

# The Natural Approach

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# The Natural Approach

- The Natural Approach is based on observation and the interpretation of how a person acquires their native language.
- It rejects the formal organization of language learning.
- It appeared in 1983 and focuses on language exposure.
- It's based on how children naturally learn their native language.

# The Natural Approach

- The natural approach focuses on communication.
- It is based on the idea that communication is the key to acquiring a language.
- Grammar and grammatical structures of a language should be learned only to fine tune communication skills.
- In order for the learner to acquire the language the communication must be effective.

# The Natural Approach

- The Natural Approach is a language teaching approach which claims that language learning is a reproduction of the way humans naturally acquire their native language.
- The approach adheres to a communicative approach to language teaching.

# The Natural Approach

- What really distinguishes the Natural approach from other methods and approaches are its premises concerning the use of language and the importance of vocabulary.
- Language is viewed as a vehicle for communicating meaning and messages.
- Vocabulary is of paramount importance as language is essentially its lexicon!

# The Natural Approach

- This means that language acquisition can not take place unless the acquirer understands messages in the target language and has developed sufficient vocabulary inventory.



The learner has an initial "silent period"

Comprehension is paramount

Speech emerges naturally

# The Natural Approach

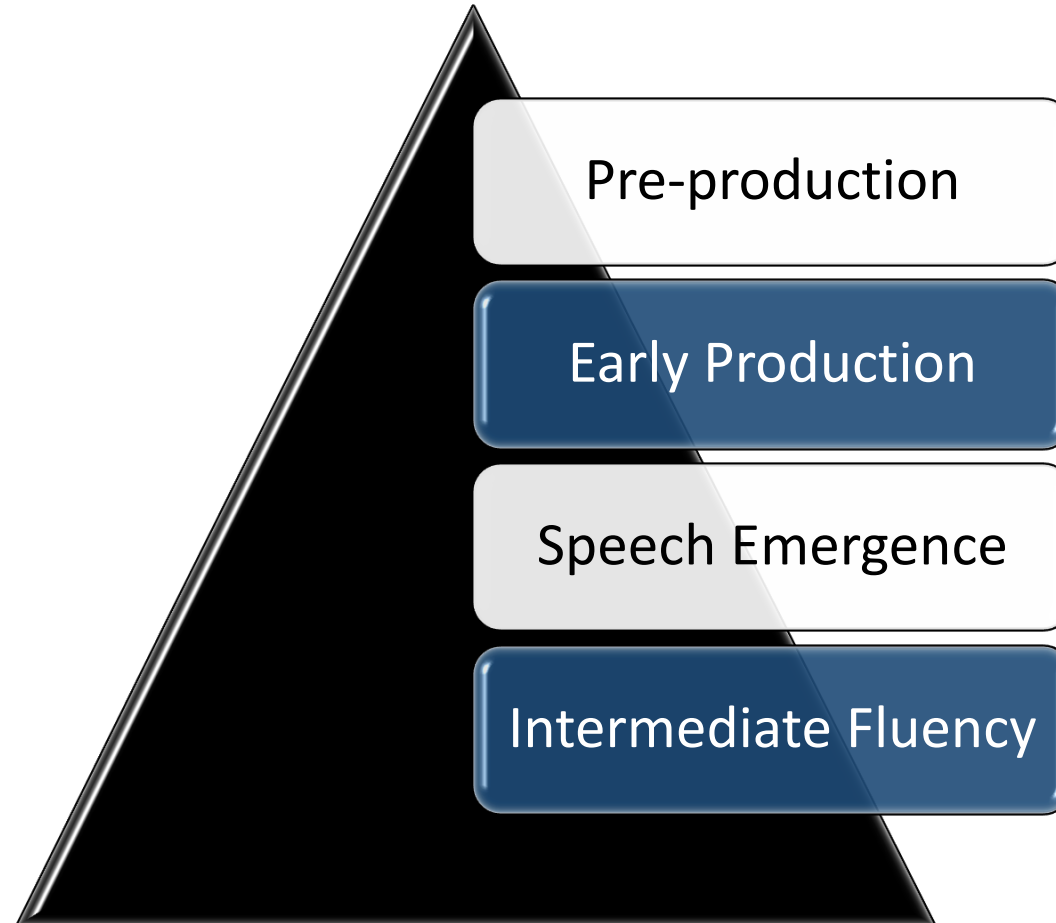
- "Krashen and Terrell suggest that language learning is different from language acquisition.
- Language learning is knowing rules and having a conscious knowledge of grammar as well as the ability to apply the rules to certain situations.
- Language acquisition is the ability to speak and understand a second language easily and fluently".

# The Natural Approach

- The Natural Approach segments the complex process of SLA into four basic levels or stages and details student and teacher behaviors at each one.
- Knowing the characteristics of each level equips teachers to communicate effectively with ELLs and to select appropriate teaching strategies.



# The Natural Approach – 4 Basic Levels



# Level 1 – Preproduction (500 basic words)

- Students at this stage have anywhere from 10 hours to 6 months of exposure to English and are just beginning to learn the language.
- At this level, the teacher should be doing about 90% or more of the talking, and the ELL students should listen and respond non-verbally.
- In order for the teacher's speech to be comprehensible, it should include: pantomime, body language, facial expressions, and gestures.

## Level 2 – Early Production (1,000 words)

- Students at this stage have anywhere from 3 months to 1 year.
- They can now begin to produce some language, in the form of 1 to 2 word responses along with the same type of non-verbal responses that they depended on in level 1.
- Formulaic chunks of language are emerging as well, with most of the elements of the chunks remaining unanalyzed.
- Once students have developed rudimentary vocabulary and syntax in English, their progress begins to expand rapidly.

## Level 3 – Speech Emergence (7,000 words)

- Students at this stage have anywhere from 1 to 3 years of exposure.
- Questions they are now able to answer include “how” and “why,” which require fairly complex responses.
- Because they can understand a great deal and can express themselves fairly effectively, albeit with grammatical simplicity and developmental errors, ELLs at the Speech Emergence stage can participate in a variety of teaching strategies.

## Level 4 – Intermediate Fluency (12,000 words)

- Students at this stage have anywhere from 3 to 4 years of exposure.
- They have gone beyond speaking in phrases and simple sentences to being able to engage in extended discourse.
- This means that they can participate in essay writing, complex problem solving, researching and supporting their positions, and critiquing and analyzing literature.

# The Natural Approach

- This acquisition-focused approach sees communicative competence progressing through three stages:

Stage 1

• Aural comprehension

Stage 2

• Early speech production

Stage 3

• Speech activities

# The Natural Approach – How does it work?

- First, the teacher speaks only the target language and class time is committed to providing input for acquisition.
- Students may use either the language being taught or their first language.
- Errors in speech are not corrected; however homework may include grammar exercises that will be corrected.

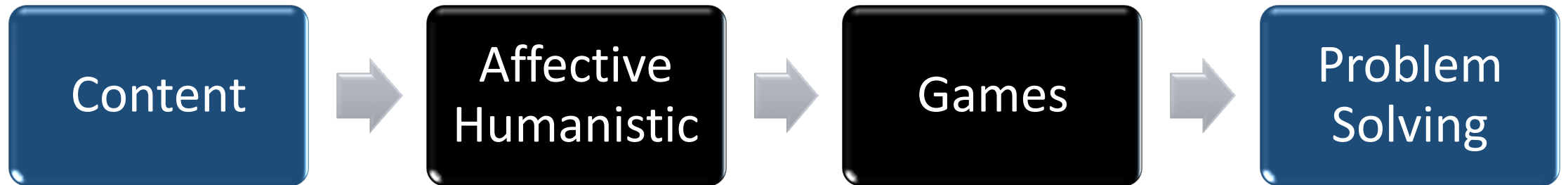
# The Natural Approach – How does it work?

- Goals for the class are to emphasize:
  - Students being able use language for functional use.
    - to talk about ideas,
    - perform tasks,
    - and solve problems



# The Natural Approach – How does it work?

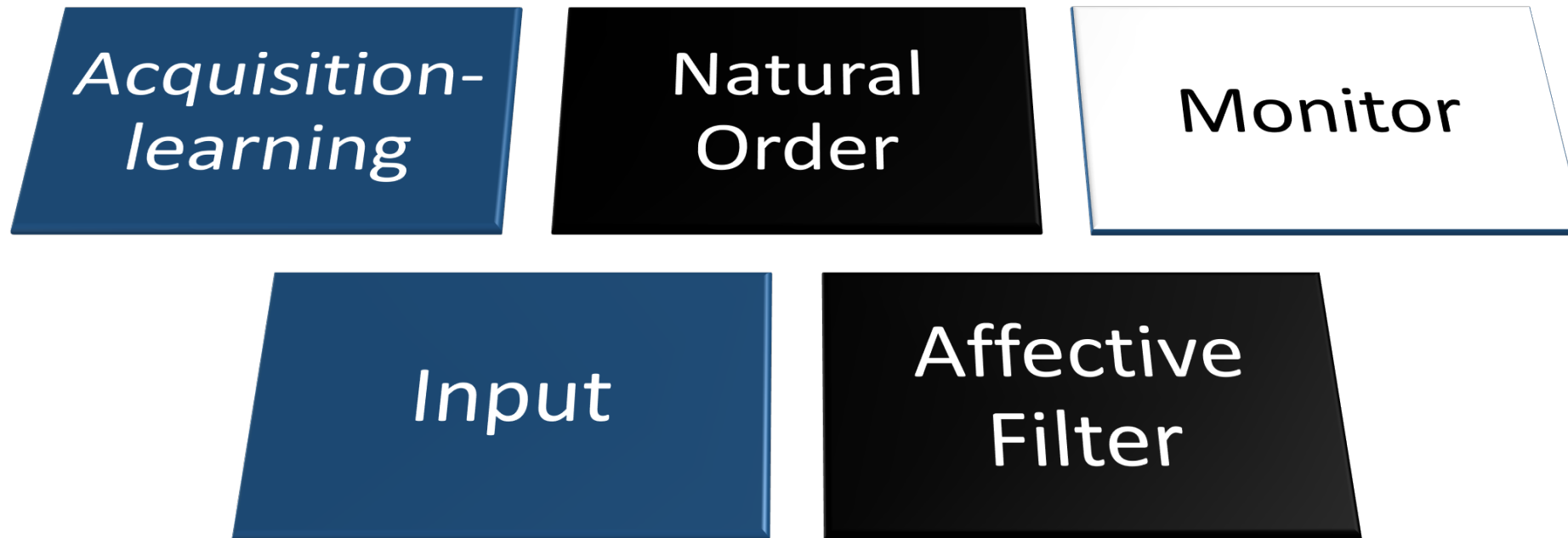
- It focuses on four categories of classroom instruction that can facilitate language acquisition:



# Stephen Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition

# Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition

- The Monitor Model posits five hypotheses about second language acquisition and learning:



# Theory of Learning - The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

- Language acquisition (an unconscious process developed through using language meaningfully)
- It's different from language learning (consciously learning or discovering rules about a language)

# Theory of Learning - The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

A learning theory should respond to these two questions:

What are the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes involved in language teaching?

What are the conditions that need to be met in order for these learning processes to be activated?"

# The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

Acquisition	Learning
implicit, subconscious	explicit, conscious
informal situations	formal situations
uses grammatical 'feel'	uses grammatical rules
depends on attitude	depends on aptitude
stable order of acquisition	simple to complex order of learning

# Theory of Learning - The Natural Order

- Grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order and it does little good to try to learn them in another order.
- The natural order hypothesis is the idea that children learning their first language acquire grammatical structures in a pre-determined, 'natural' order, and that some are acquired earlier than others.

# Theory of Learning - The Input Hypothesis

- People acquire language best from messages that are just slightly beyond their current competence:
  - $i+1$



# Theory of Learning - The Monitor Hypothesis

- Conscious learning operates only as a monitor or editor that checks or repairs the output of what has been acquired.

# Theory of Learning - The Affective Filter

- Affect refers to non-linguistic variables such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.
- According to the affective filter hypothesis, affect affects acquisition, but not learning, by facilitating or preventing comprehensible input from reaching the language acquisition device.

# Theory of Learning - The Affective Filter

- Affective variables such as:
  - fear,
  - nervousness,
  - boredom,
  - and resistance to change can effect the acquisition of a second language
- They prevent information about the second language from reaching the language areas of the mind.

## Krashen's Five Hypotheses

The Natural Order Hypothesis	'we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order'
The Acquisition/ Learning Hypothesis	'adults have two distinctive ways of developing competences in second languages .. acquisition, that is by using language for real communication ... learning .. "knowing about" language' (Krashen & Terrell 1983)
The Monitor Hypothesis	'conscious learning ... can only be used as a Monitor or an editor' (Krashen & Terrell 1983)
The Input Hypothesis	'humans acquire language in only one way - by understanding messages or by receiving "comprehensible input"'
The Affective Filter Hypothesis	'a mental block, caused by affective factors ... that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition device' (Krashen, 1985, p.100)