

Working with the Preproduction stage ELLs

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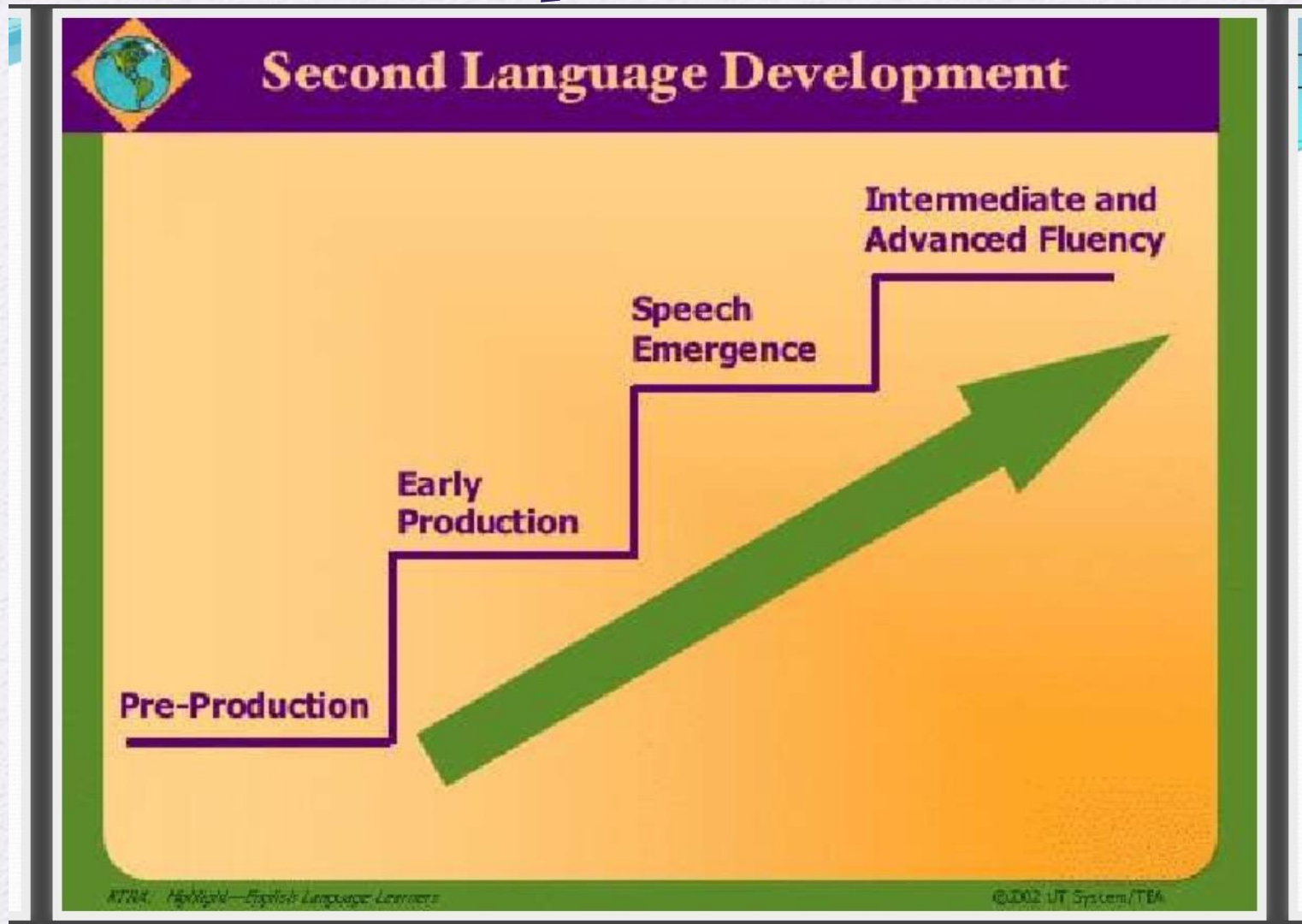
How do I teach a student who refuses to speak?



A Continuum of Language Development

- Student's L2 development occurs along a continuum
- There are predictable (in general) and sequential stages of language development ranging from no knowledge of the L2 to near native-like competency in the L2
- Teachers must be familiar with the stages of language development

Stages of Language Acquisition



Stage 1: Pre-production stage

- ♦ Also known as the “silent period” stage
- ♦ 6 out of 9 students opt for a silent period (Saville-Troike, 1988)
- ♦ Can last 0 – 6 months
- ♦ 0 - 500 receptive word vocabulary
- ♦ Most what is spoken is incomprehensible

The Silent learner



Characteristics of the silent learner

- ♦ Adjusting to new culture
- ♦ High levels of anxiety, frustration, withdrawal
- ♦ Minimal comprehension
- ♦ Have no or very minimal speech production
- ♦ May exhibit inattentiveness

**A silent learner is soaking up
language at all times**



Silent learners “parrot.”

It doesn't mean they are

producing the language



What can they do?

- ◆ Observe, locate, match, show, sort
- ◆ Nods for “yes” and “no”
- ◆ Points to objects or print
- ◆ Categorize objects or pictures
- ◆ Circling, underline

What can they do? (continued)

- ◆ Role play
- ◆ Draws pictures
- ◆ Moves to show understanding
- ◆ Matches words or objects
- ◆ Copy from board

How to work with them

- ◆ Create a climate of acceptance and respect
- ◆ Emphasize listening comprehension by using read aloud and music (choral reading, chants, songs, poems)
- ◆ Use visuals and have students point to pictures or act out vocabulary (Props, realia, manipulatives)

How to work with them (continued)

- ◆ Total physical response (TPR) works well
- ◆ Focus on listening comprehension activities
- ◆ Build vocabulary
- ◆ Make the language comprehensible - clues!

How to work with them (continued)

- ◆ Speak slowly and use shorter words, but use correct English phrasing
- ◆ Model the language by saying and showing the meaning.
- ◆ Do not talk more loudly or out of context

How to work with them (continued)

- ◆ Gesture, point and show as much as possible.
- ◆ Avoid excessive error correction. Reinforce learning by modeling correct language usage when students make mistakes.

How to work with them (continued)

- ◆ Use prompts that require physical responses
- ◆ Ask yes or no questions
- ◆ Short answer questions: Is this an A or a B?

Teacher prompts

- Show me...
- Circle the...
- Where is...
- Who has...

Buddy system (advanced ELLs, or mainstream peers)



Use physical movement, TPR and hands on



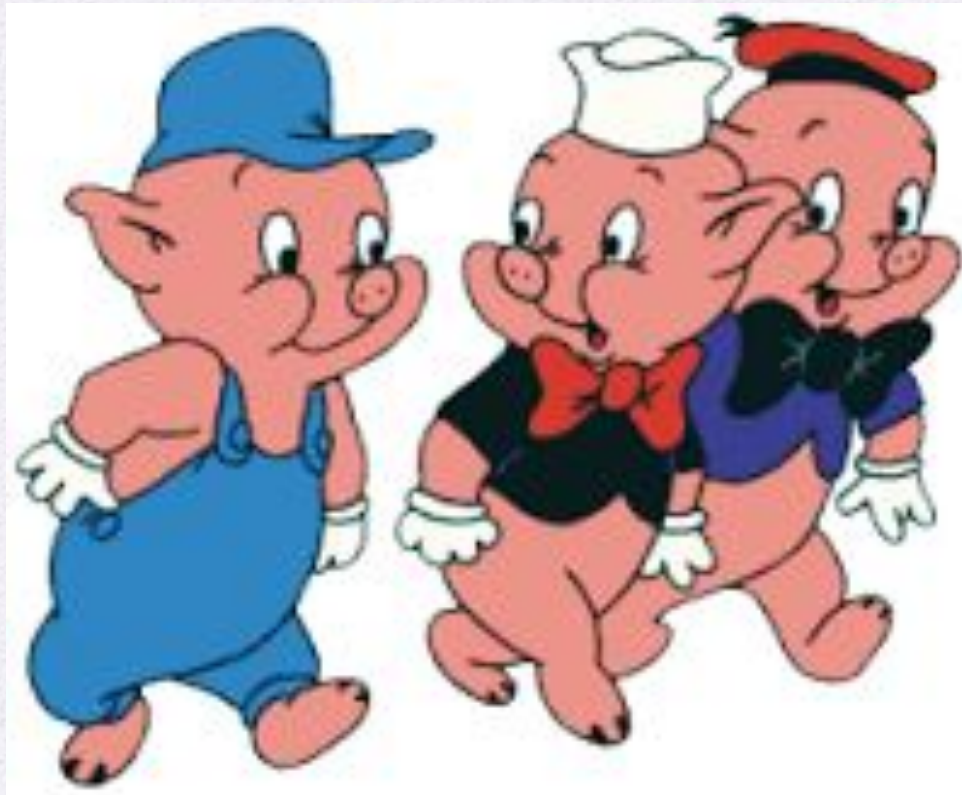
Create a classroom full of language



Do not force production! (speaking)



Activity: The Three Little Pigs



Classroom Example

Story: The Three little pigs

Pre production stage questions

“Show me the wolf”

“Where is the house?”

Student can point at pictures in the book

Give them time. They will eventually start feeling more confident about speaking.



Activity (pairs):

Give 3 examples of modifications specific a silent learner in these electives.

- PE
- Chamorro
- Music
- Marketing
- Art
- Computer science
- Drama
- Peer mediation
- Home economics
- Yearbook
- Tourism
- Health