Stages of English Language Development and Suggested Teaching Strategies

**Stage 1**

**Production**

**Students in this stage . . .**
- respond primarily nonverbally
- display limited comprehension
- manipulate objects or things to communicate
- observe storytelling, shared reading, chanting, and singing
- rely heavily on pictures in shared reading

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**
**Goal:** Build students' English listening comprehension and vocabulary.
- Modify speech delivery by slowing down, simplifying, enunciating clearly, using gestures and body language, and supporting speech with visual aids.
- Select activities that use real-world items students can touch, see, feel, hear, or smell.
- Focus primarily on group experiences.
- Use Total Physical Response by having students move in response to your commands.
- Focus literacy instruction on shared reading. Select shared reading texts that include strong picture and graphic aid support, everyday language, highly patterned text, and predictable plot lines.
- Follow up reading with activities that focus on drama, mime, and movement.
- Lead shared writing activities that rely on picture support and focus on everyday language.

**Stage 2**

**Early Production**

**Students in this stage . . .**
- use some basic words and simple phrases
- express needs and preferences with routine language expressions
- memorize favorite rhymes, songs, and chants
- manipulate objects or things to communicate
- begin to comprehend storytelling, shared reading, chanting, and singing
- rely heavily on pictures in shared reading
- participate in guided reading only when used in a shared reading manner
- participate in language-experience situations

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**
**Goal:** Continue building students' vocabulary while motivating them to produce the vocabulary they know.
Use the strategies outlined for Stage 1 and add the following:
- Actively encourage students to join in a group response or repeated refrain during shared reading.
- Introduce shared-to-guided reading as an intermediate step between shared reading and guided reading by using shared reading techniques with a small group of students and a guided reading book with simple, caption-like text.
- Follow up reading with activities that focus on movement and drawing.
- Add group language-experience activities to your writing activities.

**Note:** This chart assumes a typical relationship between literacy development and language development. However, literacy and language do not always develop at the same pace. Some students may proceed more quickly in either language or literacy development. Modify suggestions appropriately.
Students in this stage . . .
- participate in everyday conversations about familiar topics
- produce longer, complete phrases and sentences with errors that still hinder comprehension
- display increasing comprehension
- actively participate in shared reading/writing and guided reading
- rely on high-frequency words and known language patterns in shared reading
- participate in heavily scaffolded guided writing with strong teacher support
- begin to approximate independent reading

Suggested Teaching Strategies:
Goal: Continue building students’ vocabulary while building higher levels of language use.
- Speak at a normal pace while simplifying, enunciating clearly, using gestures, and sometimes supporting speech with visual aids.
- Select activities linked to, but no longer driven by, real-world items.
- Focus primarily on group experiences.
- Include an increasing amount of books with academic language and nonpatterned text in your shared reading.
- Introduce guided reading instruction, selecting books with strong picture support, simple sentence structures, and known vocabulary.
- Follow shared writing suggestions outlined for Stages 1 and 2.
- Scaffold collaborative and individual writing by providing prewriting activities that include pictures and graphic organizers such as semantic webs.

Stage 4
Intermediate Fluency

Students in this stage . . .
- engage in ordinary conversations with more complex sentences and phrases
- make errors that no longer hinder comprehension
- begin to use multiple strategies to construct meaning from print
- actively participate in shared reading/writing, guided reading/writing, and independent reading

Suggested Teaching Strategies:
Goal: Continue building students’ vocabulary and higher levels of language use in the content areas.
- Use normal speech, supporting academic language with visual aids.
- Provide a variety of individual and group experiences.
- Include an increasing amount of books with academic language and a variety of genres and text structures.
- Continue literacy instruction as outlined for Stage 3, but choose guided reading books with decreasing picture support and increasingly complex natural and academic language.
- Incorporate interactive writing activities.
- Engage students in meaningful discussions about books.

Stage 5
Advanced Fluency

Students in this stage . . .
- produce language comparable to that of a native speaker
- actively use academic language to negotiate meaning
- use multiple strategies to construct meaning from print
- actively participate in all areas of balanced literacy, both reading and writing

Suggested Teaching Strategies:
Goal: Continue building students’ literacy, learning and academic language according to grade-level expectations.
- Use normal speech, supporting academic language with visual aids.
- Continue literacy instruction as outlined for Stage 4, with an increasing emphasis on academic content and language.
**STUDENT BEHAVIORS**

**AT STAGE 1, STUDENTS WILL:**
- try to make sense out of messages.
- gain familiarity with the sounds, rhythm, and patterns of English.
- show limited comprehension of "chunks" or gist of language.
- attend to shared readings, but rely on picture clues for understanding.
- respond non-verbally by pointing, gesturing, nodding, or drawing.

**AT STAGE 2, STUDENTS WILL:**
- demonstrate increased confidence.
- listen with greater understanding.
- identify people, places, and objects.
- use routine expressions independently.
- repeat, recite memorable language.

**AT STAGE 3, STUDENTS WILL:**
- speak with less hesitation and demonstrate increasing understanding.
- produce longer phrases or sentences with grammatical inaccuracy.
- use newly-acquired receptive vocabulary to experiment and form messages in English.
- participate more fully in discussions, including those with academic content.
- explain, describe, compare, and retell in response to literature.
- study "big ideas" and key concepts in content areas.
- engage in independent reading based on oral fluency and prior experiences with print.
- use writing for a variety of purposes.

**AT STAGE 4, STUDENTS WILL:**
- produce connected discourse and narrative.
- use more extensive vocabulary.
- demonstrate increased levels of accuracy and correctness.
- demonstrate use of higher-order language (persuade, evaluate, etc.).
- read a wider range of narrative genre and content texts with increasing comprehension.
- explore concepts in subject matter in greater depth.
- write using more standard forms. Depth and breadth of topics and purposes increase to include more creative and analytical writing.
- conduct research projects.

**AT STAGE 5, STUDENTS WILL:**
- produce language with varied grammatical structures and vocabulary, comparable to native English speakers of the same age.

**TEACHER STRATEGIES**

**STUDENTS AT STAGE 1 BENEFIT WHEN TEACHERS:**
- provide abundant opportunities for active listening, utilizing props, visuals, and real objects.
- surround students with language—chants, songs, and simple poems, for example.
- avoid forcing students to speak prematurely.
- pair or group students with more advanced learners.
- conduct shared reading and storytelling with ample visual support and the incorporation of prior knowledge.
- use physical movement in language activities.
- encourage use of art, mime, music, and other forms of creative expression to represent meaning and increase students' sense of aesthetics.
- are enthusiastic and animated.

**STUDENTS AT STAGE 2 BENEFIT WHEN TEACHERS:**
- continue to provide ample opportunities for listening comprehension with contextual support.
- ask yes/no, either/or, and listing-type questions.
- ask Who? What? Where? questions or have students complete sentences with one- or two-word responses.
- have students label or manipulate pictures and/or real objects.
- conduct shared reading and storytelling with visual support and the incorporation of prior knowledge.
- expose students to a variety of experiences with understandable texts, such as patterned or predictable books.
- continue to provide opportunities for creative expression.
- introduce interactive dialog journals, responding face-to-face and mediating meaning.

**STUDENTS AT STAGE 3 BENEFIT WHEN TEACHERS:**
- focus on communication in meaningful contexts where students express themselves in speech and print for a wide range of purposes and audiences.
- ask open-ended questions; model, expand, restate and enrich student language.
- have students describe personal experiences, objects, etc.
- conduct shared reading, guided reading, and storytelling especially with patterned and predictable text.
- use puppets, flannelboard to aid in retelling or role-plays.
- provide content-area texts, trade books, newspapers, magazines, etc., to promote conceptual development.
- help students create books through Language Experience.
- respond genuinely to student writing and hold conferences that highlight student strengths and progress.

**STUDENTS AT STAGE 4 BENEFIT WHEN TEACHERS:**
- structure group discussion.
- guide use of reference material for research.
- facilitate more advanced literature studies.
- provide opportunities for students to create oral and written narratives.
- provide for a variety of realistic writing experiences (creative innovations or stories, newsletters, penpals, business letters, etc.).
- publish student-authored stories, newsletters, bulletins, etc.
- encourage drama, art, music, and other forms of creative expression to represent meaning and increase students' sense of aesthetics.

**STUDENTS AT STAGE 5 BENEFIT WHEN TEACHERS:**
- continue on-going language development through integrated language arts and content-area activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist: Teaching Interventions for English Language Learners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preview the key concepts with English Language Learners (ELLs).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare visual aids to help make the concept concrete.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduce and explain new vocabulary in a concrete way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include hands-on activities as part of your lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include collaborative group activities as part of your lesson.</td>
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<td>Color-code key concepts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model expected behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model how to complete a task/assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review the key concepts that were taught in the lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide multi-level texts to help make the concept concrete.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide <em>realia</em> to help make the concept concrete.</td>
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<td>Prepare multiple forms of assessment to measure concept comprehsion.</td>
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<td>Utilize graphic organizers.</td>
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<td>Seat ELLs in a location and arrangement that is conducive to their learning.</td>
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<td>Minimize lecture format.</td>
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<td>Use gestures and facial expressions to help convey the content of your words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modify the pacing of your lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use shorter sentences with simplified vocabulary.</td>
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<td>Evaluate the effectiveness of your classroom management.</td>
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</tbody>
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*Refer to your Landscapes of Literacy binder for more ideas.*
Graphic Organizers
Helping students organize concepts using a diagrams appropriate to the content (hierarchical, conceptual, sequential, etc.).

A Visual Approach
Student Work
Allowing students to use visual methods to represent concepts and comprehension (story boards, illustrated passages & characters, visualized math, etc.).

A Physical Approach
Comprehensible Input
Hands-On
Engaging students in activities that allow them to manipulate materials in a meaningful way. (i.e., highlighting text, conducting experiments, using manipulatives)

Collaborative Learning
Interactive Learning
Going beyond simply putting students in small groups; using group strategies to enable students to produce high quality products and to participate in meaningful collaboration.

Prior Knowledge
Accessing what knowledge and experiences students bring to text through discussions that are structured so that students can participate meaningfully in either English or their native languages.

Active Learning
Using strategies that require students to participate by doing and discussing instead of solely listening.

Word Work
Focusing on important essential vocabulary so that ELL's are not overwhelmed (word walls, survival words, guarded vocabulary – vocabulary that is adjusted)

Assessment
Looking at students through several lenses: student self-assessment, assessment of group products and process, collaborative class work, as well as standardized and formal tests. Assessing within the context of developmental language acquisition.

Elements of Sheltered Instruction
| Objective | Learning Activities  
(How do you usually teach this?) | Sheltering Strategies  
(What needs to be done to shelter this?) |
|-----------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|