CHARACTERISTICS FOR STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

Research has shown that students acquire a second language in the same way that they acquire the first language. It is an exploratory process with verbal expression increasing as confidence and knowledge are gained through trial and error. Researchers have defined the following stages with corresponding expectations. Since language acquisition is an ongoing process, stages may overlap and growth may occur at varying intervals.

1. Silent/Receptive Stage
The student does not verbally respond to communication in the second language although there is receptive processing. The student should be actively included in all class activities, but not forced to speak. Employing the natural approach and total physical response strategies will allow the student time and clues to encourage participation. Students are likely to respond non-verbally to peer buddies, inclusion in general activities and games, pictures, audiovisuals, and “hands on” projects. As students progress through this stage, they will provide one word verbal responses.

- Characteristics:
  - verbally unresponsive advancing to one word responses
  - hesitant, often confused and unsure
  - indicate comprehension nonverbally
  - develop listening skills
  - associate sound and meaning

2. Early Production
The student begins to respond verbally using one or two words and to develop the ability to extract meaning from utterances directed to them. The student continues to develop listening skills and builds up a large recognition (passive) vocabulary. As students progress through the stage, two or three words may be grouped together in a short phrase to express an idea.

- Characteristics:
  - relate words to environment
  - improve comprehension skills
  - grasp main idea without understanding all parts
  - focus on key words and contextual clues — one word verbal responses advancing to groupings of two or three words

3. Speech Emergence
The student begins to respond in simple sentences if he or she is comfortable with the school situation and engaged in activities in which he or she is receiving large amounts of comprehensible input. All attempts to communicate (gestures, attentiveness, following directions, etc.) should be warmly received and encouraged. It is especially important that neither instructor nor students make fun of or discourage attempts at speech.

- Characteristics:
  - produce words that have been heard many times and understood, but may be mispronounced (Young students’ pronunciation will improve naturally as they interact with peers.)
  - errors of omission
  - produce what is “HEARD” such as common nouns, verbs, and adjectives
4. Intermediate Fluency
The student gradually makes the transition to more elaborate speech so that stock phrases with continued good comprehensible input generates sentences. The best strategies are to give more comprehensible input, develop and extend recognition vocabulary, and give students a chance to produce language in comfortable situations.

• Characteristics:
  . errors more common as utterances are more complex
  . grammar not acquired yet (Concentrating on grammatical elements is counterproductive to the process of language development.)
  . extensive vocabulary development

5. Advanced Fluency
The student begins to engage in non-cued conversation and to produce connected narrative. This is appropriate timing for some grammar instruction, focusing on idiomatic expressions and reading comprehension skills. Provision should be made for activities designed to develop higher levels of thinking, vocabulary skills and cognitive skills, especially reading and writing.

• Characteristics:
  . level of comprehension higher but not advanced enough for all academic classroom language
  . can interact extensively with native speakers
  . fewer errors in grammar
  . many students in transitional English reading program
  . although many reading skills transfer from one language to another, extensive vocabulary development in English is still required
  . student may still be functioning in BICS (Basic Interpersonal Conversational Skills) language proficiency level Adapted from “Project Talk,” a Title VII Academic Excellence Program, Aurora Public Schools.
ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS FOR STUDENTS WITH: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

Students with Limited English Proficiency need to learn:

1. Language
   • Since thoughts and rhetoric vary across languages students need an understanding of these patterns.
   • The student needs to learn listening with comprehension.
   • The student needs to learn speaking with clarity.
   • The student needs to learn reading for understanding.
   • The student needs to learn writing for effectiveness.
   • The student needs supplemental instruction and support to learn social and academic language.
   • The student needs supplemental instruction and support to learn content area vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, modals (i.e., will, could, should) and tag verbs (i.e., make: make-up, make-believe, make-out).
   • The student needs supplemental instruction and support to learn note taking.
   • The student needs supplemental instruction and support to learn test taking.
   • The student needs supplemental instruction and support to learn phonics, spelling, and grammar, in addition to the syntactic and semantic aspects of the second language.

2. Classroom
   Skills and strategies in cross-cultural communication include:
   • How to express opinions and thoughts.
   • How to seek and interpret feedback.
   • Understanding strengths and capitalizing on those strengths.
   • Strategies of active learners.
   • How to work competitively as well as cooperatively.
   • How to ask for help.
   • How to take risks.

3. Rights and Responsibilities
   Skills and strategies in cross-cultural communication include:
   • Learning attendance, discipline and all other school and district policies such as grading, holidays, standards and assessments.
   • Learning grievance policies and procedures.
   • Learning strategies and knowledge for successful interaction both within/without own culture.
CLASSROOM PRACTICES FOR STUDENTS WITH: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

To provide effective classroom practices for students with limited English proficiency, educators need to:
(These recommendations need to be evident in every classroom with a language minority student at the elementary and secondary levels.)

1. Use Effective Teaching Strategies
There is a broad range of instructional practices and strategies that need to be employed in assisting language minority students to learn content area concepts as they learn the English language. These teaching strategies include, but are not limited to:
• Giving students flexible time for learning.
• Teaching to different styles including cross-cultural mediation in groups avoiding cultural conflict.
• Using content area materials leveled to the English language proficiency of the students (native language when appropriate and possible).
• Guiding students in the acquisition and improvement of academic and social skills.

2. Use Effective Instructional Strategies
There is a broad range of instructional practices and strategies that need to be employed in assisting language minority students to learn content area concepts as they learn the English language. All teachers should:
• Utilize the home language and culture in instructional activities.
• Design challenging content area assessments tailored to English language proficiency of students.
• Provide linguistically meaningful activities and instruction that allow students to attain or exceed content area standards.
• Provide direct instruction for language development as it relates to the content areas.
• Utilize classroom activities that teach to diverse learning styles that are culturally based.
• Develop and provide reading and writing instruction in all content areas that is consistent with the district/school wide language policy.
• Begin every lesson with an identification and preview of key content vocabulary and concepts.
• Review key concepts and vocabulary in a variety of ways and modalities.
• Use team teaching and creative student scheduling to utilize language and content expertise of staff.
• Utilize bilingual instruction when possible, avoiding concurrent translation.
• Provide content learning and language usage through meaningful activities.
• Employ a variety of strategies to monitor student comprehension which go beyond simple yes/no responses.
• Allow "thinking time" for student to process information before requiring a response.
• Acknowledge that beginning second language learners will be silent learners.
• Create a learning environment that is language rich (bilingual).
• Provide instruction in how to read course texts, handouts and other classroom materials.
• Encourage parents to use the native/home language with the student.
3. Establish a Positive Learning Environment
   - Understand and utilize the language policy of the district/school.
   - Understand cultural and linguistic code-switching.
   - Understand and support psychological saturation point related to second language learning.
   - Avoid stereotyping or comparing ethnic groups.
   - Provide support with commitment to the expectation that language minority students are to meet high content standards.

4. Use Support Strategies
   - Time/scheduling, materials, technology, community.
   - Use a buddy system to provide peer tutoring and other cultural and social help as needed.
   - Provide a comprehensive training on language minority students’ education to the entire district staff (i.e., first/second language acquisition, culture, etc.).
   - Utilize parents and community resources for linguistic and cultural enrichment.
ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

In assessing the learning of students with limited English proficiency, educators need to:

1. Develop Procedures
   • Assessments should be consistent with the language of instruction and individual linguistic abilities.
   • Assess prior learnings in the native language whenever possible and applicable to establish appropriate instruction.
   • Utilize bilingual/ESL program staff to provide detailed information about students' language proficiencies in order to develop language appropriate assessments.
   • Skill being assessed must be identified--academic knowledge and skills being assessed must be distinguished and separated from competency in the English language (Is language usage or math computational skills being assessed?).
   • Instructors must realize that most assessments will actually assess both the content area concepts and the students' language ability (especially reading/writing skills).
   • Assessment of English language proficiency must include all skill areas--reading, writing, understanding, speaking, and viewing.
   • Alter the procedures used to administer the assessment.
   • Give instructions orally using native language or English as appropriate.
   • Allow students to respond orally using native language or English as appropriate.
   • Set and assess additional performance benchmarks and linguistically appropriate goals to measure students' progress towards attainment of content standards.

2. Consider the Type of Assessment
   • Utilize language appropriate alternative forms of assessments to provide students opportunities to demonstrate both prior knowledge and progress toward attainment of content standard(s).
   • Portfolios with rubrics.
   • Individual and group projects.
   • Non-verbal assessments: visuals, drawings, demonstrations, manipulatives.
   • Self-evaluation.
   • Performance tasks.
   • Computer-assisted assessments.

3. Consider Timing
   Allow for time flexibility in assessment administration to accommodate students' linguistic competencies.

4. Determine Whether or Not a Student Has Met Standards.
   Assessments for possible placement in special education programs must take the following into
consideration:
• Language dominance must be determined before any further assessments are administered
• Length of time the student has been exposed to English
• Previous educational history
• Appropriate use of qualified translators, diagnosticians, and/or other trained personnel
• Bilingual evaluation instruments administered by trained by bilingual teachers
• In the absence of reliable native language assessment instruments, appropriate performance evaluations should be used.
SERVICE OPTIONS
FOR STUDENTS WITH:
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

For students with Limited English Proficiency to have adequate opportunities to learn, schools need to:

1. Implement personnel practices that:
   • Provide the services of trained bilingual or ESL (English as Second Language) specialists.
   • Provide the services of trained translators and interpreters.
   • Provide systematic professional development in first and second language acquisition principles and supporting classroom practices.
   • Canvass all district personnel to find untapped bilingual resources.
   • Recruit bilingual classroom teachers and special educators.
   • Recruit and train bilingual/biliterate paraprofessionals and volunteers to provide native language and English support in the classroom.
   • Recruit bilingual, non-instructional support staff (office, custodial, transportation, etc.).

2. Develop supplemental instructional programs that are offered outside the traditional school day or as otherwise appropriate to student need, such as:
   • Before and after school, Saturday, and/or summer school programs that focus on standards and language proficiencies.
   • Year round schools with tutorial programs during intermissions.
   • Magnet school programs for second language learners.

3. Create partnerships with businesses and community organizations that value bilingualism to provide:
   • Opportunities for students to apply bilingual skills.
   • Corporate internships for language minority students.

4. Expand existing alternative programs to meet the needs of older language minority students who have not yet met graduation level standards through:
   • Vocational education
   • Partnerships with community colleges
   • Open or alternative schools
   • Adult education classes

5. Develop and support family literacy programs that provide:
   • Opportunities to develop English language proficiency and literacy.
   • Opportunities to develop home language proficiency and literacy.
   • Support for home-school connections that promote parental involvement.
   • GED programs.

6. Provide all teachers with instruction and practice in second language strategies that include:
   • The ability to discern essential content area concepts and vocabulary (Sheltered Language
Techniques).

- Allowing language minority students to see, hear and experience content area concepts and vocabulary using realia, visuals, and other hands-on materials in a variety of different settings: reading, writing, listening, speaking, action dramatization, small group work, contrast/compare, matching, etc. (Sheltered Language and Total Physical Response Techniques).
- Delivering content area curriculum using clear, easily understood language. Systematic checks need to be made to monitor student understanding (Sheltered Language Techniques).
- Understanding the role of first and second language acquisition. This includes how social language precedes academic/concept language learning.
7. Provide all school staff (administration, teaching, office, professional, custodial, paraprofessional) with instruction, understanding, and resources for the affirmation of students' home language and cultural diversity. Staff training is necessary in order to develop culturally appropriate home/school partnerships by:

• Teaching communication strategies to staff as well as to the parents of language minority students in order to foster understandings across language and cultures.
• Teaching how to utilize bilingual staff and trained translators that are available for school meetings, parent-teacher-student conferences, and home visitations.
• Teaching culture-specific social interactions.