Stages of English as an Additional Language Development in the early years

Clarke, P. *Stages of EAL Language Development*. VCAA 2012

| Stage | Achievements and progress |
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| **Stage 1**  **New to English** | Learners have little or no spoken English.  They may:   * sit quietly and observe others. * refuse to respond to English * watch and copy others * repeat single words without understanding * speak in the first language. * rely on non verbal language * begin to use single words * become familiar with patterns in the sounds, intonation, rhythm, grammar and meaning of English.   They begin to:   * Understand that communication with educators and peers needs to be in English * Learn basic English to manage in the playroom * Understand sounds, intonation, single words   Learners enjoy a wide variety of activities including drawing, painting and other creative activities |
| **Stage 2**  **Becoming familiar with English** | Learners begin to show confidence in speaking in English.  They:   * start to understand some English that is spoken * greet the educators and other children * begin to name single objects and actions * follow simple directions. * communicate in single words * join in singing, action songs with repetition * repeat words of others * They point to and name objects in books * They follow simple directions * They communicate in basic English, predominantly single words including in routine and familiar situations   Learners are now growing familiar with playroom speech. They:   * start to use single words to convey meaning. * use frequently heard phrases in a formulaic way. * use some basic communication and learning strategies to participate in and sustain interaction * understand more than they are able to say. * gain confidence from hearing familiar and repetitive language and they enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. |
| **Stage 3**  **Becoming confident as a speaker of English** | Children show greater understanding of English in a variety of contexts and show increasing fluency in spoken English. They:   * use basic oral English to manage learning and undertake some learning through English. * are willing to initiate as well as respond * are familiar with patterns in the sounds, intonation, rhythm, grammar and meaning * use both single words and formulaic language to convey meaning * take part in everyday activities and routines relying heavily on a supportive teacher or peer. * demonstrate greater flexibility with spoken English. * combine single words into short sentences. * use comprehensible pronunciation, stress and intonation.   Children fluent in their first language will show understanding of two languages and can switch from the first language to English with different speakers. |
| **Stage 4**  **Demonstrated competency as a speaker of English** | Learners depend less on formulaic or rehearsed language and show the beginnings of the use of grammatically correct sentences. They:   * can distinguish between ‘he’ and ‘she’, and begin to use the definite or indefinite article correctly. * are more interested in communicating meaning rather than correctness. * are beginning to take part in discussions between educators and other children. * initiate and respond in conversation. * are now able to communicate in a range of different learning situations. * can express ideas and take part in discussions with adults and their peers. * identify key points of information in discussions about familiar topics, and in new topics when supported by visual material, appropriate pace of delivery, and discussion which links their prior knowledge to the new context. * follow a short sequence of instructions. * demonstrate competence in using English with a range of speakers.   Greater confidence in speaking English enables them to take an active part in extended conversation.  Conversations are now jointly constructed and learners can engage in cognitively challenging tasks. |