Understanding English Language Learner Levels: A Classroom Teacher’s Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Entering Level</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Beginning Level</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Developing Level</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Expanding Level</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Bridging Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levels of English Language Learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Require a period of time to simply listen and take in the language</td>
<td>• Produce simple expressions in isolated phrases or fragments</td>
<td>• Carry on basic social conversations with relative ease; however ability to communicate about academic concepts is still limited</td>
<td>• Comprehend more challenging academic material</td>
<td>• Demonstrate English skills that are almost on a par with classmates who speak English fluently</td>
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<td>• Produce one or two word utterances eventually</td>
<td>• Produce errors in speaking and writing that often impede communication</td>
<td>• Speak in complete sentences with frequent grammatical errors, but mistakes do not always interfere with understanding the message</td>
<td>• Communicate on academic topics, with teacher support</td>
<td>• Utilize academic vocabulary with greater skill and sophistication</td>
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<td>• Comprehend spoken English before speaking, reading, or writing</td>
<td>• Begin to comprehend simple stories and academic texts with adequate support</td>
<td>• Need much support to comprehend academic reading materials as well as to produce spoken and written language</td>
<td>• Utilize expanded vocabulary, but still have gaps and a need for greater sophistication</td>
<td>• Tackle complex academic topics and texts on grade level with minimal support</td>
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<td>• Respond to simple questions with gestures and yes/no</td>
<td>• Comprehend through listening far more than they are able to explain verbally or in writing</td>
<td>• Speak in fragments when conversing on academic topics, to a greater degree than would fluent English speakers, but are generally understood</td>
<td>• Need explicit instruction and support to produce quality academic writing</td>
<td>• Monitor learning with greater ease and increasingly utilize comprehension strategies effectively</td>
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<td>• Students typically move out of this level quickly, i.e., within a month or two</td>
<td>• Need to build vocabulary</td>
<td>• Need much support to comprehend academic reading materials as well as to produce spoken and written language</td>
<td>• Benefit from support, particularly in writing</td>
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Receptive Skills: What a Student Can Do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understand:</th>
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<th>Understand:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-step commands</td>
<td>One-step directions</td>
<td>Basic conversational language</td>
<td>Most conversational language</td>
<td>Academic and social language approaching the level of peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-step directions</td>
<td>Yes/No questions</td>
<td>Most questions</td>
<td>Some figurative and idiomatic language</td>
<td>Most figurative and idiomatic language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes/No questions</td>
<td>Simple W/H-questions</td>
<td>Some specific content vocabulary</td>
<td>Some technical language</td>
<td>Most technical language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simple statements</td>
<td>Simple statements</td>
<td>Basic written text</td>
<td>Various complex sentence structures both oral and written</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Entering Level</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Beginning Level</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
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### Productive Skills: What a Student Can Do

#### Level 1 (Respond physically)
- Respond physically
- Use gestures
- Point
- Choose
- Match
- Label
- Copy
- Mimic
- Draw
- Repeat
- Sort/Categorize
- Memorize
- Follow one-step commands and directions

#### Level 2 (Produce:)
- Identify
- Sequence
- Organize
- Restate/Retell
- Compare/Contrast
- Recite list using one word or simple phrases
- Follow multiple-step commands and directions

#### Level 3 (Produce:)
- Estimate
- Participate
- Discuss
- Classify
- Take simple notes
- Give simple summaries
- Gather information
- Edit at basic level
- Interview
- Draw conclusions
- Read materials on familiar topics
- Brainstorm
- Demonstrate
- Predict
- Present

#### Level 4 (Produce:)
- Apply
- Clarify
- Define
- Edit
- Expand
- Interpret
- Modify
- Paraphrase
- Differentiate
- Infer
- Reflect
- Research
- Summarize
- Read academic material with support

#### Level 5 (Produce:)
- Analyze
- Debate
- Defend
- Evaluate
- Justify
- Negotiate
- Revise
- Self monitor
- Synthesize
- Read academic material approaching the level of peers

### Instructional Techniques: What a Teacher Can Do

#### Level 1 Techniques AND:
- Use visual resources (e.g., pictures, picture dictionaries, diagrams, real item, graphic organizers)
- Encourage physical responses
- Teach key vocabulary words
- Teach words used to instruct (e.g., point, match)
- Model
- Give explicit examples
- Use manipulatives
- Assign peer buddies

#### Level 1 Techniques AND:
- Increase wait time
- Modify the content prioritizing key ideas in assignments, tests, and other assessments
- Allow extra time on assignments, tests, and other assessments
- Use computers or other technology
- Work in small groups

#### Levels 1 and 2 Techniques AND:
- Include prereading activities to increase comprehension
- Preteach vocabulary and key words
- Provide study guides and outlines prior to lessons
- Summarize learning
- Modify assessments
- Activate prior knowledge
- Include tape recording, open book tests, and journaling
- Use cooperative learning activities

#### Levels 1 to 3 Techniques AND:
- Introduce some complex and technical vocabulary
- Highlight complex grammatical patterns in reading and writing
- Emphasize cognitive comprehension strategies
- Begin to reduce scaffolding whenever possible
- Use more complex cooperative learning activities

#### Levels 1 to 4 Techniques AND:
- Present complex and technical vocabulary
- Provide scaffolding only when and where necessary
- Set expectations approaching level of peers