lower level than Non-Aboriginal students on the OLA at both the beginning and the end of the year. However, from a lower base they progressed at the same rate as Non-Aboriginal students. In addition, the scores of Aboriginal students were spread out across the full range of oral language ability as measured by the OLA. In other words, Aboriginal students are not confined to one score range, but are in fact, represented across all scores. This indicates that given the correct instructional opportunities Aboriginal students can in fact master the structures of oral English as well as their non-Aboriginal peers.

However, the data also indicate that progression at the same rate will not close achievement gaps: this can only occur by accelerating the lowest scoring Aboriginal (and non Aboriginal) students through short-term, intensive interventions in late JK, SK and Grade 1 to enable them to move faster and to catch up to their peers.

Table 8. Percentages and Cumulative Percentages of Scores on the OLA by Aboriginality: September 2008 and June 2009

Score	Aboriginal students				Non-Aboriginal students			
	Sep 2008		Jun 2009		Sep 2008		Jun 2009	
	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %
0	10.7	10.7	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.0	0.3	0.3
1	5.0	15.7	2.3	5.8	1.7	4.8	0.4	0.7
2	5.1	20.8	2.2	8.0	2.3	7.1	0.6	1.3
3	4.9	25.7	3.3	11.4	2.7	9.7	0.9	2.2
4	7.2	32.9	4.6	16.0	2.9	12.6	1.3	3.5
5	6.8	39.7	5.4	21.3	4.6	17.2	1.7	5.2
6	6.9	46.6	5.1	26.4	4.8	22.0	3.0	8.2
7	7.4	54.0	5.8	32.2	5.3	27.3	3.8	12.0
8	5.9	59.9	7.2	39.4	6.8	34.1	4.4	16.4
9	7.0	66.9	8.0	47.5	8.6	42.7	6.2	22.6
10	7.8	74.8	9.7	57.2	10.6	53.3	9.0	31.6
11	9.2	84.0	9.5	66.7	12.6	66.0	11.7	43.3
12	6.0	90.0	10.5	77.2	12.2	78.2	15.5	58.8
13	5.4	95.4	11.3	88.5	11.3	89.5	16.5	75.3
14	3.5	98.9	7.3	95.8	7.3	96.8	15.3	90.6
15	1.1	100.0	4.2	100.0	3.2	100.0	9.4	100.0
0-5	39.7		21.3		17.2		5.2	
6-10	35.1		35.9		36.1		26.4	
11-15	25.2		42.8		46.7		68.4	

Table 9 further breaks down the above results for Aboriginal students by grade level. There were 306 JK, 362 SK and 415 Grade 1 Aboriginal students. The data are also summarized graphically in Figure 9.
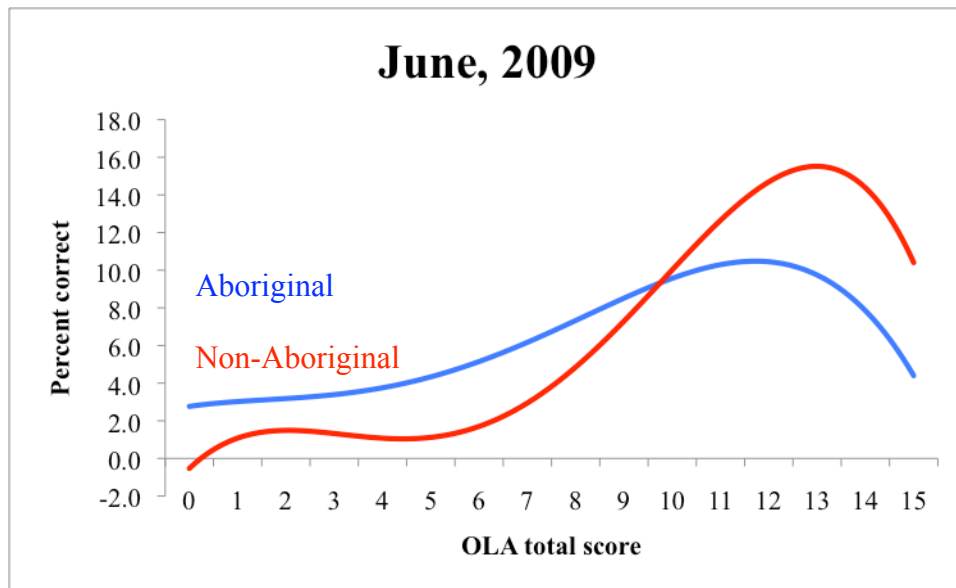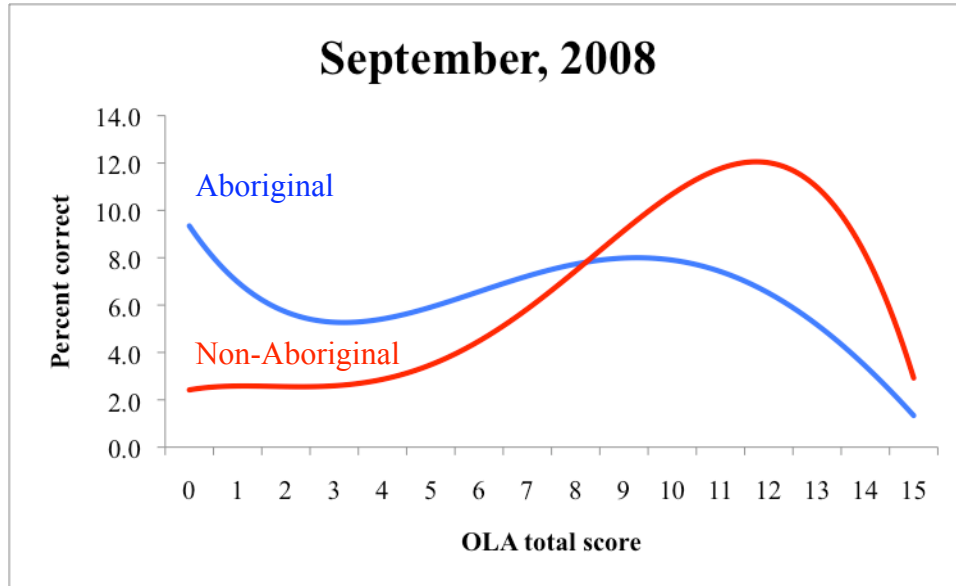
Figure 8. Distribution of OLA Total Scores of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Students: September 2007 and June 2008

Table 9. Percentages and Cumulative Percentages of Scores of Aboriginal Students by Grade: September 2008 and June 2009

Score	Junior Kindergarten				Senior Kindergarten				Grade 1			
	Sep 2008		Jun 2009		Sep 2008		Jun 2009		Sep 2008		Jun 2009	
	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %	%	Cum %
0	26.1	26.1	8.8	8.8	7.7	7.7	2.5	2.5	1.9	1.9	0.5	0.5
1	8.2	34.3	4.9	13.7	5.5	13.3	1.9	4.4	2.2	4.1	0.7	1.2
2	9.8	44.1	3.9	17.6	4.7	18.0	2.8	7.2	1.9	6.0	0.5	1.7
3	7.8	52.0	7.2	24.8	4.4	22.4	2.8	9.9	3.1	9.2	1.0	2.7
4	9.8	61.8	7.2	32.0	8.3	30.7	5.0	14.9	4.3	13.5	2.4	5.1
5	9.5	71.2	7.8	39.9	7.2	37.8	4.4	19.3	4.6	18.1	4.3	9.4
6	5.9	77.1	7.8	47.7	8.3	46.1	6.4	25.7	6.5	24.6	1.9	11.3
7	5.9	83.0	8.8	56.5	7.7	53.9	6.1	31.8	8.2	32.8	3.4	14.7
8	3.9	86.9	8.8	65.4	9.7	63.5	7.2	39.0	4.1	36.9	6.0	20.7
9	4.6	91.5	6.5	71.9	7.5	71.0	9.9	48.9	8.4	45.3	7.5	28.2
10	3.9	95.4	8.8	80.7	8.8	79.8	9.9	58.8	9.9	55.2	10.1	38.3
11	3.6	99.0	5.6	86.3	7.7	87.6	10.5	69.3	14.7	69.9	11.6	49.9
12	1.0	100.0	6.9	93.1	5.8	93.4	11.3	80.7	9.9	79.8	12.5	62.4
13	0.0	100.0	5.6	98.7	4.1	97.5	9.7	90.3	10.4	90.1	16.9	79.3
14	0.0	100.0	1.0	99.7	1.7	99.2	6.6	97.0	7.7	97.8	12.5	91.8
15	0.0	100.0	0.3	100.0	0.8	100.0	3.0	100.0	2.2	100.0	8.2	100.0
0-5	71.2%		39.9%		37.8%		19.3%		18.1%		9.4%	
6-10	24.2%		40.8%		42.0%		39.5%		37.1%		28.9%	
11-15	4.6%		19.3%		20.2%		41.2%		44.8%		61.7%	

The table reveals the very high proportion of Aboriginal students commencing Junior Kindergarten with low scores at the beginning of the year. Some 71 percent scored 0-5 on the OLA in September. By the end of the year, that figure had reduced to 40 percent. However, there were significant numbers of JK Aboriginal students who began the year with middle to high OLA scores and these students also made substantial progress during the year.

At the end of the school year, 19.3% or nearly one in five of SK Aboriginal students scored in the range 0-5 on the OLA. Once again, it is critical that each of these students is identified within each class and that they are provided with additional support and matched to their text level to ascertain their ability to read and comprehend.

The Grade 1 data reveal 9.4% of Aboriginal students scoring 0-5 at the end of the school year. These students will be at high risk when they commence Grade 2 and it is important that they be provided with additional support to ensure that their reading and writing development aligns with their chronological age. Almost 29% of Grade 1 Aboriginal students scored 6-10 at the end of the year on the OLA. These students are also behind in their receptive language and will struggle to comprehend their reading texts and in being able to construct meaningful texts.
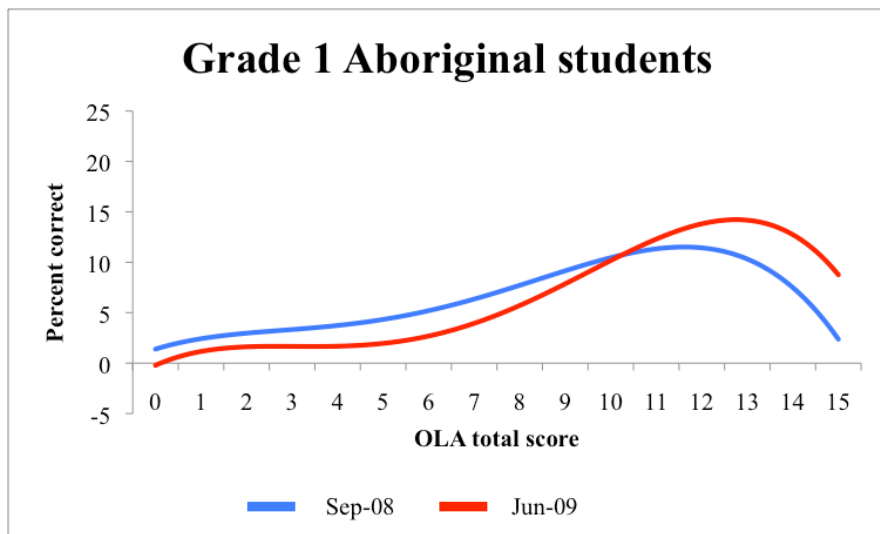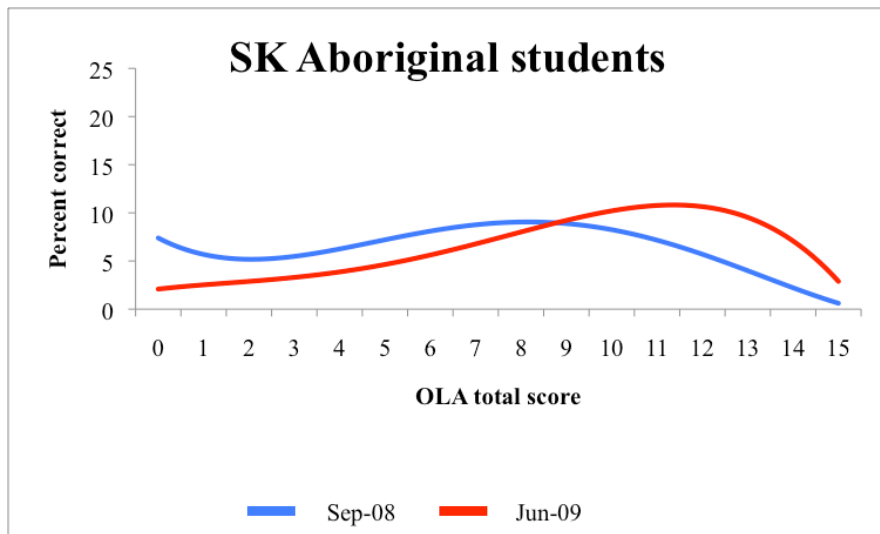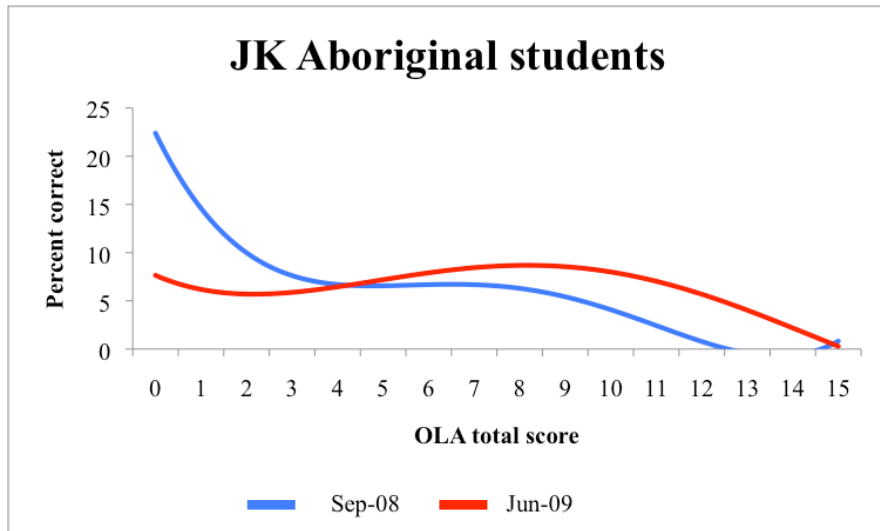
Figure 9. Distribution of OLA Total Scores of JK and SK Aboriginal Students: September 2008 and June 2009

In conclusion, it is clear that Aboriginal students score significantly lower on average than Non-Aboriginal students when they first enter Junior Kindergarten, with many scoring at very low levels, although with significant numbers scoring across the full score range including at the very highest levels. Their rate of progress over Grades SK and Grade 1 is generally the same as for Non-Aboriginal students, which means that the achievement gap, while not too great in JK, is not being closed in SK and Grade 1.

Figure 10 plots the end-of-year OLA Total scores of Aboriginal students (JK, SK and Grade 1) against the same distribution for Non Aboriginal students at the beginning of the year. It can be seen that they are similar. In other words, Aboriginal Students on average lag behind their non-Aboriginal counterparts by around 9 months of schooling. This is not an enormous achievement gap and if addressed systematically could be eliminated. This remains the challenge for teachers in this project.
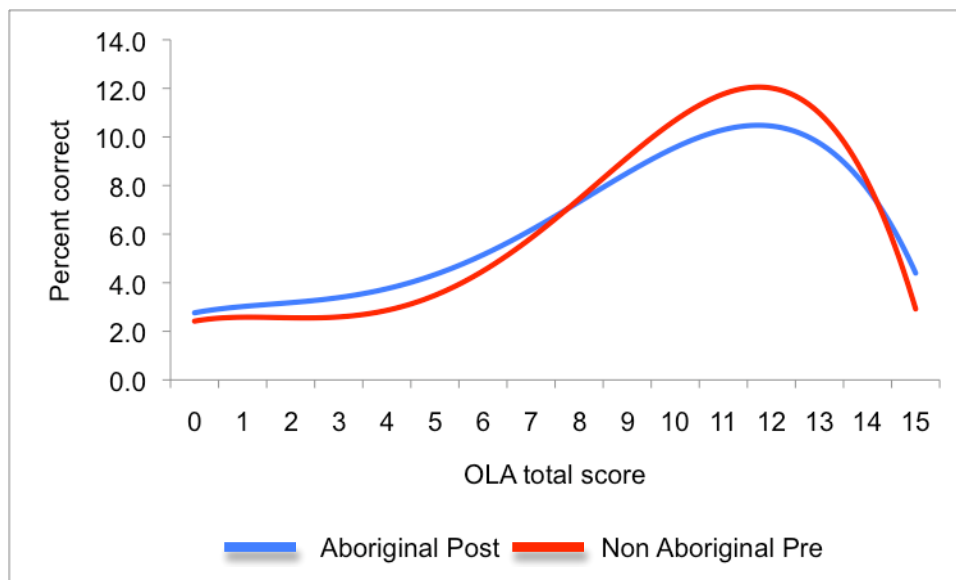
Figure 10. Distribution of OLA Total Scores of Aboriginal Students in June 2009 and non-Aboriginal students in September 2008

Distribution by schools

As can be seen from Figure 11, there were large differences in mean OLA scores among schools. In Figure 11, schools are plotted from left to right, with the schools with the highest mean scores on the left and the lowest on the right. Excluding one outlier school of just 3 students, there was a mean difference of just over 8 out of 15 score points between the schools with the lowest and the highest mean scores.
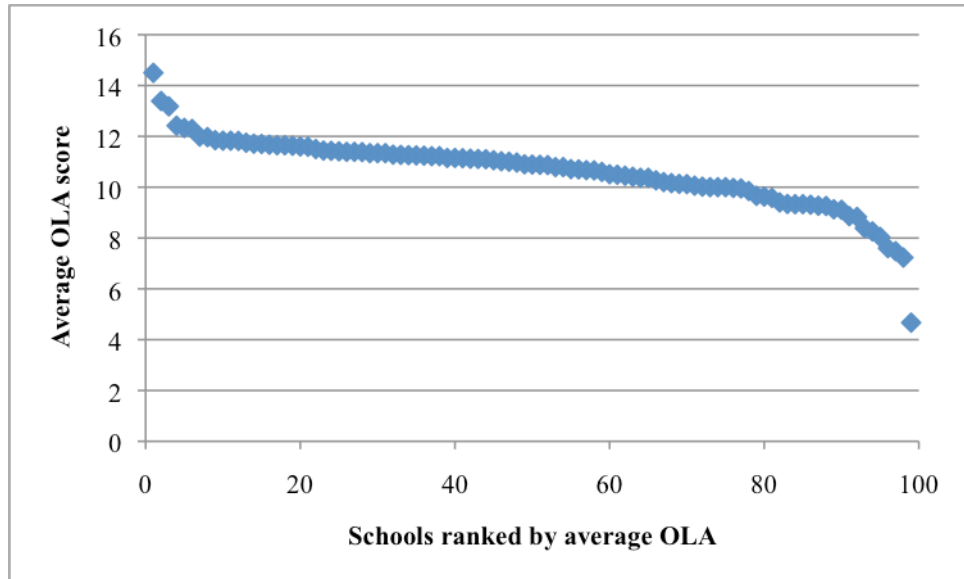
Figure 11. Distribution of Mean OLA Scores by School: SIP, June 2009

When school mean scores were plotted against the proportion of Aboriginal students in the school it was found that there was a negative correlation between the two measures. In other words, the lower the proportion of Aboriginal students, the higher the mean OLA score of the school. However, the relationship was not strong and there were both high-scoring schools with a large proportion of Aboriginal students and low-scoring schools with a low proportion of Aboriginal students. This can be seen in Figure 12. In other words, the data suggest that the important factor is instruction rather than race. It appears that some schools have been able to develop effective instructional approaches, strategies and programs that provide appropriate opportunities and support for their Aboriginal students, while others have yet to do so.
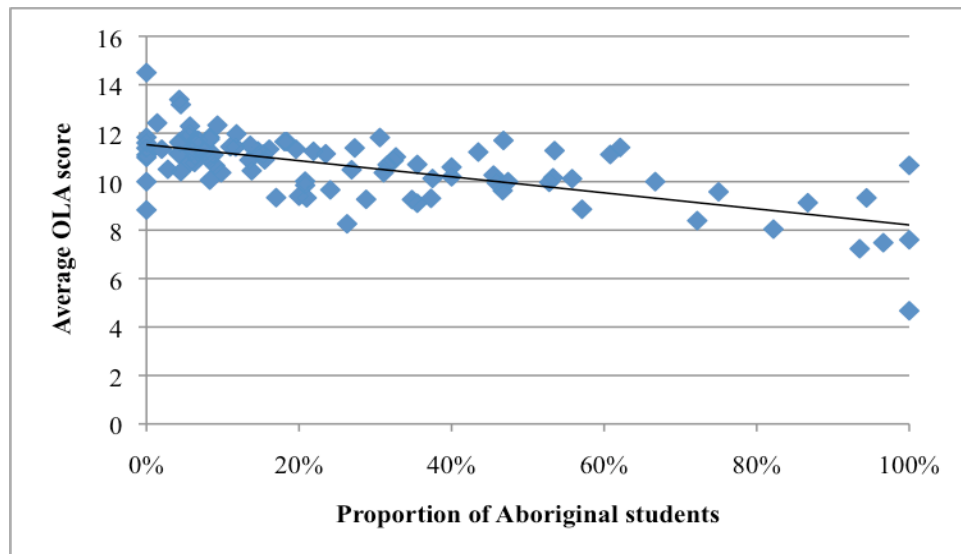
Figure 12. School Mean OLA Scores by Proportion of Aboriginal Students: SIP, June 2009

Relationship between the OLA and Text Level

For Phase 3 it was decided that the Text Level of all students in SK and Grade 1 would be recorded at the beginning and end of the year using a set of benchmark texts (either the DRA or Rigby PM Collection). Table 10 indicates the approximate equivalences between the two sets of benchmark texts and the coding used to translate both series onto a common scale.

Table 10. Reading Level Equivalences for DRA and PM Series Benchmark Texts

DRA	PM	NEW
A	Starter 1	1
1	Starter 1	2
2	Starter 2	3
3	3-4	4
4	5-6	5
6-8	7-8	6
10	9-10	7
12	11-12	8
14	13-14	9
16	15-16	10
18	17-18	11
20	19-20	12
24	21	13
28	22	14
30	23	15
34	24	16
38	25	17
40	26	18
	27	19
	28	20
44	29	21
44	30	22
44		22

The primary reason for recording students' small group Text Levels was to investigate whether there were students who were working in Guided Reading instructional sessions but who have low oral language scores.

Target standards for the OLA (Form B) and for Text Level with comprehension are as set out in Table 11.

Table 11. End of Year Target Standards for OLA and Text Level with Comprehension

Grade	OLA	Text Level
JK	5	-
SK	10	5
1	14-15	16

Tables 12a and 12b summarize the relationship between the OLA total scores of SK and Grade 1 students and their Text Level as measured using either the DRA or PM Benchmark Series, but using the common scale indicated in the third column of Table 10. Complete records were available for 1185 SK students and 1683 Grade 1 students.

Table 12a: Text Level by OLA: Senior Kindergarten, June 2009

Text Level	OLA TOTAL SCORE																Total	cum %
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
0-1*	6	4	3	3	11	8	17	7	4	8	8	10	6	7	4	0	106	9%
2	0	2	0	2	5	11	6	11	13	27	21	18	25	16	21	3	181	24%
3	0	2	0	2	4	4	8	11	8	13	42	31	33	40	20	15	233	44%
4	0	0	0	1	1	5	6	11	12	15	24	34	50	58	39	12	268	66%
5	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	2	6	8	13	13	37	31	29	14	159	80%
6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	4	5	12	24	21	26	11	106	89%
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	3	13	11	3	3	6	44	93%
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	7	5	5	3	25	95%
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	8	6	20	96%
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	3	10	97%
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	6	98%
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	4	10	99%
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	10	99%
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	100%
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	100%
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	100%
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	100%
Total	6	9	3	8	23	29	40	47	47	77	119	136	201	192	166	82	1185	
cum %	1%	1%	2%	2%	4%	7%	10%	14%	18%	24%	34%	46%	63%	79%	93%	100%		

* There were just 4 SK students recorded as having a Text Level (on the new scale) of 1

251 (21.2%) of SK students had a Text Level in the range 0-4 and a score of 0-9 on the OLA. These students would be deemed 'at risk' in both their receptive oral language and in reading with comprehension. These students are going to struggle to comprehend the texts they are reading, since receptive language and listening comprehension abilities should precede and exceed productive language and reading comprehension abilities. Principals, literacy teachers and classroom teachers need to identify who these students are and ensure that they are being provided with instruction that includes great attention to specific oral language teaching approaches, including Read To, Small Group Shared Reading and Oral Language Exploration in a rotational small group program (e.g., for every four small group sessions, only one would be a Guided Reading session).

A further 36 (3.0%) of SK students had a Text Level in the range 5-10 but OLA scores between 0-9. The implications for these students are somewhat different in that they are at an appropriate Text Level but that their receptive oral language ability, as indicated by their OLA scores, are below standard. These students need to have explicit instruction in oral language, with Read To and Oral Language Exploration teaching approaches being used regularly in place of Guided Reading.

Table 12b: Text Level by OLA: Grade 1, June 2009

Text Level	OLA TOTAL SCORE																Total	cum %
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
0	2	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	9	1%
2	0	1	0	2	2	2	2	1	4	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	21	2%
3	1	1	0	1	2	3	1	5	4	1	3	4	3	5	1	0	35	4%
4	0	0	5	1	2	4	1	4	4	10	11	9	11	8	4	3	77	8%
5	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	4	3	12	15	9	12	14	11	5	93	14%
6	0	0	0	0	3	3	4	10	9	14	20	19	26	34	29	17	188	25%
7	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	6	3	12	14	18	35	23	11	126	33%
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	5	4	9	11	12	23	25	13	108	39%
9	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	5	8	9	17	29	34	35	27	173	49%
10	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	2	6	10	19	22	41	45	51	42	244	64%
11	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	3	11	15	28	43	47	31	185	75%
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	12	23	33	28	16	120	82%
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	9	13	14	25	19	85	87%
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	7	11	18	19	23	81	92%
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	13	9	13	40	94%
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	9	7	22	95%
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	9	14	10	42	98%
18	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	5	4	5	18	99%
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	99%
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	99%
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	5	12	100%
Total	5	3	6	5	13	24	20	38	50	78	117	156	239	338	343	249	1683	
	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%	3%	5%	7%	10%	14%	21%	31%	45%	65%	85%	100%		

43 (2.6%) of Grade 1 students scored at the minimum Benchmark Text Level of 10, but scored between 0-10 on the OLA, indicating that they were below standard in their receptive oral language. Principals, literacy teachers and classroom teachers need to identify who these students are and ensure that daily instructional programs allow for intensive use of teaching prompts within the Oral Language Teaching Approaches. These students are well underway with their reading but as they enter into Grade 2 their ability to comprehend increasingly complex texts is likely to be challenged.

Relationship between the OLA and the APA

The Auditory Processing Assessment (APA) (Rowe & Rowe, 2006) is based on the view that students' oral language development is a function of their capacity to hold, sequence and recall auditory information. The Sentence Memory section of this assessment consists of 25 sentences varying in length from 4 to 18 words. The final APA score is achieved once a student achieves two consecutive errors. The word count of the final correct sentence is the final APA score. The maximum score is 18. Students listen to a recording of each of the sentences and must repeat them correctly in every detail.

At the beginning of the school year, schools were requested to administer the APA CD-1 Sentence Memory assessment to all 'at risk' SK and Grade 1 students. 'At risk' students were defined as those students who in 2008/09 Pre-testing scored 0-5 SK and 0-7 Grade 1 on the OLA (Form B). Complete data were obtained for 530 students. In June, schools were requested to administer the APA to the same students who were administered the APA in September 2008.

Complete data (i.e., students with complete records for both SK and Grade 1) were obtained for just 416 students.   The composition of these students was as shown in Table 13 below. Coincidentally, the number and percent of Grade 1 student was the same as the number and percent of Aboriginal students, although they were of course different students.

Table 13. Numbers of Students with Valid Pre- and Post APA Scores

	Number	Percent
All	416	100.0
Male	244	58.7
Female	172	41.3
Senior Kindergarten	217	52.2
Grade 1	199	47.8
Aboriginal	199	47.8
Non Aboriginal	217	52.2

With reference to Table 1, it can be seen that there were proportionally more male than female students and a higher proportion of Aboriginal students than in the population at large.

For these 416 students, Table 14 presents the proportion correctly repeating each sentence for the APA in June 2009. The overall reliability of the scale was 0.86.

Table 14. Item Difficulties: APA

	Sentence	Words	Correct
1	You can go outside	4	84.0%
2	Cars can go very fast	5	53.2%
3	Orange juice is nice and sweet	6	75.7%
4	The bird is building a nest	6	62.1%
5	I heard him talking to the driver	7	54.7%
6	The naughty monkey hides behind the door	7	39.1%
7	The old lady made some cookies for everyone.	8	40.1%
8	Some boys are playing games in the gym	8	38.2%
9	He is worried because the green bus is late	9	27.2%
10	My class is making banana cake for the party	9	17.4%
11	Put your rubbish in the black box behind the table	10	4.3%
12	The doctor takes her bag and quickly closes the door	10	5.0%
13	Her brother wrote on the card but forgot to post it	11	1.9%
14	At the beach we saw the little birds diving for fish	11	1.7%
15	Some careless person knocked over the cups and the red one broke	12	0.2%
16	After the train driver blows his whistle he drives off very fast	12	0%
17	We didn't get any letters this morning because the mail truck broke down	13	0%
18	The second player can't throw the ball as far as the first one	13	0%
19	My best friend lost her new watch while she was walking down the street	14	0%
20	At the beach the children made a sandcastle and decorated it with little shells	14	0%
21	In the kitchen, Mary makes a chocolate cake and puts thick orange icing on top	15	0%
22	Every morning, the ducks go hunting for snails and worms in the garden next door	15	0%
23	The children who go on the camping trip will need strong shoes, coats and water bottles	16	0%
24	My brother Thomas has a big red train that blows its whistle and runs along the track	17	0%
25	Bill has a caravan in his backyard with beds at one end and a kitchen at the other	18	0%

Tables 15a and 15b summarize the relationship between the OLA and the APA for the 416 students. It can be seen that the APA proved difficult for all students. Only five of the 25 sentences were repeated correctly by more than half the students, and none were able to get to the final 12 sentences with less than two consecutive errors. There was a correlation of $r = 0.63$ between total scores on the OLA (Form B) and the APA indicating that students who do well on those aspects of oral language measured by the OLA tended to also do well on those aspects measured by the APA.

Table 15a. APA and OLA Scores: Senior Kindergarten, September 2008

APA Score	OLA Total Score													Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
0	8	6	3	7	3	4	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	36
4	2	1	3	0	4	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	18
5	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
6	0	0	2	4	6	9	9	6	2	1	3	2	0	44
7	0	2	1	1	6	2	11	8	2	4	2	0	0	39
8	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	10	4	4	2	2	0	30
9	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	5	5	6	8	4	3	38
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	5
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Total	10	10	10	12	20	22	34	32	16	17	17	11	6	217

Table 15b. APA and OLA Scores: Grade 1, June 2009

APA Score	OLA Total Score															Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
0	2	1	0	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	12
4	0	1	2	1	0	3	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	13
5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
6	0	0	1	0	3	1	8	3	4	6	2	1	1	0	0	30
7	0	0	1	2	1	5	1	2	3	3	1	2	1	0	0	22
8	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	5	9	3	5	3	4	1	0	34
9	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	7	8	11	9	9	7	3	0	60
10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	16
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	2	2	0	0	9
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	2	2	6	5	7	17	13	23	30	27	23	18	18	6	2	199

Rowe and Rowe (2004) provide a 'rule of thumb' guide for interpreting APA scores. They propose that target standards for auditory processing capacity as measured by the APA by set at Age + 4. The rule of thumb implies the following target standards:

Age	APA
4	8
5	9
6	10
7	11
8	12
Etc.	

Keeping in mind target standards for both the OLA and the APA, it is evident from Tables 15a and 15b that there is a strong tendency for those who are 'at risk' on one to also be 'at risk' on the other. This raises the question as to whether those students who are having problems with the structures of oral language need to improve their short-term memory or auditory processing capacity. This is an issue that deserves further exploration, but at this stage it is deemed premature for teachers to routinely assess 'at risk' students using the APA.

Cultural version of the OLA

During the year, a group of Aboriginal educators assisted in developing an alternative form of the OLA (Form C) using culturally appropriate language. The purpose in developing this version was to investigate the impact of including culturally sensitive questions on the performance of Aboriginal students, but also to provide an alternative form of the OLA that teachers might use with Aboriginal students.

Table 16 allows a comparison of the items contained in the two forms. Both forms employ identical sentence structures, and so are intended to create a parallel form of the same test.

Table 15. Comparison for OLA Form (B) and Form (C) Items

	Form B	Form C
1	The puppy's tail is curly.	The turtle's shell is hard.
2	Mommy is baking a cake.	Daddy is frying the fish.
3	The teacher told them a story.	Grandma sang them a song.
4	There are the children.	Here are the rabbits.
5	She's eating her lunch slowly.	He's driving the boat quickly.
6	That red bike over there used to be my uncle's.	That blue car over there used to be my brother's.
7	The girl in the car is waving her hand.	The dog on the road is wagging his tail.
8	Over the weekend Jane bought us some cookies.	Over the summer, Mom picked us some berries.
9	Here comes the machine that digs the big holes.	Here comes the man that drives the big bus.
10	The bird built a nest high in the tree.	The bear climbed the tree beside the house.
11	Be careful when you are crossing the busy highway.	Be careful when you're walking on the ice road.
12	The bear and her cubs were looking for berries.	The bear and her cubs were eating at the dump.
13	The naughty puppy chewed my sister's new blue hat.	The hungry beaver chewed my Dad's old canoe.
14	There are the toys that we were playing with at my house.	Here is the snow machine that we will ride to school.
15	My friends like to play games on our computer.	The deer like to eat grass in the field at night.

In June 2009, Form C was administered by class teachers to 146 students in JK, SK and Grade 1, in addition to the regular OLA Form B. Complete data were obtained from a total of 140 students. Table 16 summarizes overall scale statistics for the two forms:

Table 16. Summary Statistics for Aboriginal Students taking OLA Forms B and C

	Mean	Standard deviation	Reliability
Form B	9.09	4.09	0.89
Form C	9.24	3.86	0.87

It can be seen that the two forms have very similar overall properties, but with Form C being marginally easier than form B for this sample of Aboriginal students.

The percentages correctly answering each item and the item-total correlations for each item are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17 Item Statistics for Aboriginal Students taking OLA Forms B and C

	Percent correct		Item-total correlations		Comparison
	OLAB	OLAC	OLAB	OLAC	
1	87%	89%	0.53	0.56	
2	79%	86%	0.53	0.51	Easier
3	82%	84%	0.54	0.47	
4	91%	92%	0.50	0.49	
5	84%	86%	0.49	0.54	
6	63%	56%	0.67	0.53	Harder
7	75%	71%	0.60	0.61	
8	62%	55%	0.65	0.58	Harder
9	52%	49%	0.61	0.54	
10	57%	59%	0.59	0.58	
11	45%	69%	0.59	0.61	Easier
12	49%	45%	0.53	0.59	
13	16%	27%	0.39	0.45	Easier
14	27%	35%	0.50	0.48	Easier
15	38%	21%	0.57	0.28	Harder

It can be seen that Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7,9, 10 and 12 behaved very similarly on the two Forms. Items 2, 11, 13 and 14 were easier on Form C, while Items 6, 8 and 15 were harder, despite the use of more culturally sensitive language. In addition, there was a significantly lower item-total correlation for Item 15 on Form C, indicating that this item did not perform as well as its counterpart on Form B in discriminating between high and low performing students.

The easier and harder items have been extracted below for closer comparison. It can be seen that very subtle differences in sentence structure play a role in determining item difficulty, but there appears to be a very small impact on item difficulty of using or not using culturally sensitive language.

Form C easier items:

	Form B	Form C
2	Mommy is baking a cake.	Daddy is frying the fish.
11	Be careful when you are crossing the busy highway.	Be careful when you're walking on the ice road.
13	The naughty puppy chewed my sister's new blue hat.	The hungry beaver chewed my Dad's old canoe.
14	There are the toys that we were playing with at my house.	Here is the snow machine that we will ride to school.

Form C harder items:

	Form B	Form C
6	That red bike over there used to be my uncle's.	That blue car over there used to be my brother's.
8	Over the weekend Jane bought us some cookies.	Over the summer, Mom picked us some berries.
15	My friends like to play games on our computer.	The deer like to eat grass in the field at night.

Levels of Implementation

In order to better understand levels of implementation within classrooms and the factors affecting change, a series of structured observations was made in a sample of 17 schools. In addition, principals in all schools within the project were invited to complete a Principals Change Questionnaire.

School observations

A number of schools were invited to participate in observation visits. Schools were chosen to ensure representation across each of the boards, proximity to major population centers (to minimize travel time and costs) and different commencement dates within the project.

Observations were carried out in late April and early May 2009 by the Project Coordinator and the Project Consultant. Schools were informed that all information would be anonymous and no school or teacher names would be recorded.

At each school, the following activities were conducted:

1. An initial 30-minute meeting was held with the Principal. This meeting was to ascertain the Principal's perspective of the Project implementation process at their school.

2. The team with the Principal conducted a 15-minute 'Walkthrough' taking in each of the classes involved in the project. The Project team used an implementation rubric to record notes on their observations of implementation (See Appendix 1). This Walkthrough was to ascertain an overall picture of classroom implementation.

3. The team observed in volunteer classrooms, making use of an implementation rubric (See Appendix 1).

4. The team debriefed with the teachers, but with the Principal not present to encourage them to speak openly about. This was done to encourage teachers to speak openly and honestly about Project implementation and challenges.

Throughout the visits, the team organized observations around what could be seen and what was heard, as follows:
1. What can be 'seen' (physical implementation) for example:
   a. Oral Language Learning Centers
   b. Task Management Boards
   c. Small group Instruction
   d. Oral Language Teaching Approaches in small group:
      i. Oral Language Exploration
         1. Generating a Discussion
         2. Recording Their Thoughts
         3. Returning To Their Thoughts
         4. Using The Text Cards
      ii. Read To
      iii. Small Group Shared Reading
      iv. Guided Reading: Oral language focus

2   What can be 'heard' (auditory/articulation implementation) for example:
   a. Open ended questioning and prompts: "Mateas, talk to us more about that."
   b. Invitational prompts: "Wow! That was interesting. What do others think about what Jay said?"
   c. Obvious 'wait time' for students who need processing time.
   d. Guided Reading focused on discussion and language, rather than decoding and solely word processing.
   e. Opportunities for students to have 'talk partners', 'knee to knee', 'turn and talk' where they are actually engaging in discussion
   f. Students in play corners engaging in 'discussions' (interactive, speaking to and listening to others, asking questions etc)

It was possible to conduct observations in a total of 17 schools. Table 18 summarizes the overall ratings of the 17 schools by the team:

Table 18. Overall Ratings of Levels of Implementation of Schools

Level of Implementation	'Seen'	'Heard'
Not implemented	1	1
Early Stages	12	12
Well Underway	2	2

Table 18 indicates that most of the classrooms observed were in the early stages of both 'heard' and 'seen'. This has significant implications for the nature of activities in Phase 4 of the Self Identification Oral Language Project. In most of the schools observed there was still some way to go to incorporate oral language into instructional programs. For example, learning centers observed in most classrooms were supportive of literacy in general, with few centers providing specific opportunities for oral language development in an explicit way. Another example relates to the use of 'invitational prompts' by teachers during whole class and small group sessions. Again, this was in the early stages of implementation with little evidence of he prompts being used in a formal and explicit manner. It is recommended that schools use the implementation rubric and begin to monitor their implementation by carrying out their own walkthroughs as a way of becoming more reflective as a team.

Principals Change Questionnaire
A questionnaire was designed to collect information from school principals about changes attributable to participation in the Self Identification Oral Language Project.

The questionnaire was anonymous and there was no recording of the identity of the principal, the school, or the district. The number of years that the school has participated in SIP was recorded however, as this was considered likely to have a major influence on achieved levels of implementation.

The questionnaire was in two Sections. Section 1 was completed by principals on receiving the questionnaire. Section 2 was completed following discussion at a meeting of their local families of schools. Section 1 contained two parts. Part 1 was concerned with capacity building and the extent to which the principal and staff had a better understanding of oral language, and the ability and motivation to modify their practices in order to improve instruction. Part 2 was concerned with fidelity of implementation of the oral language program in schools.

Principals were advised that the purpose for collecting this information was not to evaluate schools in the project, but to obtain feedback on the extent to which the project had been successful in achieving its objectives so that any weaknesses could be addressed in subsequent years.

Usable returns were received from a total of 69 out of the 99 schools, representing a return rate of 70 percent.

For questions 1-9 of the Principals Change Questionnaire, which were concerned with capacity building within the school, respondents were asked to rate each statement on a five-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, which was scored as follows:

1   Strongly Disagree
2   Disagree
3   Neutral/Not sure
4   Agree
5   Strongly Agree

Table 20 summarizes the average ratings of the 69 principals responding to Questions 1-9 of the Principals Change Questionnaire.

Table 20. Average Ratings for Questions 1-9 of the Principals Change Questionnaire

Item No.	Item	Average rating (1-5)
1.	Staff at this school have a good understanding of oral language and its role in literacy development.	4.4
2.	Staff at this school have a good understanding of the oral language abilities of the students.	4.4
3.	Staff have a good understanding of what they need to do to adjust their instructional language to match the needs of each learner at this school.	4.0
4.	Staff at this school have a good understanding of teaching approaches developed within SIP for improving students' oral language.	4.0
5.	Staff at this school have a good understanding of small group instruction and associated classroom management and routines.	4.2
6.	Staff at this school have a good understanding of classroom management and routines necessary for effective small group instruction.	4.3
7.	Staff at this school are confident about their capacity to improve oral language outcomes for all students, particularly low performing students.	3.9
8.	Staff at this school are committed to working in professional learning teams and being more open and reflective about their professional practice.	4.4
9.	Staff at this school are provided with a time allocation for (at minimum) a bi-weekly PLC meeting.	2.2

It can be seen that on average principals agreed with all of the statements except the last. In other words, they believed that staff were well placed to implement the program in terms of their understandings, capacities and commitment. However, very few have been able to arrange for time allocations to facilitate bi-weekly meetings of teams of teachers involved in the project, which can be expected to negatively impact levels of implementation.

For questions 10-21 of the Principals Change Questionnaire, which were concerned with fidelity of implementation of the oral language program within the school, respondents were asked to rate each statement on a five-point scale from Not implemented to Fully implemented in all classes, which was scored as follows:

1   Not implemented
2   Early stages of implementation
3   Well underway in at least one class
4   Well underway in most classes
5   Fully implemented in all classes

Table 21 summarizes the average ratings of the 69 principals responding to Questions 10-21 of the Principals Change Questionnaire.

It can be seen that principals believed that most of the elements of the oral language program were well underway in at least one class, and in many cases in most classes. The two notable exceptions were:
 − teachers inviting others to observe them teach and receive feedback, and observing others and giving feedback; and
 − the lead teacher and principal routinely observing oral language specific sessions and providing structured feedback.
This comes as no surprise, since these represent a big culture change. Yet they are critical to bringing about reflection on and improvement of professional practice.

Table 21. Average Ratings for Questions 10-21 of the Principals Change Questionnaire

Item No.	Item	Average rating (1-5)
10.	Teachers routinely adjust their instructional language to meet the learning needs of students.	4.1
11.	Teachers routinely use open-ended questions and invitational prompts to promote authentic discussion	3.8
12.	Teachers make use of the prompt cards and have them with them during small group instruction.	3.8
13.	Teachers make use of the prompt cards and have them with them during small group instruction.	3.7
14.	There is daily use of small group (4-6 students) instruction throughout the literacy block.	3.9
15.	During small group instruction, teachers use Generating a Discussion, Recording their Thoughts, Returning to their Thoughts, Using the Text Cards, Read To of Small Group Shared Reading with their lowest language students.	3.7
16.	For students underway with reading, teachers work in small groups (4-6 students) in Guided Reading with a focus on oral language discussion (as opposed to decoding text).	4.0
17.	Effective classroom management (learning centers, rotation guides, etc.) and routines (e.g., Task Management Boards, noise monitors, cooperative learning strategies) are in place to facilitate small group instruction.	4.0
18.	Teachers invite others to observe them teach and receive feedback, and observe others and give feedback.	2.5
19.	Students are provided with structured, focused opportunities to engage in extended discussions with each other and their teachers and/or other proficient English language user.	3.7
20.	The lead teacher and principal routinely observe oral language specific sessions and provide structured feedback.	2.4
21	Teachers make use of *Let's Talk About It*, picture cards and other stimuli in generating discussions.	4.0

The last six questions of the Principals Change Questionnaire were all open-ended questions that required respondents to reflect on the project. The questions were as follows:

1. What have been the greatest challenges for teachers within this project?
2. What have been the greatest challenges for the lead teacher and yourself as the principal within this project?
3. What currently are your greatest needs for support in working towards full implementation within this project?
4. Given the imperative to minimize costs, what adjustments would you make to the delivery of the program you have experienced if it were rolled out to new districts?
5. What are the most significant changes that have occurred at your school as a result of participation in the SI Oral Language Project?
6. What has been the impact of the SI Oral Language Project on attitudes towards and instructional practice with respect to Aboriginal students?

The following is a brief summary of the responses of principals to the above questions.

Greatest challenges for teachers
The challenge most frequently referred to was a lack of *time* (35 mentions). This included time for preparation and reflection, completing assessments, meeting to discuss, observe and give feedback, working with students in need, implementing oral language teaching strategies, especially in half-time classes, recording student thoughts, conducting small group instruction, focusing on oral language as opposed to other curriculum priorities, and training new teachers.

The second most frequently mentioned challenge was ***knowing what to do*** (52 mentions). This included classroom management and routines, adjusting instructional language, learning how to ask open questions and provide wait time, analyzing scores and planning next steps, providing small group instruction during the literacy block, keeping other children on task, developing competence in implementing teaching strategies and making the connection between oral language and reading.

Other frequently mentioned challenges were ***staffing*** issues (17 mentions), including staff changes, team building, communications and travel to meetings; ***student or parent issues*** (13 mentions), most of which related to low language students who were difficult to engage, teach and support, and; ***teacher attitudes*** (12 mentions), including teacher beliefs about the capacity of students to learn and teachers who are uncomfortable with change and with collaborating with peers.

Greatest challenges for lead teachers and principals
There was considerable overlap in responses to this question and the previous question, with *time* being the most frequently mentioned challenge (36 mentions). This included timetabling issues, time to get into classrooms, observe and give feedback, insufficient time for attendance at PD sessions and for teacher meetings, providing release time and not being able to operate a consistent schedule of classroom visits and observations.

The second most frequently mentioned cluster of challenges related to leadership and management issues (25 mentions), including tying different initiatives together so they makes sense to staff, creating and being an active part of the PLT, getting teacher buy in and ownership of the project, communications, relations with unions, monitoring implementation, observing and giving feedback.

The next most frequently mentioned challenges were ***staffing*** issues (16 mentions) and teachers ***knowing what to do*** (15 mentions), mostly repeating the issues mentioned in response to Question 1. Finally, some respondents cited ***training*** issues (8 mentions), including being pulled out of teacher training sessions for leadership training when principals in fact need both, the need to involve vice principals, and generally keeping abreast of the project.

Greatest needs for support
The most frequently-cited support need was, not unexpectedly, associated with time (20 mentions). Principals wanted agreement regarding common planning and meeting time for teachers and more release time. They also wanted an extended life for the project to have time to fully implement the oral language program.

Principals also requested a range of external support (18 mentions), including additional Speech Language pathologists and Communication Assistants. They requested continued Board support to drive specific changes and formal structures to facilitate school visits and bi-weekly meetings of PLCs as opposed to the current 6-week cycle.

The third most frequently-cited need was for various kinds of internal support (13 mentions), including EAs in classes to support the oral language program, additional staff (teachers, EAs and SERTs) as well as an ECE in every Kindergarten classroom, and access to qualified supply teachers..

Program adjustments
When asked to suggest adjustments to the delivery of the program to minimize costs in the event of a wider roll out to new districts, principals made the following suggestions:

− Greater use of video recordings of teaching with pre-briefs, lessons and de-briefs communicate and generate discussion of teaching strategies
− Better planning and sharing of plans at the start of the program so expectations are clear
− One meeting at the beginning of the year, then shorter meetings throughout the year
− Adoption of the 'family of schools' format for providing mutual support
− Fewer centralized meetings and more delivery at the local Board or school network level (keep it local and less driving time)
− Compressed training days
− Greater use of videoconferencing, webcasts, blogs and other communication technologies to reduce travel costs and provide instant contact and support
− Reduce distractions from other competing initiatives
− Establish demonstration classrooms within each Board
− Introduce classroom and interschool visits as soon as possible
− Spend more time on directly improving teaching
− Have all grades trained at the same time

Significant changes
When asked what were the most significant changes that have occurred at their school as a result of participation in the SI Oral Language Project, principals most frequently cited the following:

− Teachers' professional practice (35 mentions), including the use of specific oral language teaching strategies, small group teaching, focused and precise teaching, a greater emphasis on oral language and greater use of data to understand and monitor student learning.
− Teachers more aware of the importance of oral language development (23 mentions).
− Teachers more aware of their students, especially 'at risk' students and taking greater responsibility for their learning (16 mentions)
− Collaboration among teachers, visits and discussions (14 mentions)
− Teachers more aware of their instructional language (11 mentions)
− Consistency of teacher practice and common language (11 mentions)
− Student oral language and the amount of student talk (11 mentions)

Impact
When asked what has been the impact of the SI Oral Language Project on attitudes towards and instructional practice with respect to Aboriginal students, principals' comments clustered around two main thoughts:

The SI Oral Language Project had given them and their staff:

– greater confidence to address the learning needs of Aboriginal students, more positive beliefs about these students' capacity to learn and about their capacity as educators to teach them, coupled with a belief that developing oral language skills of Aboriginal students is possible and can yield powerful results. (24 mentions)

– A greater awareness of the needs of Aboriginal students, of the performance gap separating them from their non-Aboriginal peers, and a greater confidence in the capacity of the school to close this gap. (18 mentions)

Conclusions

At the conclusion of Phase 2, it was suggested that data collection in Phase 3 should focus on addressing the following questions:

1. Given the relatively high overall scores on the OLA, why is the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students so large and why do the scores of Aboriginal students reveal a very wide spread across the full ability continuum?

2. What is the impact of using culturally sensitive materials and contexts on the scores of Aboriginal students/

3. What is the relationship between students' ability to understand the structures of oral English and their auditory processing capacity and is this the same for all groups of students, especially Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students?

4. What impact does teachers' instructional language and instructional strategies (including small group instruction) have on the oral language development of their students and specifically on that of Aboriginal students?

5. What is the link between students' oral language development and their development as comprehending readers?

So at the conclusion of Phase 3, what can be said in response to each of these questions?

The achievement gap
The testing data for Phase 3 confirm what was established in Phase 2, namely that the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal students is equivalent to about one year of schooling, but that Aboriginal students are not a homogeneous group and are spread across the full ability range in terms of their receptive oral language. The

further work on a culturally sensitive version of the OLA suggests that this gap is not a function of the test itself, but reflects opportunities to develop oral language skills and the need for more intensive, focused instruction to enable them to catch up.

The OLA data also indicates that some schools are more effective than others in closing the gap and the school visits and observations indicate that there is significant variation between classes within schools as well as between schools in levels of implementation or effective instructional practices to support oral language development.

Many teachers continue to teach as they have always taught, but with some oral language 'add ons' which they struggle to incorporate into their repertoires. While the adoption of new teaching approaches have led to improvements in oral language instruction, they have not led to a fundamental change in practice. The focus for Phase 4 needs to be on going deeper and bringing about this more fundamental change in many more classrooms. In particular, the aim should be to get universal adoption of the oral language teaching approaches and instructional prompts and to differentiate their instruction to meet the wide range of learning needs of both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal students. To date this has not happened.

Culturally sensitive materials
The Cultural Kit has been widely used by Project schools and items incorporated into demonstration lessons and videos. The materials are invaluable in promoting engagement of students in their learning at school. It is proposed that during Phase 4, that this kit be further developed.

The results from the culturally sensitive version of the OLA indicated that using more culturally sensitive language had little impact on item difficulty. On the other hand, quite subtle differences in sentence structure do seem to play a role in determining item difficulty. On the basis of these results, it is suggested that OLA (Form C) be made available to Project schools to use with their Aboriginal students if they so choose and if they believe it will provide a more accurate picture of their receptive oral language abilities.

Sentence structure versus auditory memory
The data for those 'at risk' SK and Grade 1 students who were administered the APA and the OLA indicated that there is a strong relationship between performance on the APA, which is intended to assess auditory memory, and the OLA, which is based on the structure of the language. However, in the Sentence Memory section of the APA, auditory memory and sentence structure are confounded and so it is not possible to ascertain which is having the greatest effect on the performance of individual students. It is thus suggested that the APA Sentence memory test not be used in Phase 4, but that consideration be given to trialing a more contextualized and easily administered assessment more exclusively focused on measuring auditory memory.

Instructional language and structures
In terms of what was both 'seen' and what was 'heard', instructional practice was at the early stages of implementation. But principals and lead teachers were not always conscious of the distance yet to be travelled and of the changes still required to provide consistent and effective oral language instructional practice.

In Phase 4, the focus needs to be on the explicit use of:

- the Oral Language Teaching Approaches, aligned to student needs though small instructional groups,
- the Oral Language Instructional Prompts, with each teacher using prompt sheets during small group instructional sessions, and
- the implementation of appropriate classroom management routines and structures that support the explicit development of oral language.

The aim should be to create a clearer picture of what *full implementation* implies and of what needs to be done to move from an 'early stages' level of implementation to 'full implementation' in which the teaching approaches and instructional prompts become daily practice rather than add-ons to existing practice. This means that during Phase 4 the emphasis is on *refinement* of current knowledge and not on the introduction of new teaching approaches.

Oral language and reading comprehension
During Phase 3, the Text Level Text Level of all students in SK and Grade 1 was recorded at the beginning and end of the year using a set of benchmark texts (either the DRA or Rigby PM Collection). These data were then correlated with the OLA data. This revealed significant numbers of students who were at risk in both reading and receptive language. For these students, intensive oral language intervention is required in the form of daily small group sessions using the Oral Language Teaching Approaches. If students are having problems listening and comprehending what they hear, they are unlikely to be able to read with comprehension, even though their ability to decode text may continue to improve.

The data also revealed significant numbers of students in both SK and Grade 1 who were reading at their benchmark levels but were clearly at risk in their receptive oral language. For these students, the likelihood of their being able to fully comprehend ever increasingly complex text is not great. They too need more intensive support and intervention.

In Phase 4, attention needs to be given to:
- ensuring that those students who were at risk in both Text Level and OLA are identified and placed in groups with like students for daily intensive 10 – 15 minute instructional sessions using the oral language teaching approaches (Read To, Shared Reading, Oral Language Exploration) instead of always working in small group Guided Reading.
- ensuring that those students who scored in the 'at risk' category for OLA but who were at or above Text Level standard be identified and placed in groups with like students and given at least two 15 minute intensive sessions incorporating the oral language teaching approaches (Read To, Shared Reading, Oral Language Exploration)
- the use of the Instructional Strategies Matrix (Breakthrough) or the Key Assessment Chart (back of the Let's talk About It Guide Book) to align the students scores with the most appropriate teaching approaches and the use of Rotation Guides provided as examples of how to organize the small group instruction to best meet the needs of all students.

Appendix 1

Literacy Numeracy Secretariat and
Self Identification Oral Language Project
(LNS/SIP)

School Observation Rubric

School	
Principal	
Commenced	☐ Jun 2007 ☐ Sep 2007 ☐ Sep 2008
Date/Time	
Observer(s)	

Version 1

Walkthrough

Focus	Comments
Literacy Block in place	
Classroom organization to promote oral language development	
Task Management Board	
Oral Language Focused Literacy Centers	
Small Group Instruction – general	
Small Group Oral Language Teaching Approaches	
Evidence of Co-operative Learning skills	
Evidence of 'dynamic' interactions between teacher and students	
Evidence of open and invitational teacher language	
Evidence of 'dynamic' interactions – student to student	
Evidence of Tracking Walls: Comprehension Text Level and Oral Language	
Evidence of 'on-going' monitoring and assessment within the classroom	
Evidence of innovative programs or processes to support Oral Language development.	
Evidence of 'oral language Intervention' programs to support 'at risk' students	

The classroom observations will cover two aspects of observation:

3   What can be 'seen' (physical implementation) for example:
    e. Oral Language Learning Centers
    f. Task Management Boards
    g. Small group Instruction
    h. Oral Language Teaching Approaches in small group:
        i. Oral Language Exploration
            1. Generating a Discussion
            2. Recording Their Thoughts
            3. Returning To Their Thoughts
            4. Using The Text Cards
        ii. Read To
        iii. Small Group Shared Reading
        iv. Guided Reading: Oral language focus

4   What can be 'heard' (auditory/articulation implementation) for example:
    a. Open ended questioning and prompts: *"Mateas, talk to us more about that."*
    b. Invitational prompts: *"Wow! That was interesting. What do others think about what Jay said?"*
    c. Obvious 'wait time' for students who need processing time.
    d. Guided Reading focused on discussion and language, rather than decoding and solely word processing.
    e. Opportunities for students to have 'talk partners', 'knee to knee', 'turn and talk' where they are actually engaging in discussion
    f. Students in play corners engaging in 'discussions' (interactive, speaking to and listening to others, asking questions etc)

Classroom Observation (1)

☐JK ☐SK ☐G1 ☐FD5 ☐FD3 ☐HD5   ☐6/07 ☐9/07 ☐9/08 ☐9/09

Focus	Comments
PHYSICAL	
Oral Language Learning Center	
Task Management Boards	
Group Seating to promote discussion	
Rug area for small group instruction	
Large chart stand for recording thoughts	
Use of LTAI charts and text cards, and other stimuli to promote discussion	
Use of small group Oral Language Teaching Approaches (see above)	
Evidence of students familiar with small group instructional setting	
Teacher made Big Books of students thoughts generated in Oral Language Exploration	
Evidence of innovative programs or processes to support oral language development	
Evidence of oral language intervention programs or strategies to support the 'at risk' students	
Evidence of 'flexible grouping' (set up of TMB, Rotation Guides etc)	

Classroom Observation (1)

AUDITORY	
Evidence of *open - ended questioning*	
Evidence of the use of *invitational prompts*	
Obvious adjustment of language between groups	
Carry over of effective instructional language into whole class instructional and general dialogue	
Evidence of teacher as *facilitator* rather than *interrogator*	
Evidence of students using more complex thoughts to articulate ideas	
Evidence of teaching for more complex thoughts	

Classroom Observation (2)

JK SK G1	FD5 FD3 HD5	6/07 9/07 9/08 9/09

Focus	Comments
PHYSICAL	
Oral Language Learning Center	
Task Management Boards	
Group Seating to promote discussion	
Rug area for small group instruction	
Large chart stand for recording thoughts	
Use of LTAI charts and text cards, and other stimuli to promote discussion	
Use of small group Oral Language Teaching Approaches (see above)	
Evidence of students familiar with small group instructional setting	
Teacher made Big Books of students thoughts generated in Oral Language Exploration	
Evidence of innovative programs or processes to support oral language development	
Evidence of oral language intervention programs or strategies to support the 'at risk' students	
Evidence of 'flexible grouping' (set up of TMB, Rotation Guides etc)	

Classroom Observation (2)

AUDITORY	
Evidence of *open - ended questioning*	
Evidence of the use of *invitational prompts*	
Obvious adjustment of language between groups	
Carry over of effective instructional language into whole class instructional and general dialogue	
Evidence of teacher as *facilitator* rather than *interrogator*	
Evidence of students using more complex thoughts to articulate ideas	
Evidence of teaching for more complex thoughts	

Classroom Observation (3)

JK SK G1	FD5 FD3 HD5	6/07 9/07 9/08 9/09

Focus	Comments
PHYSICAL	
Oral Language Learning Center	
Task Management Boards	
Group Seating to promote discussion	
Rug area for small group instruction	
Large chart stand for recording thoughts	
Use of LTAI charts and text cards, and other stimuli to promote discussion	
Use of small group Oral Language Teaching Approaches (see above)	
Evidence of students familiar with small group instructional setting	
Teacher made Big Books of students thoughts generated in Oral Language Exploration	
Evidence of innovative programs or processes to support oral language development	
Evidence of oral language intervention programs or strategies to support the 'at risk' students	
Evidence of 'flexible grouping' (set up of TMB, Rotation Guides etc)	

Classroom Observation (3)

AUDITORY	
Evidence of *open - ended questioning*	
Evidence of the use of *invitational prompts*	
Obvious adjustment of language between groups	
Carry over of effective instructional language into whole class instructional and general dialogue	
Evidence of teacher as *facilitator* rather than *interrogator*	
Evidence of students using more complex thoughts to articulate ideas	
Evidence of teaching for more complex thoughts	

Teacher Debrief

Focus	Comments
What has been the most satisfying achievement for you as a result of being involved in this project?	
What have been the easiest aspects for you to implement in this project?	
What have been the hardest aspects for you to implement in this project?	
To what extent has the Project helped you to better meet the needs of Aboriginal students?	
How could the Project be improved in the future?	

Principal Debrief

Focus	Comments
What has been the most satisfying achievement for you as a result of being involved in this project?	
What have been the easiest aspects for you to implement in this project?	
What have been the hardest aspects for you to implement in this project?	
To what extent has the involvement of the school in this Project helped the school to better meet the needs of your Aboriginal students?	
How could the Project be improved in the future?	

Overall rating of level of 'physical' Implementation

☐ Not implemented

☐ Early stages of implementation

☐ Well underway in at least one class

☐ Well underway in most classes

☐ Fully implemented in all classes

Overall rating of level of 'articulation' Implementation

☐ Not implemented

☐ Early stages of implementation

☐ Well underway in at least one class

☐ Well underway in most classrooms

☐ Fully implemented in all classes

Appendix 2

Literacy Numeracy Secretariat and
Self Identification Oral Language Project
(LNS/SIP)

Principal's Change
Questionnaire

May 2009

Dear Principal

This questionnaire has been designed to collect information from you about changes attributable to participation in the SI Oral Language Project in your school.

The questionnaire is entirely anonymous and there will be no recording of the identity of the principal, the school, or the district. The number of years that the school has participated in SIP will be recorded however, as this is likely to have a major influence on achieved levels of implementation.

The questionnaire is in two Sections (Section 1 and 2). You are asked to complete Section 1 on receiving the questionnaire. Section 2 is to be completed following discussion at a meeting of your local family of schools.

Section 1 has two parts. Part 1 is concerned with capacity building and the extent to which you and staff at your school have a better understanding of oral language, and the ability and motivation to modify their practices in order to improve instruction.
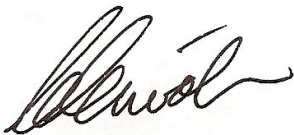
Part 2 is concerned with fidelity of implementation of the oral language program in your school. Fidelity of implementation means the degree to which specified procedures are implemented as intended or planned.

The purpose for collecting this information is NOT to evaluate your or other schools in the project, but to obtain feedback on the extent to which the project has been successful in achieving its objectives so that any weaknesses can be addressed in subsequent years.

You will receive a report summarizing the findings from the questionnaire and other activities to be conducted to better understand changes attributable to participation in the SI Oral Language Project, including observations in a small sample of project schools.

We would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire and being an active partner in this research project. We know that much has been achieved, but we also know that none of us are perfect, so we are keen to work hard at improving outcomes for our students.

Yours sincerely

Carmel A. Crévola   Peter W. Hill
Project Director   Project Consultant

Section 1, Part 1 (To be completed now)

Please place a cross (✗) in the box that best reflects understandings and attitudes within your school as a result of participation in the SI Oral Language Project.

	Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Neutral/Not sure N	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA
1. Staff at this school have a good understanding of oral language and its role in literacy development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Staff at this school have a good understanding of the oral language abilities of the students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Staff have a good understanding of what they need to do to adjust their instructional language to match the needs of each learner at this school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Staff at this school have a good understanding of teaching approaches developed within SIP for improving students' oral language.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Staff at this school have a good understanding of small group instruction and associated classroom management and routines.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Staff at this school have a good understanding of classroom management and routines necessary for effective small group instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Staff at this school are confident about their capacity to improve oral language outcomes for all students, particularly low performing students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Staff at this school are committed to working in professional learning teams and being more open and reflective about their professional practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Staff at this school are provided with a time allocation for (at minimum) a bi-weekly PLC meeting.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 1, Part 2 (To be completed now)

Please place a cross (✗) in the box that best reflects your assessment of levels of implementation in your school.

Not Implemented (NI)

Early stages of implementation (ESI)

Well underway in at least one class (WUO)

Well underway in most classes (WUM)

Fully implemented in all classes (FIA)

	NI	ESI	WUO	WUM	FIA
10. There is ongoing assessment of students to establish starting points and monitor progress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Teachers routinely adjust their instructional language to meet the learning needs of students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Teachers routinely use open-ended questions and invitational prompts to promote authentic discussion (e.g., "Talk to us about…"; "That was a good idea… did you hear what she said?"; "Tell us what he said").	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Teachers make use of the prompt cards and have them with them during small group instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. There is daily use of small group (4-6 students) instruction throughout the literacy block.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. During small group instruction, teachers use Generating a Discussion, Recording their Thoughts, Returning to their Thoughts, Using the Text Cards, Read To of Small Group Shared Reading with their lowest language students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. For students underway with reading, teachers work in small groups (4-6 students) in Guided Reading with a focus on oral language discussion (as opposed to decoding text).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please place a cross (✗) in the box that best reflects your assessment of levels of implementation in your school.

Not implemented

Early stages of implementation (ESI)

Well underway in at least one class (WUO)

Well underway in most classes (WUM)

Fully implemented in all classes (FIA)

	NI	ESI	WUO	WUM	FIA
17. Effective classroom management (learning centers, rotation guides, etc.) and routines (e.g., Task Management Boards, noise monitors, cooperative learning strategies) are in place to facilitate small group instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Teachers invite others to observe them teach and receive feedback, and observe others and give feedback.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Students are provided with structured, focused opportunities to engage in extended discussions with each other and their teachers and/or other proficient English language user.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. The lead teacher and principal routinely observe oral language specific sessions and provide structured feedback.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Teachers make use of *Let's Talk About It*, picture cards and other stimuli in generating discussions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please place a cross (✗) in the box that indicates when your school *first* participated in the SI Oral Language Project.

☐   June 2007

☐   September 2007

☐   September 2008

(To be completed during meeting with family of schools)

What have been the greatest challenges for teachers within this project?

What have been the greatest challenges for the lead teacher and yourself as the principal within this project?

What currently are your greatest needs for support in working towards full implementation within this project?

Given the imperative to minimize costs, what adjustments would you make to the delivery of the program you have experienced if it were rolled out to new districts?

What are the most significant changes that have occurred at your school as a result of participation in the SI Oral Language Project?

What has been the impact of the SI Oral Language Project on attitudes towards and instructional practice with respect to Aboriginal students?