

Stages of Second Language Acquisition

*"One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade."
- Chinese Proverb*

L1 and L2 Acquisition

- Researchers define language acquisition into two categories: first-language acquisition and second-language acquisition.
- First-language acquisition is a universal process regardless of home language. Babies listen to the sounds around them, begin to imitate them, and eventually start producing words.
- Second-language acquisition assumes knowledge in a first language and encompasses the process an individual goes through as he or she learns the elements of a new language, such as vocabulary, phonological components, grammatical structures, and writing systems.





Stages of Language Acquisition Overview

Watch this video from You Tube that overviews the stages of language acquisition by interviewing ELLs from each of them. You will need to view the PPT. in Slide Show then click on the ELL students.

Stage I: Pre-Production Minimal Comprehension



- Silent/Receptive stage can last up to zero to 6 months...
- May have up to 500 words in their receptive vocabulary but they are not yet speaking.
- Some students will, however, repeat everything you say.
 - They are not really producing language but are parroting.
- Will listen attentively and they may even be able to copy words from the board.
- They will be able to respond to pictures and other visuals.
- They can understand and duplicate gestures and movements to show comprehension.



Stage 1: Pre-Production



Student Characteristics

- Verbally unresponsive
- Hesitant and unsure
- Use one word responses
- Developing listening skills
- Need time to be comfortable with classroom environment, procedures and activities
- Respond non-verbally by:
 - Pointing
 - Nodding
 - Gesturing
 - Drawing

Teachers Strategies

- Encourage listening; don't force speaking
- Slow speech, emphasize key words
- Model and demonstrate activities
- Use visual aides:
 - pictures
 - graphic organizers
 - realia
- Use gestures and body language
- Use multimedia aids to illustrate concepts
- Modify work by amount, time, content

Stage I: Examples for Pre-Production



- Listening comprehension:
 - Use read-alouds and music with verbal chants.
 - Repeat and paraphrase to clarify meaning.
- Build vocabulary:
 - Use visuals and have students point to pictures or act out vocabulary.
- “Chunk” sentences:
 - Speak slowly and use shorter words, and simple sentences but use correct English phrasing.
- Model "survival" language by saying and showing the meaning:
 - For example, say, "Open your book," and then open a book while the student observes.
 - Gesture, point and show as much as possible.

- Use buddies/partners:
 - More advanced classmates who speak the same language can support new learning through interpretation.
- Model correct language usage:
 - When students make mistakes avoid excessive error correction.
- TPR: Total Physical Response:
 - Use language with physical movement to reinforce meaning.

Stage I: Pre-Production Learner Tasks and Blooms Taxonomy



Learner Tasks

- Listen
- Point
- Move
- Mime
- Gesture
- Match
- Draw
- Select
- Choose
- Act
- Circle
- Copy
- Match pictures
- Nod yes and no
- Math Drill and Practice

Blooms Taxonomy: Assessing Comprehension

- **Know:**
 - Show me a...
- **Comprehend:**
 - Draw a....
- **Apply:**
 - Point to the examples of...
- **Analyze:**
 - Draw the parts of...
- **Synthesize:**
 - Show what would happen if . .
- **Evaluate:**
 - Move (object/to place) if you agree. . .

Stage II: Early Production Limited Comprehension



- This stage may last up to **six months to a year**.
- Will develop a receptive and active vocabulary of about **1000 words**.
- During this stage, students can usually speak **in one- or two-word phrases**.
- They can use **short language chunks** that have been memorized although these chunks may not always be used correctly.



Stage II: Early Production



Student Characteristics

- Relate words to their environment
- Begin to grasp main ideas of message
- Begin to focus on contextual clues
- Use routine expressions independently
- Demonstrate improved comprehension
- Mispronounce words (no need for correction)
- Will repeat or recite memorable language
- Will use one or two word responses advancing to two or three words
- May not tell you if they do not understand

Teachers Strategies

- Encourage listening; don't force speaking
- Use cooperative learning and scaffolding techniques
- Ask Yes/No and directed choice questions
- Ask Who? What? Where? Questions
- Ask listing type questions
- Use Think-Pair-Share technique when asking questions of the class
- Allow students to illustrate knowledge
- Use labeling and diagramming in illustrations
- Modify work by amount of time, content

Stage 2: Examples for Early Production



- Ask yes/no and either/or questions.
 - Does a chef cook in a house?
- Accept one or two word responses.
 - Ask students to point to pictures and say the new word.
- Give students the opportunity to participate in some of the whole class activities.
 - Have students work in pairs or small groups to discuss a problem.
- Modify content information to the language level of ELLs.
- Build vocabulary:
 - Use pictures and realia to support key vocabulary and concepts.

- Support learning with graphic organizers, charts and graphs.
 - Begin to foster writing in English through labeling and short sentences.
 - Use a frame to scaffold writing.
- Provide listening activities.
 - Model a phrase and have the student repeat it and add modifications.
 - Teacher says, "This book is very interesting." The student repeats it and says, "This book is very boring."
 - Reinforce learning by modeling correct usage.
 - Avoid excessive error correction.

Stage II: Early Production Learner Tasks and Blooms Taxonomy



Learner Tasks

- Name
- Label
- Group
- Respond
- Discriminate
- List
- Categorize
- Tell/say
- Chant
- Answer

Blooms Taxonomy: Assessing Comprehension

- **Know:**
 - Where is the . . . ?
- **Comprehend:**
 - Draw and label the....
- **Apply:**
 - Show me how you know...
- **Analyze:**
 - Show how you would sort...
- **Synthesize:**
 - Predict (tell) what happens next
- **Evaluate:**
 - Why did _____ choose_____?

Stage II: Activities for Early Production



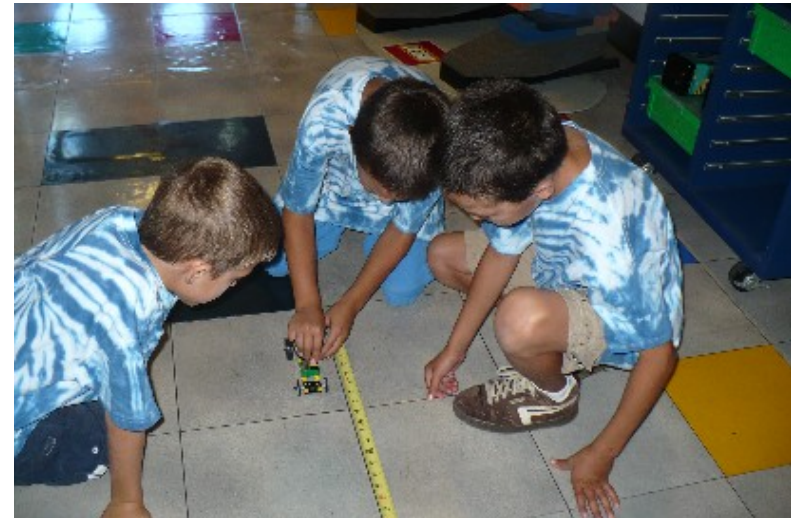
What teachers can expect at this level...

- Match words and pictures
- Yes/No questions
- Either/or questions
- Spell simple words
- List
- Categorize
- Label
- Repeat words and phrases
- Recite from memory
- Present tense
- Simple sentences

Stage III: Speech Emergence “Fair to Good Comprehension”



- 1-3 years
- Vocabulary of about 3,000 words.
- They will communicate with simple phrases and sentences.
- They will ask simple questions, that may or may not be grammatically correct.
 - “ May I go to bathroom? V. Can...”
- They will also initiate short conversations with classmates.
- They will understand easy stories read in class with the support of pictures.
- They will also be able to do some content work with teacher support.



Stage III: Speech Emergence



Student Characteristics

- Begin to speak in simple sentences
- Demonstrate expanded vocabulary
- Show improved comprehension
- May ask for clarification or meaning
- Participate in small group discussions
- May rely on native language to
- Communicate complex ideas
- Start to acquire basic communication
- Skills and social language
- May not tell you if they do not understand.

Teachers Strategies

- Encourage listening and not force speaking
- Use cooperative grouping
- Encourage efforts to participate
- Ask How and Why questions
- Emphasize content area vocabulary
- Provide pictures and content area text
- Provide opportunities for participation in early reading and writing activities
- Modify work according to individual need.

Stage III: More Strategies for Speech Emergence



- Introduce new academic vocabulary and model how to use it in a sentence.
 - Provide visuals and make connections with student's background knowledge as much as possible.
 - Ask questions that require a short answer and are fairly literal.
 - Introduce charts and graphs by using easily understood information such as a class survey of food preferences.
- Have students re-tell stories or experiences and have another student write them down. The ELL student can bring these narratives home to read and reinforce learning.
 - In writing activities, provide the student with a fill-in-the blank version of the assignment with the necessary vocabulary listed on the page.
 - Provide minimal error correction. Focus only on correction that directly interferes with meaning. Reinforce learning by modeling the correct usage.

Stage III: Activities for Speech Emergence



What teachers can expect at this level...

- Sound out stories phonetically.
- Read short, modified texts in content area subjects.
- Complete graphic organizers with word banks.
- Understand and answer questions about charts and graphs.
- Match vocabulary words to definitions.
- Study flashcards with content area vocabulary.
- Participate in duet, pair and choral reading activities.
- Write and illustrate riddles.
- Understand teacher explanations and two-step directions.
- Compose brief stories based on personal experience.
- Write in dialogue journals.

Stage III: Examples for Speech Emergence



- Have students work in pairs and groups to discuss content.
- During instruction, have students do a "Think, pair, share" to give the student an opportunity to process the new language and concept.
- Ask questions that require a full response with explanation. If you do not understand the student's explanation, ask for clarification by paraphrasing and asking the student if you heard them correctly.
- Ask questions that require inference and justification of the answer.
- Ask students if they agree or disagree with a statement and why.
- Model more advanced academic language structures such as, "I think," "In my opinion," and "When you compare." Have students repeat the phrases in context.
- Re-phrase incorrect statements in correct English, or ask the student if they know another way to say it.
- Introduce nuances of language such as when to use more formal English and how to interact in conversations.
- Have students make short presentations, providing them with the phrases and language used in presentations ("Today I will be talking about") and giving them opportunities to practice the presentation with partners before getting in front of the class.
- Continue to provide visual support and vocabulary development.
- Correct errors that interfere with meaning, and pre-identify errors that will be corrected in student writing, such as verb-tense agreement. Only correct the errors agreed upon.
- You may want to assist in improving pronunciation by asking a student to repeat key vocabulary and discussing how different languages have different sounds.

Stage III: Speech Emergence

Learner Tasks and Blooms Taxonomy



Learner Tasks

- Recall
- Retell
- Define
- Compare
- Role-play
- Select
- Describe
- Organize
- Make-up

Blooms Taxonomy: Assessing Comprehension

- **Know:**
 - Can you recall . . . ?
- **Comprehend:**
 - Explain what is happening...?
- **Apply:**
 - How would you use...?
- **Analyze:**
 - How would you organize...?
- **Synthesize:**
 - What would happen if...?
- **Evaluate:**
 - What choice would you have made?

Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency

“Good Comprehension”



- **3-5 years**
- Developed a vocabulary of about of **6000 active words**.
- Using **more complex sentences** when speaking and writing.
 - Express opinions and share their thoughts.
 - Many grammar errors in writing
- **Ask questions to clarify** what they are learning in class.
- Use **native language strategies** to learn content in English.
 - Work in grade level math and science classes with some teacher support.
 - Comprehension of English literature and social studies content is increasing.



Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency



Student Characteristics

- Begin to speak in more complex sentences
- May use incorrect grammar and verb forms
- Participate more often in large groups
- Need context clues in content area
- Exhibit greater vocabulary development
- Begin to think in the new language instead of translating from native language
- Synthesize what they have learned and make inferences from that learning

Teachers Strategies

- Encourage listening and not force speaking
- Provide visually rich content instruction
- Design content activities that focus on speech production, not grammatical form
- Have students take on larger roles in cooperative group activities
- Provide extra time or modify assignments
- Introduce colloquialisms/idioms

Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency



- Identify key academic vocabulary and phrases and model them.
 - Ask students to produce the language in class activities.
- Use graphic organizers and thinking maps and check to make sure the student is filling them in with details.
 - Challenge the student to add more.
- Help the student make connections with new vocabulary by instructing him or her in the etymology of words or word families such as, "important, importance, importantly."
- Create assessments that give students an opportunity to present in English after they have an opportunity to practice in pairs or small groups.
- Introduce more academic skills, such as brainstorming, prioritizing, categorization, summarizing and compare and contrast.
- Starting at this level, students need more correction/feedback, even on errors that do not directly affect meaning.
- Ask students to identify vocabulary by symbols that show whether the student "knows it really well, kind of knows it, or doesn't know it at all." Help students focus on strategies to get the meaning of new words.
- Have a "guessing time" during silent reading where they circle words they don't know and write down their guess of the meaning. Check the results as a class.
- Introduce idioms and give examples of how to use them appropriately.
 - For example, "Let's wind up our work." What's another way you could use the phrase "wind up?"
- They should be developing a more advanced command of syntax, pragmatics, pronunciation, and other elements that do not necessarily affect meaning but do contribute to oral fluency.
- It may also be helpful to discuss language goals with the student so you can assist in providing modeling and correction in specified areas.

Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency

Learner Tasks and Blooms Taxonomy



Learner Tasks

- Summarize
- Restate
- Contrast
- Predict
- Create
- Classify
- Extend
- Evaluate
- Support
- Examine

Blooms Taxonomy: Assessing Comprehension

- **Know:**
 - How would you describe. . .?
- **Comprehend:**
 - Which statements support .?
- **Apply:**
 - What questions would you ask about___?
- **Analyze:**
 - What is the relationship between___?
- **Synthesize:**
 - Can you predict the outcome if. . .?
- **Evaluate:**
 - Compare and contrast. . .

Stage V: Advanced Fluency Near-Native Comprehension



- It takes students from **4-10 years** to achieve cognitive academic language proficiency in a second language.
- Student at this stage will be **near-native** in their ability to perform in content area learning.
- **Most** ELLs at this stage have been **exited** from ESL and other support programs.
- At the beginning of this stage, however, they will need **continued support** from classroom teachers especially in content areas such as history/ social studies and in writing.



Stage V: Advanced Fluency



Student Characteristics

- Can interact extensively with native speakers
- Make few grammatical errors
- Participate in English literacy programs
- Have high levels of comprehension but may not understand all of the academic language
- Read and write for a variety of purposes
- Continue to need extensive vocabulary development in content

Teachers Strategies

- Encourage listening and not force speaking
- Emphasize content area vocabulary
- Begin to provide grammar instruction
- Focus on reading and writing skills
- Have students take on advanced cooperative learning roles (note-taker, reporter)
- Continue to support content area instruction with visuals, realia, and active learning strategies

Stage V: Examples for Advanced Fluency



- Students at this level are close to native language fluency and can interact well in a variety of situations.
- Continue to develop language skills as gaps arise by using the strategies listed above.
- Although the student may seem completely fluent, he or she still benefit from visual support, building on background knowledge, pre-teaching vocabulary and making connections between content areas.
- Offer challenge activities to expand the student's vocabulary knowledge such as identifying antonyms, synonyms and the use of a thesaurus and dictionary.
- Demonstrate effective note-taking and provide a template.
- Offer error correction on academic work and on oral language. Because students at this stage have achieved near-native fluency, they benefit from support in fine-tuning their oral and written language skills.

Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency

Learner Tasks and Blooms Taxonomy



Learner Tasks

- Construct
- Hypothesize
- Justify
- Analyze
- Defend
- Debate
- Elaborate
- Conclude
- Influence
- Persuade

Blooms Taxonomy: Assessing Comprehension

- **Know:**
 - How would you explain?
- **Comprehend:**
 - Put this in your own words
- **Apply:**
 - What other way could you___?
- **Analyze:**
 - What ideas justify___?
- **Synthesize:**
 - Show what would happen if . .
- **Evaluate:**
 - What would you cite to defend___?