



The Five Stages of Second Language Acquisition

Understanding the five stages of second language acquisition can help educators understand the developmental stage and scaffold language learning experiences of children. The five stages are:

1. Pre-Production

Characteristics

The child:

- Does not speak the language and is silent.
- Has minimal comprehension.
- Nods “Yes” and “No”.
- Draws and points.

Teacher Prompts

- Show me ...
- Where is ...?
- Who has ...?

2. Early Production

Characteristics

The child:

- Produces one- to two-word responses.
- Has limited comprehension.
- Uses or repeats key words and familiar phrases.

Teacher Prompts

- Yes/no questions
- Either/or questions
- What is ...?



3. Speech Emergence

Characteristics

The child:

- Speaks using simple sentences.
- Has good comprehension.
- Makes grammatical and pronunciation errors.

Teacher Prompts

- Why ...?
- How ...?
- Explain ...

4. Intermediate Fluency

Characteristics

The child:

- Has excellent comprehension.
- Makes few grammatical errors.

Teacher Prompts

- What would happen if ...?
- Why do you think ...?

5. Advanced Fluency

Characteristics

The child has near-native level of speech.

Teacher Prompts

- Retell ...

(Adapted from Hill and Miller, 2006)