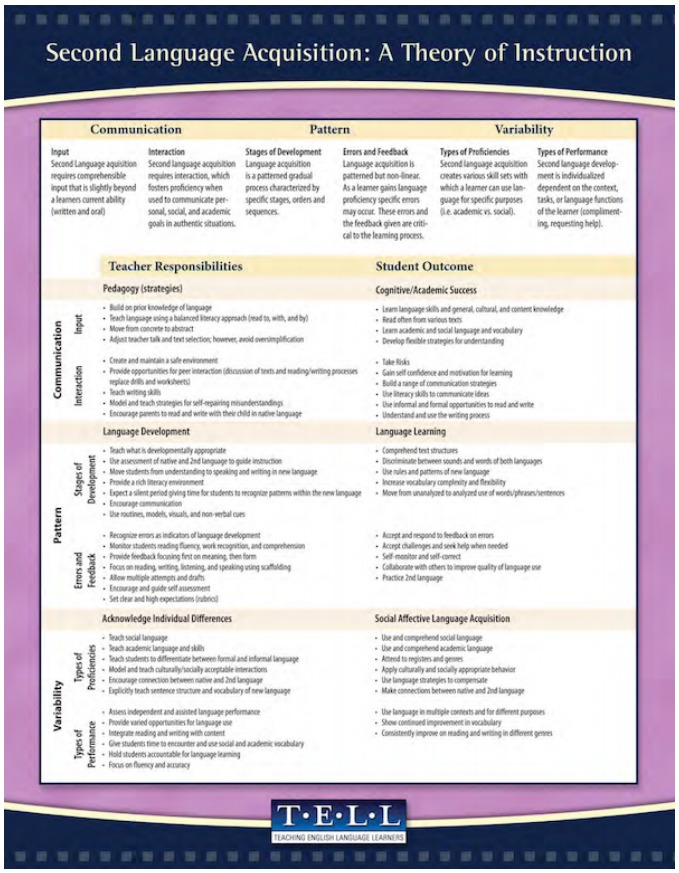
A Theory of Instruction for Teaching ELs: Communication, Pattern, & Variability: The TOOL

For a downloadable and printable black and white copy of the following charts, please click the following links: CPV Charts 1, CPV Chart 2



Use the slide bar at the bottom to see the entire chart below.

What Every Teacher Should Know About Second Language Acquisition: A Theory of Instruction

Concepts	Six Defining Principles	Develop Flexibility in *Examples of Student Work*		Plan for Variety in *Examples of Teacher Work*	
Communication *How can I assist students in becoming successful communicators?*	**Input:** *How can I improve access to oral and written input?* Second Language Acquisition requires access to comprehensible input; that is, written and oral input that is slightly beyond a learner's current ability level for language acquisition to take place.	Cognitive / Academic	• Activate and develop language skills and general, cultural, and content knowledge • Learn new structures and vocabulary • Develop flexible strategies for understanding	Pedagogy	• Recognize and build on students' language skills and general, cultural, and content knowledge • Contextualize language and learning • Move from concrete to abstract • Adjust teacher talk • Modify and elaborate speech and text • Avoid oversimplification of speech, text, tasks, or content
	Interaction: *How can I increase opportunities for meaningful interaction?* Second Language Acquisition requires interaction. Learners develop greater language proficiency through interaction with other people for authentic purposes, when they communicate to meet personal, social, academic goals and needs in a sociocultural reality.		• Take risks • Gain self-confidence • Create and sustain motivation for learning • Develop and work toward goals • Be aware of sociocultural factors' impact • Use formal and informal opportunities • Move from whole to part • Build a range of communication strategies • Learn new cultural ways		• Create and maintain a safe environment • Respect multiple perspectives • Provide varied opportunities for authentic peer interaction • Promote meaningful language use (not drills or worksheets) • Provide strategy instruction for skill-building • Teach nonverbal skills • Focus on meaning first • Model and teach strategies for repairing misunderstandings
Pattern *How can I promote language and literacy development?*	**Stages of Development:** *How can I assess language and literacy skills?* Second Language Acquisition is a patterned and gradual process of development characterized by specific stages, orders, and sequences of development that predict what aspects of language are learned earlier than other aspects.	Language Learning	• Comprehend and discriminate sounds, words, meanings • Internalize rules and patterns • Move from unanalyzed to analyzed use of words/phrases/sentences • Avoid fossilization	Language Development	• Teach what is developmentally appropriate (Teachability Hypothesis) • Move students from comprehension to production • Create a rich linguistic environment • Understand and expect a silent period • Have appropriate yet high expectations • Plan opportunities for students to notice new features • Encourage communication • Use routines, models, visual, and nonverbal cues
	Errors and Feedback: *How can I use feedback to further language learning?* Second Language Acquisition is a patterned but nonlinear process. As new features of language are learned the learner's internal system is restructured, sometimes causing errors in production that look like backsliding or reveal a learner's testing of hypotheses. Errors and feedback are essential to this learning process.		• Practice useful phrases • Integrate new and increasingly complex forms • Generate hypotheses • Transfer first language competence • Develop language skills simultaneously • Accept and respond to feedback on errors		• Recognize errors as students' hypotheses about how language works • Provide feedback with a focus on meaning and then form • Support transfer of native academic language skills to new language skills (Interdependency Hypothesis) • Integrate focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking using appropriate scaffolding • Move students from comprehension to production • Allow multiple attempts and drafts • Collaborate with colleagues who can support student development
Variability *How can I vary instruction to meet individual needs?*	**Types of Proficiencies:** *How can I increase knowledge of language?* Second Language Acquisition results in various levels of skill or proficiency with which a person can use language for a specific purpose, in a specific cultural or academic setting, with various individuals.	Social / Affective	• Learn social language • Learn academic language • Learn sociocultural appropriacy • Use analysis and synthesis skills in understanding language • Build a repertoire of strategies for compensating • Develop awareness of self in sociocultural settings	Individual Differences	• Teach language for social interaction • Model and teach socially and culturally appropriate classroom interaction • Teach academic language • Engage students in challenging curriculum • Assess students' L2 proficiency to ensure accessibility to instruction (Threshold Hypothesis) • Teach registers and genres • Teach standard English • Teach academic skills
	Types of Performances: *How can I expand use of language?* Second Language Acquisition is marked by variability in performance as well as patterns because the very context, tasks, or language function (e.g., complimenting, requesting help) can impact the learner's ability to produce language with fluency and accuracy.		• Controlled/planned to automatic/spontaneous • Move between accuracy and fluency • Flexible learning strategies		• Provide varied opportunities for language use because features first appear in planned or monitored speech • Teach explicitly forms, functions, sentence structures, and vocabulary • Focus on fluency and accuracy • Hold students accountable for learning • Teach academic strategies for learning

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Appendix A.3

Teemant, A. (2001). *What every teacher should know about second language acquisition: A theory of instruction.* Provo, UT: Brigham Young University.

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