

## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION STAGE 3

### SPEECH EMERGENCE

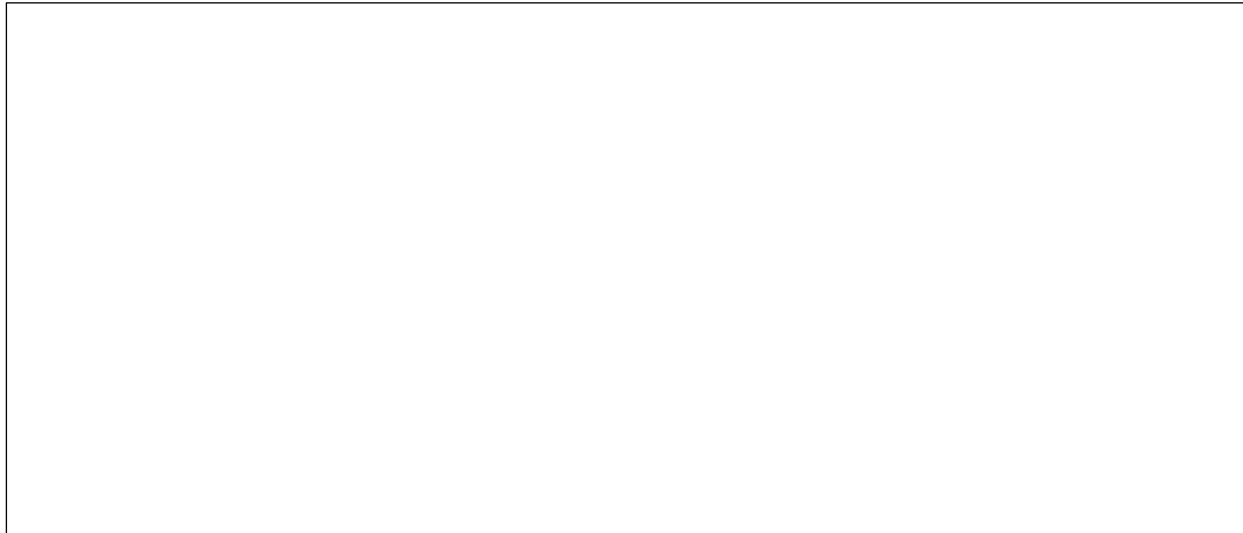
The third stage is commonly referred to as the “speech emergence” stage. It generally takes 2-3 years to achieve this stage of English language development, but may vary depending upon the level of functional language support the student receives. The student’s speech is more unified at this stage and begins to show more sequential, comparative and organizational relationships. In stage three, the student speaks in phrases or simple sentences with lots of grammatical errors. The student usually shows a greater willingness to communicate at this stage and is able to get involved with his or her peers in classroom and extracurricular activities. The student’s informal social language (sometimes referred to as BICS) is becoming highly developed in stage three. Consequently, the student may give the impression through a few well chosen English phrases that he or she speaks the language well, but grammatical errors still abound. Academic language (sometimes referred to as CALP) is just beginning to emerge. The level of acquired vocabulary in stage three is approximately 2000-3000 words, and the approximate corresponding WELPA level is ‘Intermediate’.



Stage three students will understand easy stories read in class with the support of pictures. They can sound out stories phonetically and can read short modified texts in content area subjects. They can participate in choral, duet, and pair reading. They can understand and answer questions about charts and graphs, and match vocabulary words to definitions. They can understand two-step or more involved directions if accompanied by modeling, demonstrations or graphical/visual support.



There are many strategies that teachers can use to support stage three students. The importance of integrating many opportunities for academic discourse between and among students cannot be overstated at this stage. Have students engage in dialog journals, or compose brief stories based on their experiences. Invite them to write about themselves. This will take them further into writing and allow them to express their thoughts and ideas. When the student needs to extract information from text sources, scaffold by providing partially completed graphic organizers to support the task. Adapt the quantity of text the student must read by providing a “Cliff notes” version, a lower reading level version (if available) or scaffold the reading process through a jigsaw strategy. Chunk the text and encourage the students to use pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading strategies to aid in comprehension.



At all stages of language acquisition students are able to think, but are not always able to demonstrate their understanding in English. Teachers must think deeply about what the student can do at this stage, and be intentional about their question prompts. At stage three, the teacher can assess understanding of content and concepts by asking oral “how” and “why” questions. The student’s language level is advanced enough to move beyond the 2-3 word phrases of stage 2. Here are some examples for a range of questions at stage three:

EVALUATION: “What makes a good home for a bear?”

SYNTHESIS: “How could you change a scorpion so it could swim?”

ANALYSIS: “How are racoons and squirrels the same? How are they different?”

APPLICATION: “How could you change the body of a fish to make it fly?”

COMPREHENSION: “Why is a toad the color it is?”

KNOWLEDGE: “What are the body parts of a turtle?”



Other assessment tasks at stage three can include project demonstrations, oral presentations, or adapted written assessments. Adaptations may include permitting an oral answer in lieu of a written one, permitting a shorter written passage rather than a longer essay, permitting a fill-in-the-blank or cloze questionnaire. If using a written assessment of content knowledge, teachers should not allow grammatical and editing errors to impact their judgement of the student's level of content understanding (unless, of course, you are assessing editing or a particular writing skill).

