General Principles of Language Acquisition

A number of general principles derived from current research and theory about the nature of language, language learning, human development, and pedagogy, underlie the ESL standards described in this document. These principles are described briefly here.

1. Language is functional.
2. Language varies.
3. Language learning is cultural learning.
4. Language acquisition is a long-term process.
5. Language acquisition occurs through meaningful use and interaction.
6. Language processes develop interdependently.
7. Native language proficiency contributes to second language acquisition.
8. Bilingualism is an individual and societal asset.

1 Language is functional.

Language, oral and written, is primarily a means of communication used by people in multiple and varied social contexts to express themselves, interact with others, learn about the world, and meet their individual and collective needs. Successful language learning and language teaching emphasize the goal of functional proficiency. This is a departure from traditional pedagogical approaches that view language learning and teaching primarily as mastery of the elements of language, such as grammar and vocabulary, without reference to their functional usefulness. Therefore, what is most important for ESOL learners is to function effectively in English and through English while learning challenging academic content.

2 Language varies.

Language, oral and written, is not monolithic; it comes in different varieties. Language varies according to person, topic, purpose, and situation. Everyone is proficient in more than one of these social varieties of their native language. Language also varies with respect to regional, social class, and ethnic group differences. Such language varieties are characterized by distinctive structural and functional characteristics, and they constitute legitimate and functional systems of communication within their respective sociocultural niches. Additionally, language varies from one academic domain to another – the language of mathematics is different from the language of social studies. As competent language users, ESOL students already use their own language varieties. They must also learn the oral and written language varieties used in schools and in the community in large. What is most important for ESOL learners is to function effectively in academic environments, while retaining their own native language varieties.

3 Language learning is cultural learning.

Patterns of language usage vary across cultures and reflect differences in values, norms, and beliefs about social roles and relationships in each culture. When children learn their first language, they learn the cultural values, norms, and beliefs that are characteristic of their culture. To learn another language is to learn new norms, behaviors, and beliefs that are appropriate in the new culture, and thus to extend one's sociocultural competence to new environments. To add a new language, therefore, is to add a new culture. Learning a new language and culture also provides insights into one's own language and culture. This is important for ESOL students because general education in U.S. schools tends to reflect a culture other than their own. If ESOL students are to attain the same high standards as native-English-speaking students, educational programs must be based on acknowledgment of, understanding of, respect for, and valuing of diverse cultural backgrounds. What is important for all language learners is to develop attitudes of additive bilingualism and biculturalism.

4 Language acquisition is a long-term process.

Language acquisition occurs over time with learners moving through developmental stages and gradually growing in proficiency. Individual learners however move through these stages at variable rates. Rates of acquisition are influenced by multiple factors including an individual's educational background, first language background, learning style, cognitive style, motivation, and personality. In addition, sociocultural factors, such as the influence of the English or native language community in the learner's life, may play a role in acquisition. In many instances, learners "pick up" conversation skills related to social language more quickly than they acquire academic language skills. Educational programs must recognize the length of time it takes to acquire the English language skills necessary for success in school. This means that ESOL learners must be given the time it takes to attain full academic proficiency in English, often from 5 to 7 years.

5 Language acquisition occurs through meaningful use and interaction.

Research in first and second language acquisition indicates that language is learned most effectively when it is used in significant and meaningful situations as learners interact with others (some of whom should be more proficient than the learners are) to accomplish their purposes. Language acquisition takes place as learners engage in activities of a social nature with opportunities to practice language forms for a variety of communicative purposes. Language acquisition also takes place during activities that are of a cognitive or intellectual nature where learners have opportunities to become skilled in using language for reasoning and mastery of challenging new information. This means that ESOL learners must have multiple opportunities to use English, to interact with others as they study meaningful and intellectually challenging content, and to receive feedback on their language use.

6 Language processes develop interdependently.

Traditional distinctions among the processes of reading, listening, writing, and speaking are artificial. So is the conceptualization that language acquisition is linear (with listening preceding speaking, and speaking preceding reading, and so forth). Authentic language often entails the simultaneous use of different language modalities, and acquisition of functional language abilities occurs simultaneously and interdependently, rather than sequentially. Thus, for example, depending on the age of the learner, reading activities may activate the development of speaking abilities, or vice versa. Additionally, listening, speaking, reading, and writing develop as learners engage with and through different modes and technologies, such as computers, music, film, and video. This means that ESOL learners need learning environments that provide demonstrations of the interdependence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They also need to develop all of their language abilities through the use of varied modes and technologies.

7 Native language proficiency contributes to second language acquisition.

Because, by definition, ESOL students know and use at least one other language, they have acquired an intuitive understanding of the general structural and functional characteristics of language. They bring this knowledge to the task of second language learning. Some ESOL students also come to the task of learning English and learning content through English already literate in their native languages. These learners know what it means to be literate – they know that they can use written forms of language to learn more about the world, to convey information and receive information from others, to establish and maintain relationships with others, and to explore the perspectives of others. Literacy in the native language correlates positively with the acquisition of literacy in a second language. In addition, academic instruction that includes the use of ESOL students' native languages, especially if they are literate in that language, promotes learners' academic achievement while they are acquiring the English needed to benefit fully from instruction through English. Native language literacy abilities can assist ESOL students in English-medium classrooms to construct meaning from academic materials and experiences in English. And, in learning a new language, students also learn more about their native tongue. This means that for ESOL learners the most effective environments for second language teaching and learning are those that promote ESOL students' native language and literacy development as a foundation for English language and academic development.

8 Bilingualism is an individual and societal asset.

Acquisition of two languages simultaneously is a common and normal developmental phenomenon and acquisition of a second (or third) language can confer certain cognitive and linguistic advantages on the individual. To realize these benefits, however, advanced levels of proficiency in both languages are necessary. Therefore, the most effective educational environments for ESOL learners are those that promote the continued development of learners' primary languages for both academic and social purposes. In addition, as noted earlier, bilingual proficiency enhances employment possibilities in the international marketplace and enhances the competitive strength of U.S. industry and business worldwide. This means that bilingualism benefits the individual and serves the national interest, and schools need to promote the retention and development of multiple languages.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model Implementation Self-Assessment

Beside each SIOP Model feature, write either Usually, Sometimes, or Rarely to show how often you use this feature in your teaching.

Lesson Preparation

___ 1. Define, display, and review **content objectives** clearly with students.

___ 2. Define, display, and review **language objectives** clearly with students.

___ 3. Choose **content concepts appropriate** for age and educational background level of students.

___ 4. Identify **supplementary materials** to use (e.g., graphs, models, visuals).

___ 5. **Adapt content** (e.g., text, assignment) to all levels of student proficiency.

___ 6. Plan **meaningful activities** that integrate lesson concepts (e.g., surveys, letter writing, simulations, constructing models) with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking.

Building Background

___ 7. Explicitly **link concepts to students' backgrounds and experiences**.

___ 8. Explicitly **link past learning and new concepts**.

___ 9. **Emphasize key vocabulary** (e.g., introduce, write, repeat, and highlight) for students.

Comprehensible Input

___ 10. Use **speech** appropriate for students' proficiency level (e.g., slower rate, enunciation, and simple sentence structure for beginners).

___ 11. **Explain academic tasks** clearly.

___ 12. Use a **variety of techniques** to make content concepts clear (e.g., modeling, visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, gestures, body language, repetition, corrective recast, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification requests, and the negotiation of meaning.).

Strategies

___ 13. Provide ample opportunities for students to use **learning strategies** (e.g., problem solving, predicting, organizing, summarizing, categorizing, evaluating, self-monitoring, questioning, visualizing, diagramming).

___ 14. Use **scaffolding techniques** consistently (providing the right amount of support to move students from one level of understanding to a higher level) throughout lesson.

___ 15. Use a variety of **question types including those that promote higher-order thinking** skills throughout the lesson (e.g., literal, analytical, and interpretive questions).

Interaction

___ 16. Provide frequent **opportunities for interactions** and discussion between teacher/student and among students, and encourage elaborated responses, repair, comprehension checks, confirmation checks, clarification requests, the negotiation of meaning, and corrective recasts.

___ 17. Use **group configurations** that support language and content objectives of the lesson.

___ 18. Provide sufficient **wait time for student responses** consistently.

___ 19. Give ample opportunities for **students to clarify key concepts in L1** as needed with aide, peer, or L1 text.

Practice/Application

___ 20. Provide **hands-on materials** and/or manipulatives for students to practice using new content knowledge.

___ 21. Provide activities for students to **apply content and language knowledge** in the classroom.

___ 22. Provide activities that **integrate all language skills** (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking).

Lesson Delivery

___ 23. Support **content objectives** clearly.

___ 24. Support **language objectives** clearly.

___ 25. **Engage students** approximately 90–100% of the period (most students taking part and on task throughout the lesson).

___ 26. **Pace** the lesson appropriately to the students' ability level.

Review & Assessment

___ **27.** Give a comprehensive **review of key vocabulary**.

___ **28.** Give a comprehensive **review of key content concepts**.

___ **29.** Provide **feedback** to students regularly on their output (e.g., language, content, work).

___ **30.** Conduct **assessments** of student comprehension and learning throughout lesson on all lesson objectives (e.g., spot checking, group response).

Total U's_____ Total S's_____ Total R's _____

Conclusions:

Objective Verbs for Every Level of Bloom's Taxonomy

Remembering

acquire	describe	indicate	memorize	relate
arrange	detect	isolate	name	repeat
attend	differentiate	label	order	reproduce
choose	distinguish	locate	outline	spell
collect	duplicate	list	place	select
complete	find	mark	recall	state
copy	identify	match	recognize	tell
define	imitate			

Understanding

arrange	diagram	follow	locate	rephrase
categorize	differentiate	formulate	make	report
change	discuss	gather	organize	represent
chart	distinguish	generalize	paraphrase	restate
circle	document	give example	predict	retell
cite	draw	give in own words	prepare	review
classify	edit	identify	quote	rewrite
compile	estimate	indicate	read	select
conclude	explain	infer	rearrange	summarize
convert	express	interpolate	recognize	translate
defend	extend	interpret	record	update
demonstrate	extrapolate	itemize	relate	
determine	fill in		reorder	

Applying

calculate	construct	manipulate	prepare	sketch
change	demonstrate	modify	produce	solve
choose	dramatize	operate	relate	transfer
classify	employ	organize	restructure	use
compute	generalize	practice	schedule	write
conduct	interpret	predict	show	

Analyzing

analyze	contrast	distinguish	interpret	relate
appraise	criticize	evaluate	model	save
break down	deduce	examine	outline	select
calculate	defend	experiment	paraphrase	separate
categorize	derive	formulate	plan	shorten
classify	detect	generate	point out	specify
combine	diagram	identify	present	structure
compare	differentiate	induce	question	subdivide
conclude	discriminate	infer	recognize	test

Evaluating

appraise	debate	editorialize	justify	recommend
choose	decide	evaluate	prioritize	select
compare	defend	give your opinion	rank	support
conclude	discuss	judge	rate	

Creating

change	design	generate	predict	reorganize
combine	estimate	hypothesize	pretend	revise
compose	find an unusual way	invent	produce	role-play
construct	formulate	originate	rearrange	suggest
create		plan	reconstruct	write

Adapting Reading Selections: Creating Scaffolds for Complex Texts

Why should we adapt?

- To create easier access to grade level text and content
- Adaptations should accompany the grade level texts, not replace them.

For whom should we adapt?

- Only students whose reading levels inhibit them from reading the text with any comprehension at all
- Students for whom building background is not enough

When should we adapt?

- When students need access to the rich ideas in grade level text and authentic documents

How can we adapt?

- Create a graphic organizer.
- Make a time line.
- **Illustrate** the text, including important information on the illustration.
- Draw a map, a chart, or a graph.
- Create an outline.
- **Reduce the grammatical complexity**, while keeping all essential information.
- Shorten the sentences.
- Change the verb tenses to the simple present, present progressive, or past tenses.
- Change the passive voice to the active voice.
- Delete unessential information – but retain key vocabulary!
- Elaborate or amplify the text.
- Add additional information to explain key concepts.
- **Highlight essential vocabulary**. Use bold, italics, or other highlighting.
- **Add a glossary or word bank**. Emphasize meaning in context, provide multiple meanings, word origins (Latin & Greek roots), and derivations (e.g., psychology, psychologist, psychological).
- Create a **Readers Theatre** which provides an authentic platform in which students work with literature and develop literacy skills through reading and writing
- Create a **song**.

Examples of Simplified and Modified Text

Original

Catfish have both gills for use under water and lungs for use on land, where they can breathe for twelve hours or more. The hot daytime sun would dry them out, but they can slip out of their ponds at night and still stay cool while they hunt for food. They are meat eaters, so they search for worms, insects, and other fish, and can often be seen crossing roads at night while on these hunting expeditions. (Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994)[4]

Simplified

Catfish have both gills and lungs. The gills are used for breathing under water. The lungs are for use on land. The fish can breathe on land for 12 hours or more. At night these fish can slip out of ponds. They move at night so they can stay cool. The hot sun would dry them out. They hunt for food at night, too. They are meat eaters. They search for worms, insects, and other fish. People often observe them crossing roads at night when the fish are hunting. (Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994)

Elaborated

Catfish have two systems for breathing: gills, like other fish, for use under water, and lungs, like people, for use on land, where they can breathe for twelve hours or more. Catfish would dry out and die from the heat of the sun, so they stay in water during the daytime. At night, on the other hand, they can slip out of their ponds and still stay cool while they hunt for food. They are meat eaters, so they hunt for worms, insects, and other fish. People traveling at night often see catfish crossing roads when the fish are out on these hunting expeditions. (Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994)

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[4] Yano, Y., Long, M. H., & Ross, S. (1994). The effects of simplified and elaborated texts on foreign language reading comprehension. *Language Learning*, *44*(2), 189-219.

Graphic Organizers

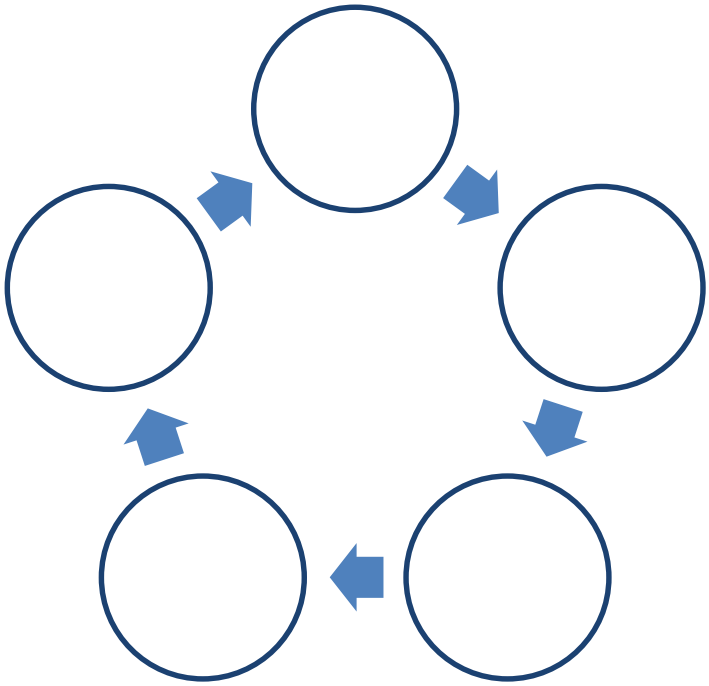
The chart below lists types of expository (informational) texts, gives a definition, and then suggests graphic organizers that are appropriate for that type of text. Use this chart to help you decide which type of graphic organizer might be best for the text with which you are working. Remember, you might want to use different organizers for different parts of one text.

Type of Text	Definition	Organizers
Description	Describes or defines information	Webs, features charts, comparison charts
Enumeration	Lists information about several related items (e.g., events, characters, objects) and provides supporting evidence or details	Tree diagrams, branch diagrams, webs, outlines, comparison charts
Comparison-Contrast	Comments on similarities and differences among facts, people, events, and uses comparative adjectives and transitional markers (e.g., "on the one hand…on the other," "both…only one")	Venn diagrams, comparison charts
Chronological or Sequential	Organizes information in a time sequence and uses temporal markers such as dates, prepositional phrases of time, and sequence words (e.g., first, next, then)	Timelines, story summaries, flow charts
Cause-Effect	Describes cause-effect reactions (how one thing occurs as the result of another) and uses causative words (e.g., so, as a result, therefore, thus)	Flow charts, sequence chains, cycles
Problem-Solution	Presents a problem and one or more solutions and uses words related to options, alternatives, consequences, and results	Decision-making diagrams, semantic maps

Graphic Organizer Examples

Chronological/Sequential

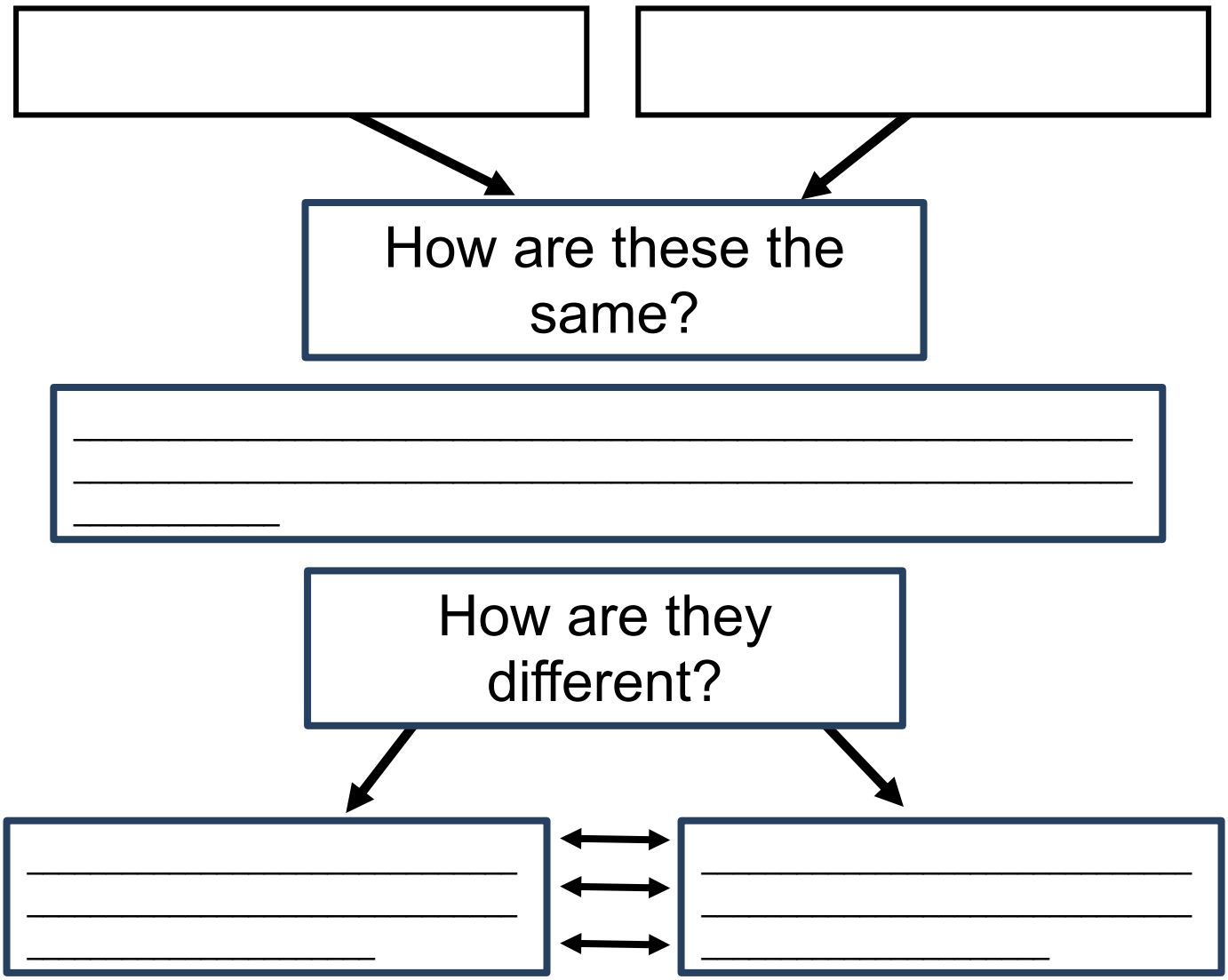
Cause and Effect



Graphic Organizer Examples

Compare & Contrast[5]

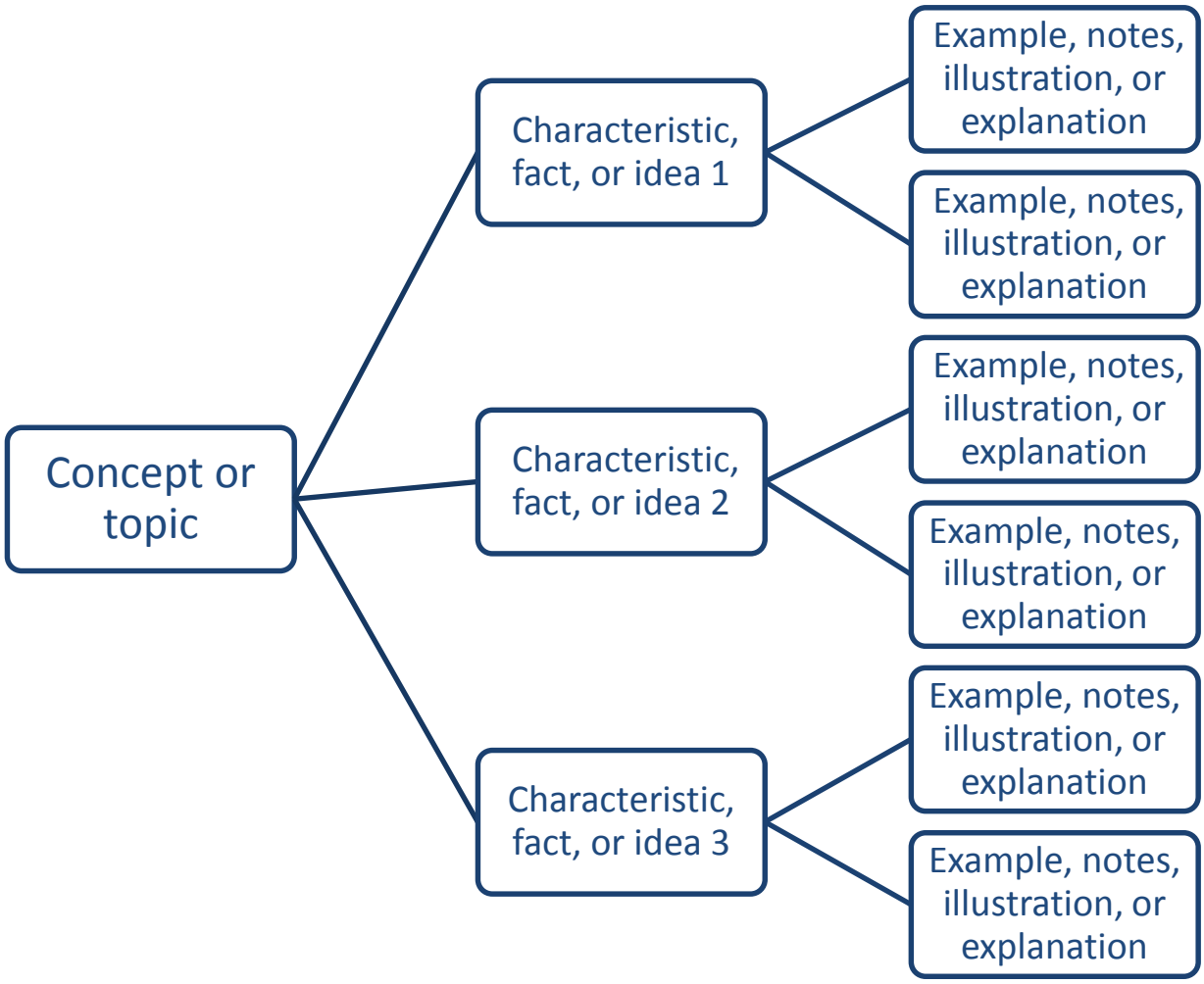
Topic: _____ **Name:** _____



[5] Coltrane, B. (2003). Graphic organizers for SIOP teaching. Washington, DC; CAL.

Graphic Organizer Examples

Concept Map



Suggestions for Meaningful Activities

- Design a strip story to explain a process.
- Create a travel brochure.
- Create a graphic organizer.
- Create and perform a jazz chant, song, rap, poem, etc.
- Develop a questionnaire and conduct an interview (of a classmate, parent, school staff member, community member, guest speaker).
- Practice and perform a role play.
- Write a headline and/or brief newspaper article about a topic.
- Make a product and develop a marketing plan for it.
- Produce a class newspaper or online journal.
- Create a poster, diorama, model, or mural to reflect a topic; present it to the class and/or to other classes.
- Perform a readers' theatre.
- Develop questions to be used in a whole-class review game such as Jeopardy, Numbered Heads Together, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, etc.
- Participate in a simulation.
- Develop and conduct a survey; distribute to classmates or other group, tally and present the results.
- Write a letter or email (to a community leader, principal, organization, government agency, etc.) about a particular topic.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation.
- Develop and present a puppet show about a content concept (e.g., the Alamo, ecology/conservation).
- Participate in a debate.
- Participate in a community service project or school improvement project.
- Participate in a classroom academic conference.

Guidelines to Achieve Comprehensible Input

Directions: Use this form as a self-assessment. Check ☑ strategies that you use in your lessons and star ∗ strategies that you *would like* to include more often.

Teacher Speech and Behavior	
	Use expression and body language. *Gestures, facial expressions, and body language can provide context for the message.*
	Speak slowly and clearly. *Make it natural without overdoing it.*
	Use more pauses between phrases. *This allows students time to process what you have said.*
	Use shorter sentences with simpler syntax.
	Stress high frequency vocabulary.
	Repeat and review vocabulary. *As much as possible, use consistent vocabulary during instruction. To expand vocabulary, repeat a concept, using different words and then the same words, so the students hear it in different contexts.*
	Watch carefully for comprehension and be ready to repeat or restate to clarify meaning whenever necessary. *Use whatever means necessary to achieve comprehension – visuals, gestures, models, translation.*
	Be friendly and enthusiastic.
	Maintain a warm supportive affect. *This lowers student anxiety and encourages student participation.*
	Open discussion to different perspectives of a topic.
Instructional Strategies	
	Use visuals.
	Use graphic organizers. *These help students represent information and identify relationships.*
	Explain processes and tasks clearly and model activities for students. *Students need explicit guidance to make the transition to academic tasks.*
	Communicate about the subject area in oral, written, physical, or pictorial form.
	Tap the students as resources for information about the topic.
	Provide hands-on and performance-based activities.
	Promote critical thinking and study skill development.
	Incorporate cooperative learning activities. *Promote student interaction and seek peer tutors among classmates.*

Techniques for Making Input Comprehensible

Giving Directions for an Activity

- Model the activity and provide visual/written support.
- Present directions in steps.
- Be clear, precise, and complete.
- Use action verbs in the command (imperative) form (e.g., "Open your books. Look at the picture of the mainframe.").
- Ask students to summarize the steps.
- Give a precise amount of time to complete the assignment.
- Circulate around the room to make sure everyone understands what to do.
- If some students appear unsure about what to do next, remind them of the list of steps.

Instructional Techniques to Make Concepts Clear

- Use gestures, body language, and pictures.
- Provide examples.
- Preview material.
- Allow for alternative expression of ideas.
- Use multimedia.
- Provide repeated exposure to words, concepts, and skills.
- Use sentence strips.
- Use graphic organizers.
- Use audio texts

Note: Make the connection with your teachers on how to connect Comprehensible Input and the reading of content area textbooks – see pages 165-166 & the GO on page 170 of your SIOP Manual.

Comprehensible Input Video

Directions: Watch the video of this science lesson on magnets and magnetism and record your answers on the graphic organizer below.

Identify the component feature demonstrated	Description of how the feature was implemented	Presentation Questions/Ideas

COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

4	3	2	1	0
10. **Speech** appropriate for students' proficiency levels (e.g., slower rate, enunciation, and simple sentence structure for beginners)		**Speech** sometimes inappropriate for students' proficiency levels		**Speech** inappropriate for students' proficiency levels

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0
11. **Clear explanation** of academic tasks		**Unclear** explanation of academic tasks		**No** explanation of academic tasks

Comments:

4	3	2	1	0
12. **A variety of techniques** used to make content concepts clear (e.g., modeling, visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, gestures, body language)		Some **techniques** used to make content concepts clear		No **techniques** used to make concepts clear

Comments: