

PICTURE RETELLING ACTIVITY

A final approach to assessing oral proficiency is by asking students to describe a series of pictures in sequence. Beth is able to use this activity to find out how well students can demonstrate their ability to retell stories, consistent with the CCSS for speaking at this grade level.

Just as Beth asks students to participate in one paired interview activity each quarter, she also asks them to participate in a picture sequence activity each quarter. She has worked to assemble many different picture sequences for students to describe. For the first quarter she has a series of pictures that show the first day of school, and students describe a first day in second grade. For the second quarter, Beth asks students to retell the story of the three little pigs, a story the children who began in kindergarten know very well and a story that Beth loves to read aloud, with students accompanying her on the “huff and puff” parts. By third and fourth quarters, Beth thinks students are ready to retell a story about a new social studies or science lesson. Table 4.5 contains the rubric that she uses as a basis to provide feedback.

The rubric in Table 4.5 provides a strong foundation for Beth to use throughout the year. As she moves from primarily classroom activities to more language arts, social studies, and science picture sequences, she adds specific vocabulary and structures to the rubric.

Activity 4.2. Modifying Assessments

Think about how you would develop oral language assessments like the three that Beth has developed. How would you need to modify these activities—interview, oral report, and picture description—to suit your own classroom and student needs?

Oral development tends to be emphasized more with younger children than with older ELLs. However, oral development is also important for high school students and is an important component of the CCSS for secondary grades. Alicia, our Texas high school teacher, understands that her students need to communicate verbally and in writing, and she works to assess their oral language development regularly through both structured interviews and formal oral reports. You’ll notice many differences between Alicia’s approach and Beth’s, which is appropriate because their students are different.

Table 4.5. Rubric for Picture Sequencing

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Student names several things in the picture and uses a few phrases	Student describes one or more things in each picture but does not necessarily put them in sequence	Student describes all of the pictures using mostly full sentences	Student is able to describe the pictures in order and use words such as <i>and</i> and <i>next</i> to show what happens next