

Factors in Second Language Acquisition

<p>Quality of Instruction</p>	<p>What you do every day in the classroom has the greatest impact on learning outcomes for ELLs. Your daily routines, level of lesson preparation, expectations for students, mastery over content, and modification of instruction are vital. Build background knowledge, draw on students' personal experiences, pre-teach vocabulary, promote extended discourse through writing and discussion, assist students in rereading pivotal portions of the text, and modify assessment to match instructional modifications.</p>
<p>Native Language Literacy</p>	<p>It is always a good idea to find out how fluent your students and/or their parents are in their native language. Research shows that a higher level of fluency in a child's native language will facilitate a higher level of fluency that child can acquire in English. This is especially important in older students. Fluency in their native language provides a greater opportunity for them to transfer what they know in their native language to what they are learning in English.</p>
<p>Motivation/attitude toward language</p>	<p>Motivation is highly important since ELLs have to work harder on both the language and the content to reach grade-level proficiency. Intrinsically or self-motivated students embrace learning challenges for their own sake. Integrative motivation is when students want to be able blend in with their peers. Instrumental motivation is when the goal is to get a job or get a high school diploma. All three are important.</p>
<p>Home Support</p>	<p>Language minority students who come from well-educated families generally learn English much more quickly and adapt to their new schools with greater ease. They are able to transfer content skills and knowledge into the new classroom. Parents might have the ability to help with homework because of their own prior knowledge. It is more important that parents can communicate with their children in their own language and show interest in their child's progress than if they speak English at home.</p>
<p>Life Experience</p>	<p>Some language minority students have had difficult lives. They often have grown up in poverty, may have survived wars and violence, may have been separated from family members, and may have arrived in this country without documentation. They may also be living in substandard and unstable environments. Their life experiences may affect their readiness and willingness to learn.</p>
<p>Personality</p>	<p>It is important to be aware of how individual language learning curves can be affected by personality. Extroverts may enjoy more rapid initial success with language learning because they enjoy socialization and are not afraid to take risks or experiment with language. Introverts may be quietly absorbing information and thus demonstrate greater growth later on. Perfectionists are sometimes their own worst enemy because they will stick to the easier or safer things because they want everything to be right.</p>

Similarities between L1 (1st language) and L2 (2nd language)	<p>The more similar a student's primary language is to English, the easier it is for him/her to acquire the new language. With French or Spanish, for example, students can rely on cognates and similar linguistic structures to aid their English language acquisition. However, when the first language uses a different alphabet such as Arabic, Korean or Vietnamese, or when the vocabulary is unrelated and the structures have little in common, then the student has a more difficult task transferring skills from the first language to the second.</p>
Peer Pressure	<p>It is important to keep peer influences in mind and help students foster a positive self-image for bilingual fluency. Students may be pressured to avoid the use of their home language so they can fit in with the crowd, and thus lose out on the benefits of being bilingual. On the other hand, they may be pressured to assert their home language or culture in negative ways and to look down on the ELL academic achievers.</p>