Figure 2.1
Stages of Second Language Acquisition

Stage	Characteristics	Approximate Time Frame	Teacher Prompts
Preproduction	The student • Has minimal comprehension • Does not verbalize • Nods "Yes" and "No" • Draws and points	0–6 months	• Show me • Circle the • Where is ? • Who has ?
Early Production	The student • Has limited comprehension • Produces one- or two-word responses • Participates using key words and familiar phrases • Uses present-tense verbs	6 months–1 year	Yes/no questions Either/or questions One- or two-word answers Lists Labels
Speech Emergence	The student • Has good comprehension • Can produce simple sentences • Makes grammar and pronunciation errors • Frequently misunderstands jokes	1–3 years	Why? How? Explain Phrase or short-sentence answers
Intermediate Fluency	The student • Has excellent comprehension • Makes few grammatical errors	3–5 years	What would happen if? Why do you think?
Advanced Fluency	The student has a near-native level of speech.	5–7 years	Decide if Retell

Source: Adapted from Krashen and Terrell (1983).

increasing length and complexity, until finally, at the Advanced Fluency stage, they demonstrate a near-native level of fluency.

All students acquiring English will pass through these stages. Although Figure 2.1 provides an approximate time frame for each stage, the length of time students spend at each level will be as varied as the students themselves. Krashen and Terrell's early work linked classroom activities with the stages to ensure that teachers did not expect utterances from ELLs that were beyond or beneath their stages of acquisition. Imagine, for example, a student in the Preproduction stage being asked "how" or "why" questions or a student in the Intermediate Fluency stage being asked to perform a Preproduction-stage task, such as pointing to an object.

reports, solve mathematical word problems, and take tests. Without a mastery of academic English, students cannot develop the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills needed to understand and express the new and abstract concepts taught in the classroom. However, academic language takes at least five to seven years to develop, and it can take even longer for a student who was not literate in her primary language when she started in a U.S. school (Collier & Thomas, 1989).

In the chapters that follow, you will find examples of instructional strategies that have been modified to meet the needs of ELLs according to their language acquisition level. You will also find examples of how to engage these students in whole-class activities by asking tiered questions associated with their level of language acquisition. Each chapter features an example of how an instructional strategy can be adapted for Preproduction, Early Production, Speech Emergence, and Intermediate and Advanced Fluency students. By providing stage-appropriate adaptations of instructional strategies, we hope to help you achieve the greatest possible success with your ELLs.

Classroom Examples

Here are examples of the kinds of adaptations you will find in the following chapters.

Subject: Literacy

Content Objective: To help students learn the basics of summarization. A 1st grade teacher is teaching students to summarize using a Big Book version of *The Three Little Pigs*. She can help her ELLs acquire a better understanding of summarizing by using tiered questions in different ways depending on the stage of the student.

Preproduction

Students can point to a picture in the book as the teacher says or asks: "Show me the wolf. Where is the house?"

Early Production

Students do well with yes/no questions and one- or two-word answers: "Did the brick house fall down? Who blew down the straw house?"

Speech Emergence

Students can answer "why" and "how" questions with phrases or short-sentence answers, and can also explain their answers: "Explain why the third pig built his house out of bricks."

Intermediate Fluency

Students can answer "What would happen if" and "Why do you think" questions: "Why do you think the pigs were able to outsmart the wolf?"

Advanced Fluency

Students can retell the story, including the main plot elements and leaving out the insignificant details.

In addition to using tiered questions to include all students in a whole-class activity, you can also use these questioning strategies one-on-one with ELLs to check for comprehension.

The Word-MES Strategy

The Word-MES formula is another strategy you can use to enhance language development. Jane Hill, one of the authors of this book, named this formula based on her experiences learning to speak Spanish in Mexico and Spain. She knew what she wanted to say, but when she tried to say it she ended up in a big word mess—entangled in an utterance of disjointed nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Today, when she works with ELLs on language development, she uses the phrase "Word-MES" to remind her to

- 1. Work on word selection with Preproduction students,
- 2. Model for Early Production students,
- 3. Expand what Speech Emergence students have said or written, and
- 4. Help Intermediate and Advanced Fluency students "sound like a book."

Here is how the 1st grade teacher in our classroom example can employ the Word-MES formula with ELLs at different stages.

Preproduction

Students need help with word selection. They need to learn vocabulary words such as "wolf," "pig," "house," "straw," "bricks," and "blow."

Early Production

Students benefit from you modeling good English. If a student says, "Wolf blowed," you can say, "Yes, the wolf blew and blew." Note that explicit corrections should not be made.

Speech Emergence

Students should focus on expanding oral and written sentences. If a student says, "He blew the house down," you can say, "Yes, he blew the straw house down." You have expanded by adding an adjective.