NOTES

When we talk about English Language Learners, the "silent period" refers to the time period in the development of second language skills during which the ELL is unable to speak or communicate verbally in the second language. Although the student can demonstrate understanding of the second language through the actions he/she performs. When students are first exposed to a second language, frequently they focus on listening and comprehension. These students are often very quiet, speaking little as they focus on understanding the new language.

Teachers can respond by providing hands-on activities and have their students interact in small groups; students will then be able to participate in the existence of the classroom earlier. ELL will feel confident in risking oral language. Classroom and subject area teachers can improve many of the beginners' doubts by creating a language development environment in their classes. The first weeks are crucial, the more comfortable ELLs beginners feel in your classroom, the quicker they will be able to learn. The more anxiety students experience, the less language they will comprehend. Teach key concepts, skills, and academic language in English using sheltered-English, methodologies and literacy development in English.

The silent period is a phase during learning a second language where the individual does not speak. Per Peregoy and Boyle (2008), it is part of Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis. The critical point for the educator to be aware of is just because the student is not speaking, does not mean they are not learning. Often students are taking in the language and processing this new information.

Per Haynes (n.d.), teachers should not force ELLs to speak before they are ready. It is important to not embarrass the student or put them on the spot. A second response of teachers addressing this level of language development is to gear instruction to build these learners’ confidence. Activities suggested by Haynes (n.d.) include: hands-on activities, use of visuals, total physical response, repetition, and listening comprehension activities.

Haynes, J. (n.d.). Pre-production and the silent period. Retrieved August 22, 2012, from h[ttp://www.everythingesl.net/inservices/pre\_producti\_silent\_period\_93415.php](http://www.everythingesl.net/inservices/pre_producti_silent_period_93415.php)

Peregoy, S., & Boyle, O. (2008). Reading,writing, and learning in ESL: A resource book for K-12 teachers (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.