



STAGE OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Pre - Production/ Silent Period



Language Learners

Typically understands a limited number of words < 500

Usually able to repeat

Points and gestures at pictures

Not yet ready to speak

Early Production



Language Learners

Beginning to use short words and sentences

Most still have limited speech production

Frequent errors of pronunciation

Speech Emergent



Begins speaking on familiar topics

Increasing vocabulary, decreasing errors

Pragmatic (BICS) language is strengthening; however, still struggling with expression due to gaps in vocabulary and appropriate phrasing.

Intermediate Fluency



English fluency is growing, however, there are still errors in academic content.

Students demonstrates higher-order thinking skills in the second language such as offering an opinion or analyzing a problem.

Advanced Fluency



Communicates fluently and understands new contexts when exposed to new academic information.

Errors occur with slang and idioms but primarily fluent and comfortable communicating in the second language.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Pre-Production or Silent Period



- Ask simple questions and use prompts to engage students, like "circle the____" or "point to the____."
- Ask students to do something physically (TPR) such as "shut off the light" or "crawl under or over the chair."
- Focus on building a receptive vocabulary.
- Speak slowly and clearly with repetitions.
- Emphasize listening comprehension by using read-alouds and music.
- Use visuals and have students point to pictures or act out vocabulary.
- Speak slowly and use shorter words but use correct English phrasing.
- Model "survival" language by saying and gesturing the meaning. Ask student to "open your book" and then open a book while the student observes.
- More advanced classmates who speak the same language can support new learning through interpretation.
- Avoid excessive error correction. Reinforce learning by modeling correct language usage when students make mistakes.

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Literacy for All

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Early Production



- Ask simple yes, no, either questions and who, when, and where questions.
- Have students list, draw, or label to show understanding.
- Modify content information and use simple language.
- Use visuals and graphic organizers to support comprehension.
- Expose students to print and use simple books with predictable text.
- Use sentence stems and frames to scaffold writing (I like ___ and ____.)
- Offer opportunities for students to produce simple language.
- Ask students to point to pictures and say the new word.
- Have students work in pairs or small groups to discuss a problem.
- Have literate students write short sentences or words in graphic organizers.
- Model a phrase and have the student repeat it and modify it using simple vocabulary. For instance, say "This book is very interesting." The student repeats it and says, "This book is very good." Continue with different phrases and vocabulary.
- Avoid excessive error correction and reinforce learning by modeling correct usage.

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Literacy for All

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Speech Emergent



- Depending on students' skills and level of engagement, you may find that *using strategies from the previous two stages* may still be needed with scaffolds. The goal is to gradually increase student speech.
- It is helpful to connect to cognates (words from their native language that sound and have similar meanings to words in English).
- NTC's Dictionary of Spanish Cognates: Thematically Organized is a resource to help with Spanish to English cognates.
- Find-a-Cognate online database is another reliable resource for accurate synonyms, and antonyms cognates--false cognates do exist.
- Use prompts that start with why, and how, and explain each prompt by modeling with oral language.
- In addition to teaching content and vocabulary, explicitly teach writing structures.
- Provide students with graphic organizers and include word banks they can use to complete the graphic organizer.
- Create as many collaborative learning activities so students have multiple opportunities to work together to talk and write together often.
- When pairing students together select partners that have slightly higher skill levels this will help them build confidence in English.

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RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Intermediate Fluency



- Use prompts that start with:

What would happen if?

Why do you think?

Who is?

What was the author's intent?

- Modify texts in content-area subjects.
- Continue using visuals and scaffolding strategies (e.g., graphic organizers.)
- Provide guidance and support for group discussions (e.g., modeling, sentence frames.)
- Assign longer writing tasks, particularly on familiar topics (personal stories, dreams, and journal prompts.)
- Have students define vocabulary words and explain concepts.
- Allow students to use their first language (L1) when learning new concepts or words.

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Literacy for All

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Advanced Fluency



- Use prompts that start with:

Decide if...

The book _____ is about ...

- Use more complex vocabulary and sentence structure to support oral language communication.
- Continue scaffolding students' independent reading of content-area materials with visuals and graphic organizers.
- Allow students to use their first language (L1) when learning new concepts or words.
- Continue to provide writing support.
- Support students' study skills and strategy development.

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Literacy for All

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

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All Levels of Multilingual Learners (MLs)

REMEMBER



- Use cooperative learning strategies as much as possible with all MLs.
- When formulating groups, be sure to structure them so that like skills are with each other.
- For instance, put a pre-productive with early emergent and then fill in with native language speakers. This gives the MLs internal support structures within the group.
- See Colorin Colorado's suggestions for more [cooperative learning strategies and building relationships](#).
- A note on cognates and false cognates: Cognates are words that are spelled and sound similar to English words and can be incredibly helpful for MLS learners to connect words and meaning. However, be careful because there are false cognates that may sound similar but have completely different meanings. Do your homework and make sure all is clear before presenting these words to students.

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