

## Lily Wong Fillmore's Cognitive and Social Strategies for Second Language Learners

### Variability Summary E

Annela Teemant & Stefinee E. Pinnegar

Cognitive strategies “enable learners to figure out how the new language is structured, to interpret meanings in it, and to begin expressing themselves using it” (Fillmore, 1976, p. 633). Social strategies involve “ways to receive input on which to base the language learning and making efficient use of the social setting in which language is used as an aid in that learning” (p. 633). Fillmore expressed these strategies as maxims to guide second language learners’ cognitive and social participation. We have added recommendations for how teachers can support these activities.

### Cognitive Maxims:

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|---------------|---|
| <b>One:</b>   | <p>“Assume that what people are saying is directly relevant to the situation at hand or to what they or you guess” (p. 634).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers can help learners make sense of what they hear.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Two:</b>   | <p>“Get some expressions you understand and start talking” (p. 639).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers can encourage learners to produce language.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Three:</b> | <p>“Look for recurring parts in the formulas you know” (p. 644).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers can help learners notice the structure of language.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Four:</b>  | <p>“Make the most of what you’ve got” (p. 649).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers can help learners feel good about their efforts to communicate and encourage continuation.</li> </ul>                                   |
| <b>Five:</b>  | <p>“Work on the big things; save the details for later” (p. 655).</p>   |

- Teachers can help learners focus first on the language structures that are most important for understanding particular details until it is developmentally appropriate.

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## Social Maxims:

- One:** “Join a group and act as if you understand what’s going on, even if you don’t” (p. 667).
- Teachers can help learners structure social settings and understand the importance of listening
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- Two:** “Give the impression—with a few well-chosen words—that you can speak the language” (p. 669).
- Teachers can help learners and native-speakers understand the importance of production in language
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- Three:** “Count on your friends for help” (p. 688).
- Teachers can help learners seek feedback and encourage peers and native-speakers to be helpful
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## Source:

Fillmore, L. W. (1976). *The second time around: Cognitive and social strategies in second language acquisition*. (Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1976). Dissertation Abstracts International, 37(10), 6443A.

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Annela Teemant is Professor of Second Language Education (Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1997) at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Her scholarship focuses on developing, implementing, and researching applications of critical sociocultural theory and practices to the preparation of K-12 teachers of English Language Learners. Specifically, she has collaboratively developed and researched the Six Standards Instructional Coaching Model and pedagogy. She has been awarded five U.S. Department of Education grants focused on ESL teacher quality. She has authored more than 30 multimedia teacher education curricula and video ethnographies of practice and published in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *Urban Education*, *Teachers College Record*, and *Language Teaching Research*. Her work describes how to use pedagogical coaching to radically improve the conditions of learning needed for multilingual learners. She has also taught adult intensive English in the United States, Finland, and Hungary.



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A St. George native, Dr. Pinnegar graduated from Dixie College (now DSU) and Southern Utah State (now SUU). She taught on the Navajo Reservation then completed an M.A. in English at BYU. She taught for 5 years in Crawfordsville, Indiana. She then completed a PhD in Educational Psychology at the University of Arizona (1989). She was faculty at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, before coming to BYU. She helped develop and now directs the TELL program. She is Acting Dean of Invisible College for Research on Teaching, a research organization that meets yearly in conjunction with AERA. She is a specialty editor of *Frontiers in Education's* Teacher Education strand with Ramona Cutri. She is editor of the series *Advancements in Research on Teaching* published by Emerald Insight. She has received the Benjamin Cluff Jr. award for research and the Sponsored Research Award from ORCA at BYU. She is a founder of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices research methodology. She has published in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Ed Researcher*, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* and has contributed to the handbook of narrative inquiry, two international handbooks of teacher education and two Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices handbooks. She reviews for numerous journals and presents regularly at the American Educational Research Association, ISATT, and the Castle Conference sponsored by S-STTEP.



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