How we learn a language and practical applications

LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORY

How We Learn a Language

- We hear it
- We say it
- We read it
- We write it

Learning vs. Acquisition

* Times Tables
* Recite the 50 States

* Driving
* Operating a computer

Language Acquisition Theory

- Language learned naturally
- Meaning more important than structure

The Role of Instruction

- Reinforcement of 'Real World' Language Acquisition

- Language acquisition will accelerate based on increased vocabulary and syntax

Concepts in Language Acquisition Theory

- Natural Order
- Affective Filter
- First language interference
- L+1

Natural Order

- They produce single words.
- They string words together based on meaning and not syntax.
- They begin to identify elements that begin and end sentences.
- They begin to identify different elements within sentences and can rearrange them to produce questions.

Affective Filter

- Motivation
- Self-confidence
- Anxiety

First Language Interference and Other Issues

- The pick-up truck and the muddy road
- Overgeneralizations – I eated my vegetables
- Those wonderful exceptions in English
- Prepositions

L+1

- Teach at the student's level +1
  - Students using one or two-word sentences, you use 3-4 word sentences
    - Here homework
    - Johnny has his homework

Classroom Applications

- No dictionaries or translators
- Follow 1st language acquisition
  - Listening
  - Speaking
  - Reading
  - Writing

Sample Lesson

- Listening – Ask students questions – teaching the form 'to be'

- Speaking – Students respond to questions – write responses on the board

- Reading – Students work through drills using the form 'to be'

- Writing – Students write what was practiced in class