



Colour Coding Language

The impact of language deficits commonly results in difficulties with reading and writing. When high demands are placed on decoding and encoding, meaning is lost when reading and grammatical difficulties surface when writing. Colour coding can add another layer of meaning to help students make sense of text.

Keywords: *colour coding, reading, writing, classroom strategies, executive function*

How can you use colour coding?

Colour coding is widely used to support literacy, language and organisation; however, it is not limited to these areas.

Colour coded writing is an adjustment to text that supports verbal expression, reading comprehension and writing development. Colour coded writing provides an additional layer of meaning to text that visually supports students with literacy difficulties, Language Disorder and/or executive functioning weaknesses to identify grammatical elements of our language system.

○ Red	=	proper names (e.g., <u>Harry</u>); nouns (e.g., <u>ball</u>); personal pronouns (e.g., <u>I</u> , <u>you</u> , <u>he</u> , <u>she</u> , <u>it</u>); and <u>yes/no</u>
○ Blue	=	verbs/actions (e.g., <u>is swimming</u>)
○ Green	=	adjectives/describing (e.g., <u>blue</u> ball; <u>soft</u> ball)
○ Orange	=	prepositions/where (e.g., <u>beside</u>) adverbs for place (e.g., <u>from</u>)
○ Pink	=	determiners/articles (e.g., <u>a</u> , <u>an</u> , <u>the</u> , <u>some</u> , <u>this</u> , <u>that</u> , <u>those</u>)
○ Brown	=	possessive pronouns (e.g., <u>my</u> , <u>mine</u> , <u>his</u> , <u>her/s</u>) adverbs/modify verbs of time (e.g., <u>quickly</u>) and manner (e.g., <u>happily</u> , <u>very</u> , <u>too</u>)
○ Purple	=	conjunctions (e.g., <u>and</u> , <u>because</u> , <u>until</u>)

Strategies to Support Colour Coded Writing

Use coloured pens and pencils to write words in their appropriate colours, or underline words in their corresponding colours.

Teach students the parts of speech by introducing the colour coding, for example, “Red words are nouns – red words talk about a person, place, or thing.” Place pictures of people, places and things onto red cardboard. “Blue words are verbs – blue words talk about actions.” Place pictures of people performing actions onto yellow cardboard, and so on.

Teach students the grammatical word ordering which governs our language, for example, “A pink word will only come before a red word.” (i.e., an elephant, the Olympics, that book). “Orange words need to come before a pink or red word in a sentence.” (i.e., The boy is beside the boat. I am coming from Sydney.) “A green word helps to describe a red word, and often comes before it in



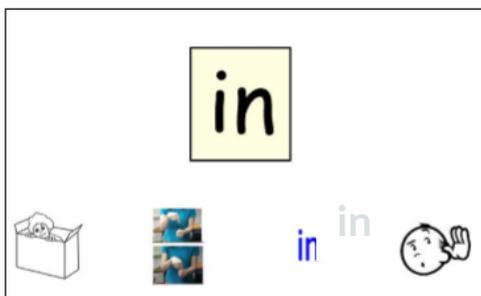
the sentence.” (i.e., The big blue bird ate the little yellow insect.) “A conjunction, or purple word, joins two sentences to make them into one.”

Increase students’ ability to use varied sentence structures through providing colour coded sentence frames (see attachments). Alternatively, colour coded prompts can be used to cue students to include additional information in writing. For example, “Can you use a green word to improve these red words?”

Increase students’ ability to use creative language in sentences and stories by indicating they must use, for example, several green words, or a brown word in their work.

Ask students to proof and edit their work by utilising colour coding to assist in identifying disordered sentence structures or recognising the need to vary sentence structures.

Use colour coding to code high frequency reading words in order to facilitate increased retention. The colour coding will provide a link to the word meaning.



Example of a flash/prompt card used when teaching high frequency words. A range of prompts are included along the bottom and revealed one-by-one, as needed, to help the student to recall the word. Colour coding is used as an additional prompt, following a picture and sign prompt.

Useful Websites

Colourful Semantics: <http://integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/our-approaches/speech-therapy-approaches/colourful-semantic-2/>

Jolly Learning: <http://jollylearning.co.uk/overview-about-jolly-grammar/>

Want to learn more?

To learn more about Language Disorder and how to support children and young people for whom language is their primary disorder, please **contact us**. Language Disorder Australia provides holistic, innovative and effective therapy, education and support services and has a transdisciplinary team of speech pathologists, occupational therapists, educators, psychologists and physiotherapists.

Contact: 1300 881 763 or hello@languagedisorder.org.au

Website: languagedisorder.org.au



References

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