# Second Language Acquisition Stages Activity

| Pre-productionCharacteristics* Has minimal comprehension
* Does not verbalize
* Nods "Yes" and "No"
* Draws and points
* Absorbs the new language, but cannot yet speak it

Strategies* 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 showing the meaning. For example, say, "Open your book," and then model opening a book.
* Gesture, point, and show as much as possible.
* 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.

Teacher prompts* Show me...
* Circle the...
* Where is...?
* Who has...?
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| Early ProductionCharacteristics* Has limited comprehension
* Produces one- or two- word responses
* Uses key words and familiar phrases
* Uses present-tense verbs
* Continues to listen and take in the new language
* Makes many errors during this time

Strategies* Continue the strategies listed above, but add opportunities for students to produce simple language.
* Ask students to point to pictures and say the new word.
* Ask yes/no and either/or questions.
* Have students work in pairs or small groups to discuss a problem.
* Model a phrase and have the student repeat it and add modifications. For example, the teacher says, "This book is very interesting." The student responds, "This book is very boring." Continue with as many modifications as possible.
* Avoid excessive error correction; reinforce learning by modeling correct usage.

Teacher prompts* Yes/no questions
* Either/or questions
* Who....?
* What...?
* How many…?
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| Speech EmergentCharacteristics* Has good comprehension
* Can produce single sentences
* Makes grammar and pronunciation errors
* Frequently misunderstands jokes
* Vocabulary increases
* Speaks more frequently, but still relies on context clues, nonverbal communication, and familiar topics

Strategies * Introduce more academic language and skills by using the same techniques listed above, but begin to use more academic vocabulary.
* Provide visuals and make connections with the 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 retell stories or experiences and have another student write them down. The multilingual student can bring them home to practice reading.
* 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 corrections that directly interfere with meaning. Reinforce learning by modeling the correct usage.

Teacher prompts* Why...?
* How...?
* Explain...
* Questions requiring phrases or short sentence answers
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| Beginning FluencyCharacteristics* Increased comprehension
* In social situations, speech will become more fluent and the learner will make fewer errors
* Expressing oneself can be difficult due to limited vocabulary proficiency and nuanced differences in language usage

Strategies* 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 students if they agree or disagree with a statement and why.
* Model more advanced academic language structures ("I think," "In my opinion," "When you compare."). Have students repeat the phrases in context.
* Rephrase incorrect statements correctly 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 the presentation; give them opportunities to practice with partners before presenting to the whole class.
* Continue to provide visual support for vocabulary.
* Correct errors that interfere with meaning.
* Open discussions about how different languages include different sounds and assist in improving pronunciation as necessary or welcomed.

Teacher prompts* Why...?
* How...?
* Explain...
* Questions requiring phrases or short sentence answers
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| Intermediate FluencyCharacteristics* Has excellent comprehension
* Makes fewer grammatical errors
* Fluency continues to increase overall
* Participates in most conversations with some gaps in vocabulary or unknown expressions
* Communicates opinions or analyzes in the new language

Strategies* Identify key academic vocabulary/phrases and model them.
* 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 them in the etymology of words or word families such as, "important, importance, importantly."
* Create assessments that give students an opportunity to present after they have an opportunity to practice in pairs or small groups.
* Introduce more academic skills, such as brainstorming, prioritizing, categorization, summarizing and compare/contrast.
* Have a "guessing time" during silent reading where they circle words they don't know and write down their guess of the meaning.
* 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?"
* Starting at this level, students need more correction/feedback; 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.

Teacher prompts* What would happen if...?
* Why do you think...?
* Questions requiring more than a sentence response
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| Advanced FluencyCharacteristics* Speaks fluently in the new language; includes new contexts and new academic information
* While there may be some residual errors at times, they can be quickly resolved

Strategies* 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 benefits 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 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.

Teacher prompts* Decide if...
* Retell...
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