Instructional Tool: Oral Communications Matrix

This tool supports element 1, *Set disciplinary learning targets that are aligned with ELA/Anchor Literacy CCSS and the target high-impact practice*. Designing lessons to support oral language development and communication between students is an essential facet of the CCSS and elementary school curricula. The Oral Communications Matrix (see Table 5.4) pro-vides you with a comprehensive and structured approach for determining the types of oral communication on which to focus and for identifying the language skills each type requires.

Why Use This Tool: At an early age, children begin to learn how lan-guage can be used to serve many purposes, and as a result, they enter school with some pragmatic knowledge of how to use language to communicate. Teachers need to build on this knowledge base by providing opportuni-ties for different types of communication as well as instruction in the spe-cific language skills needed to support them. The Oral Communications Matrix (Table 5.4) is a tool you can use when designing lessons to sup-port these learning targets and the High-Impact Practice of Disciplinary Communication.

Type of Oral Communication	What It Is	Language Skills	Examples
Oral Report a) planned b) unplanned	Sharing of new information that can include multimedia Planned: introduction, body, and conclusion Unplanned: organized by reconstructing information or explanation	❑ Select and organize information ❑ Identify key facts ❑ Use clear and precise language ❑ Include subject-specific concepts and words	Personal topics, book report, topic report Spontaneous reporting of group work
Storytelling	Telling stories, retelling events, and relating personal anecdotes	❑ Retell a series of events ❑ Include descriptive vocabulary ❑ Speak with appropriate tone of voice and volume ❑ Use expressive body language	Community stories, family stories, puppetry, reader's theater
Partner or small-group work	Developing speaking and listening skills	❑ Use language to interact ❑ Listen and respond to what others say ❑ Summarize or evaluate ❑ Initiate ideas	Think-Pair-Share, Literature Circles, Jigsaw

Type of Oral Communication	What It Is	Language Skills	Examples
Giving instructions	Explaining a series of steps	❑ Describe using facts ❑ Include details for how, when, and where ❑ Use sequence words appropriately	Barrier games (example: Battleship), How to . . .
Questioning and Inquiry	Encouraging higher-order thinking; dialogue between students and teachers; probing, speculative inquiry questions	❑ Ask and answer questions ❑ Pose multilevel questions (literal, inferential, and evaluative) ❑ Paraphrase responses ❑ Question yourself	Hot Seat, Socratic Questions, Question Matrix, Six Thinking Hats
Arguments and formal/informal debates	Persuading someone to a particular point of view	❑ Use persuasive tone and body language ❑ Use data or evidence ❑ Understand contrasting points of view ❑ Give and justify opinions ❑ Gather accurate and relevant information	Four Corners, Take a Stand, Formal Debate
Interviews	Questioning in an authentic context	❑ Ask open and closed questions ❑ Clarify others' ideas ❑ Acknowledge others ❑ Listen critically ❑ Paraphrase	Hot Seat, Who Am I?, Interviews
Interest Talks	Sharing topics of personal interest	❑ Explain or describe ❑ Organize appropriately for audience ❑ Draw on background knowledge or experiences ❑ Use subject-specific vocabulary ❑ Include descriptive and sequencing words ❑ Pace your speech and use appropriate tone of voice ❑ Include visual aids	Show and Tell, small-group or whole-class presentation

When to Use This Tool: Across all grade levels and content areas, teachers must identify and teach the language skills students need to engage in the eight different types of oral communication. Using this tool when planning and structuring your lessons will enable your students to meet these learning targets.

How to Use This Tool: Using the Oral Communications Matrix when designing your lesson involves five steps:

1. Reflect on the learning target(s) of your lesson and the type of oral communication in which you want your students to engage. Consult the Oral Communications Matrix to identify the specific language skills they need to develop.
2. Create an anchor chart with your students, explaining the purpose, audience, and context for the oral communication chosen.
3. Model the type of speaking you expect your students to engage in, focusing on the appropriate language structures, concepts, and vocabulary.
4. Provide an opportunity for students to practice and apply the skills.
5. Monitor student progress and provide feedback as necessary.