

M.A.N.I.A.C.

Krashen's Hypotheses of Language Acquisition with an Acronym

by Bryce Hedstrom

"Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill."

—Stephen Krashen, PhD, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (1982)

"The overwhelming number of teachers are unable to name or describe a theory of learning that underlies what they do."

—Alfie Kohn, *Punished by Rewards* (1993)



"If you're really teachers, where are your theories?"

"The overwhelming majority of teachers are unable to name or describe a theory of learning that underlies what they do in the classroom." —Alfie Kohn

In Humphrey Bogart's movie, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, the quote was, "If you're really federales, where are your badges?" We best not respond with, "Theories? We ain't got no theories! We don't have to show you no stinkin' theories!"

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Before Reading: Discuss What You Already Know

- *What is the most influential of Stephen Krashen's hypotheses of language acquisition?*
- *What are Krashen's main hypotheses of language acquisition?*
- *How are these hypotheses different from the assumptions about language learning in a traditional classroom?*
- *How could instructors apply Krashen's hypotheses in their classrooms?*

Notes Before Beginning

- *There are further explanations and research that available on the brycehedstrom.com website on the [Free Stuff](#) pages, as well as on the blog.*
- *Krashen's is not the only model of learning teachers need to know. There are newer and more precise models (the [MOGUL](#) framework, for example) used by researchers. **But teachers are not researchers.** Teachers need simple ideas that work in the classroom. It is helpful for modern language teachers and their students know these hypotheses and how they apply in the classroom.*

To say that Stephen Krashen's hypotheses of second language acquisition (1982, 2011) have had an influence on the way teachers think about language teaching is an understatement. Krashen's work has revolutionized teaching practice in language classes by shifting the focus from a grammatical syllabus to a model of language learning that focuses on comprehensible input. His first five hypotheses, formulated in 1982, have stood the test of time over the last 30+ years and are supported by scores of second language acquisition (SLA) research studies. But change comes slowly. Traditional teaching methods are often grounded in nostalgia rather than research and change comes at a glacial pace. Even when teachers set out to use new methods the multiple demands of the classroom and school culture can cause even well-intentioned teachers to revert to the way they were taught and progress stalls.

A Short Explanation of ‘MANIAC’

Remember Krashen's Hypotheses with an Acronym

Krashen's hypotheses go against some aspects of conventional thinking. Academic peer pressure and traditional textbooks help to maintain the status quo. In order to overcome educational inertia and to apply this different understanding of SLA in the classroom a teacher may need to focus like a *maniac*. As a mnemonic device, Krashen's hypotheses can be arranged to form the acronym **MANIAC**:

1. The **Monitor** Hypothesis
2. The **Affective Filter** Hypothesis
3. The **Natural Order of Acquisition** Hypothesis
4. The **Input** Hypothesis
5. The **Acquisition/Learning** Hypothesis
6. The **Compelling Input** Hypothesis (2011)

A teacher new to these concepts might ask:

Do you discuss these hypotheses with students? Yes.

Do they know *why* you use these ideas to guide your teaching? Yes.

Do you quiz your students on these ideas? Yes.

Yes, to both questions, but the only person in the classroom that *really* needs to understand these hypotheses is the teacher. Once the teacher understands these ideas at a deep level, they naturally flow in teaching. The students pick up the ideas quickly, effortlessly and unconsciously because they are seeing so many examples of them every day. Soon, students can't imagine a teacher teaching a language any other way.

It is important to let students know that these methods are based on research—they are not just quirks of the instructor. There are good reasons for teaching this way—they are not just a wacky experimental idea.

Think about overtly teaching Stephen Krashen's hypotheses of language acquisition to your high school and college students using the acronym **MANIAC**. Tell them that you want to teach like a maniac, and that you want them to learn like maniacs. That is, **quickly, effortlessly, spontaneously and non-self-consciously. Tell them that there is a growing body of evidence indicating that these hypotheses are correct. Ask them if the hypotheses make sense to them.**

M = The **Monitor** Hypothesis: *Knowing grammar rules can be helpful.*

You can use memorized grammar rules to communicate if you know the rules, are focused on the rules, and have time to apply them. The trouble is these conditions are rarely met. We want you to be able to use the language to communicate face-to-face.

A = The **Affective Filter** Hypothesis: *Emotions can help or hinder acquisition.*

We need to be polite and supportive of one another in class if all are to learn all they can.

N = The **Natural Order of Acquisition** Hypothesis: *Language is acquired in a predictable order.*

The trouble is, students are all at different places in the acquisition process. So, we have to keep on giving them compelling comprehensible input that most can mostly understand so that they can all keep getting what they need when they are ready.

I = The **Input** Hypothesis: *People acquire language by comprehensible input.*

Learners pick up a language by understanding messages in that language.

A = The **Acquisition / Learning** Hypothesis: *Acquisition and learning are different in language.*

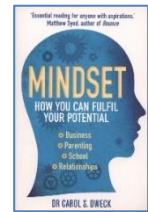
Acquisition is subconscious. Learning is conscious. Language acquisition helps students remember and speak effortlessly.

C = The **Compelling Input** Hypothesis: *If messages in the language are interesting, learners will acquire effortlessly and subconsciously.*

They will be able to understand and produce the language better by being absorbed with the message rather than on the form.

Teach these hypotheses of language acquisition because you're in this for the long game and you want students to be wildly confident, enthusiastic and unselfconscious (maniacal) about learning languages long-term. Knowing this bit of theory behind the methods will help them to learn other languages in the future by being able to evaluate the practices of teachers they will have after you.

Knowing the theory behind how people learn and grow helps too. See the book *Mindset* by Carol Dweck for more on how to train students to keep working and not give up. It describes the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset.



Quizzes for Students Over the Acronym

Refer to Krashen's hypotheses and their ramifications in your world language classes frequently when a solid example pops up. Why? Because it helps students to understand why you are teaching this way.

Give short quizzes over the hypotheses to high school students in upper-level classes, as well as to college and adult students. When students understand the big ideas behind why you are teaching the way you do, it can help them to learn more. See *Start with Why*, by Simon Sinek and *Mindset*, by Carol Dweck for more on this.

Give students a series of 7 short lessons and then 7 short quizzes on the acronym and the hypotheses. Students write out definitions and examples. Use the Expanded Explanations below to prepare them.

Quiz #1: What does the acronym MANIAC stand for? Who formulated these hypotheses?

Quiz #2: What is the Monitor Hypothesis? What does it look like in this class?

Quiz #3: What is the Affective Filter Hypothesis? What does it look like in this class?

Quiz #4: What is the Natural Order Hypothesis? What does it look like in this class?

Quiz #5: What is the Input Hypothesis? What does it look like in this class?

Quiz #6: What is the Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis? What does it look like in this class?

Quiz #7: What is the Compelling Input Hypothesis? What does it look like in this class?

Expanded Explanations of Krashen's Hypotheses

MANIAC

1. The **Monitor** Hypothesis

Knowing grammar rules can help students to monitor their speech and correct themselves.

Grammatical knowledge is important. Knowing the grammar rules can be helpful in some situations. Explicit grammar study can serve a purpose, but it is limited. When students are consciously aware of grammar, they can monitor their language use and make corrections as they write, and to a lesser extent, as they speak.

But... for this internal monitor, or self-check, to work three conditions must be met. The student must:

- a. **Know the grammar rule**
- b. **Be focused on form and thinking about correctness**
- c. **Have time to apply the grammar rule**

The Natural Approach, by Stephen Krashen, p. 30

These conditions rarely occur when using the language outside of a test in class. They normally happen only on tests in class that are focused on a particular aspect of grammar—and then students promptly forget them. Here are some reasons why these conditions are difficult to achieve in real world use outside of the classroom:

• **Knowing grammar rules:** Language is so complex that even PhD's that study the subject do not fully understand all of the rules of grammar. New grammar rules are discovered every year. Professional linguists would admit that no one knows all of the grammatical rules of the language they use, but with use, the subconscious mind puts most of them together.

“In the simple two-word Latin sentence *Vellem mortuos* ('I would that they were dead.' or 'I wish they were dead.'), there are **14 grammatical rules**: 1) person, 2) tense, 3) voice, 4) number, 5) mood of the verb *vellem*, 6) that it comes from *volo*, 7) meaning 'I wish' or 'I want'; that 8) the subjunctive has here a particular shade of meaning. As to *mortuos*, we must know that it is 9) the accusative, 10) plural, 11) masculine, from the verb 12) *mortuus*, 13) meaning 'dead', and 14) the reason why the accusative is necessary.”

—Tracy Lee Simmons, *Climbing Parnassus*, p. 177

And there are at least two more: 15) knowing that the word *vēllem* takes a macron, and 16) knowing that the pronoun *ego* is not required.

• **Focusing on Form:** In spontaneous language use outside of the classroom, one grammar rule is never the focus. As above, many verb tenses are used, even when talking with young children using simple vocabulary.

With children, we would not hesitate to communicate with simple vocabulary and what language teachers would think of as complex grammar:

Parent: What did Momma say? She said, like she always says, ‘Eat your vegetables.’ I would like you to eat your vegetables, too. Do you remember what we talked about? I said that if you hadn’t finished eating your vegetables by the time the rest of the family had eaten, you wouldn’t be able to have any ice cream. What would you like to do? Have you decided what you’re going to do yet? Will you be eating your vegetables or not? I hope you eat them, because I want to go eat ice cream with you.

3-year-old child: Completely understanding the high-frequency vocabulary and the 11 verb moods and tenses, pushes the plate away and begins to cry.

There are 97 total words and only 46 unique words in the paragraph above. Almost all of them are high frequency. Depending on how you count them, there are at least 11 verb forms—many what would be considered “upper-level” grammar.

In authentic, spontaneous communication, we’re probably more interested with **what** we are saying, rather than with precisely **how** we are saying it.

• **Time to apply grammar rules:** When you are speaking there is hardly ever time to think about the grammar formulas or rules—what you have actually acquired will come out. Language that has been acquired subconsciously comes out spontaneously. Memorized grammar rules take too long in most unrehearsed conversations.

Explicit grammar teaching tends not to stick with most students. Why? Because **explicitly taught grammar is rarely contextual or meaningful**. Grammar rules have traditionally been taught as units. The rule is presented, practiced, drilled, tested... and then quickly forgotten. This is an ineffective strategy for long term memory with language, let alone acquisition. The human brain picks up language piece by piece and repeated over time, rather than all at once.

Meaningful, comprehended, spaced repetition is what works; not all of one grammar point in one lesson. Enjoying regular, nutritious, tasty meals rather than trying to eat a pickup truck full of food once a month is what works to make your body healthy. The same thing goes with acquiring language—learning little by little is best.

Krashen and many other SLA researchers assert that **language acquisition is mostly an unconscious process**, and therefore the use of the monitor is limited. Self-monitoring can be helpful when there is time to reflect and edit one’s own work, as in writing a formal essay when there is time to think, time to write, reread, think again and rewrite. The older students get and the more fluent they become, the more conscious knowledge of grammar rules can help them to monitor their own speaking and writing because they can think more abstractly. Formal teaching of grammar has little place in beginning language classes or with elementary aged students. Grammar study can sometimes be helpful with upper-level high school students and with college students because those students can analyze and compare grammar and have more developed metacognitive abilities. But keep in mind that explicit grammar teaching is not necessary to develop fluency.

One area where many teachers think that explaining a rule and drilling it may be beneficial is in teaching advanced grammatical structures such as the subjunctive mood in Spanish, French, Latin and other languages. But Krashen’s research indicates that the only factor that influences mastery of the Spanish subjunctive is the amount of reading of novels the students has done,

and not (surprisingly, to most students and instructors) the amount of formal study, or even the time spent in another country (!).

*APPLYING
THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS
IN YOUR CLASSROOM:*

- **Minimal grammar.** Teach grammar sparingly, realizing that it does not always help to develop fluency. Use correct grammar yourself when speaking, of course, and point out how it is being used at the level of the sentence, but limit grammatical units to tidbits that help communication right now.

- **Ask questions to the whole class.** Use regular scaffolded comprehension check questions to the whole class to get a general sense of student understanding. The confidence, volume and speed with which the class answers can be a good indicator of general comprehension.

- **Ask individual students questions.** Use differentiated comprehension check questions to individuals based on their level of understanding and self-reflection.

- **Check acquisition with timed writing.** Have students write essays from time to time. Start with timed writing of stories they are familiar with to give them confidence.

- **Let students use the monitor.** Occasionally give student time to write, read and rewrite their essays so that they can use their own internal monitor. Writing leads to deeper thinking.

M A N I A C

2. The **Affective Filter** Hypothesis

Learning is filtered through the emotions.

Psychological safety is one of the most important factors in a successful team. The classroom is no different. It needs to be a safe space where students are free to take chances. The class must be free of insults, putdowns, judgmental statements and crude language. Even snide remarks, rolling eyes, smirks, mockery, and lack of inclusion can have a negative impact on students' ability to learn.

Establishing behavioral norms and expectations in the classroom and then rigorously enforcing them is crucial if students are to learn at high levels.

"When the input does not contain $i+1$... and when the students' affective filter is high, comprehensible input is not good enough." (Krashen, 1982)

Comprehensible Input may not be enough. Here's how it can go wrong:

Not Enough $i + 1$

High Affective Filter (Unease in the classroom)
Students do not have respect for one another.

There is a tense relationship with the teacher or with authority in general.

APPLYING
THE AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS
IN YOUR CLASSROOM:

- **Have clear behavioral expectations.** Set clear and high standards for student behavior.
- **Practice and use procedures.** Reinforce your expectations with well thought out classroom procedures.
- **Enforce the class norms.** Consistently enforce the classroom norms of courtesy and respectful behavior.
- **Explicitly teach and tell them what you expect.** Expect students to “play the game.” Use an interpersonal self-assessment to define what you mean.
- **Control your own behavior.** Stay in control of the class by controlling your thoughts and behavior. Students can pick up on the unconscious and unintended body language messages you are sending out when you are disappointed or disapproving.

MANIAC

3. The **Natural Order of Acquisition** Hypothesis

Students acquire elements of grammar in a predictable order.

The order of acquisition cannot be altered or rushed. The ability to recognize and produce certain aspects of grammar and much of the accompanying vocabulary, unfolds as students are exposed to comprehended input. Every student is at a different stage of acquisition, so attempting to structure a grammatical syllabus can be frustrating and nearly futile.

Students will get what they are ready to get when they are ready to get it. In the meantime, our job is to provide them with plenty of interesting comprehensible input. Pictures, videos, acting, context, gesturing, body language, facial expressions, and background knowledge can fill in the language gaps as they are picking up

One source for learning about the Natural Order of Acquisition is *The Natural Approach*, by Krashen and Terrell (1982).

APPLYING
THE NATURAL ORDER OF ACQUISITION HYPOTHESIS
IN YOUR CLASSROOM:

- **Every class is a multi-level class.** Realize that students are acquiring language at different rates. They do not all progress in lock step with one another. They acquire pieces here and there as

they are ready. The order is somewhat predictable but the timing is not. We need to teach all students, not just the top students.

• **Error correction does not work well.** Recognize that error correction is mostly futile. Time is better spent giving more comprehensible input. When a student gives a correct, but improperly structured answer, reflect back the correct usage as you clarify meaning and engage.

Student: We goed to a movie last weekend.

Teacher: You went to a movie? I went to movie too! Which one did you go to?
Who did you go with?

Student: Friends

Teacher: I went to a movie with some friends too. We went to...
I went on Sunday afternoon. What day did you go?

• **Vary the input.** Keep the natural order of acquisition in mind but do not attempt to precisely mimic it in your syllabus. Instead, vary the input so that those that are ready can catch what they need and progress in the language at their own rate.

• **Focus on high frequency vocabulary**, both [verbs](#) and [function words](#). The most commonly used words will be the most useful. [Mark Davies](#) claims that *65% of all communication in most languages is accomplished with the 100 most common words*. There are frequency lists for every language.

• **Provide opportunities for students to progress at their own pace.** Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) is an effective way to accomplish this.

• **Keep the input interesting and comprehensible** so that student acquisition can unfold as each student is ready to acquire it.

• **Spiral the curriculum.** Realize that the curriculum must circle back down almost as much as it climbs up. We must go back and revisit certain aspects of language again and again, even as we progress. Students are not at the same point in their acquisition. Everyone has gaps in what they know and can do. No one gets all of the grammar and vocabulary the first time through.

This is natural in language acquisition. Everyone has gaps. Think of the adult native English speakers that cannot use the past participles *eaten* or *written* correctly, or those that confuse *its* and *it's*, *than* and *then*, *two*, *too* and *to*, or *there*, *their*, and *they're*.



MANIAC

4. The **Input Hypothesis** ← *This is the big one* *Comprehensible input is the cause of language acquisition.*

This is the most influential of Krashen's hypotheses. It asserts that we develop language ability when we understand messages in the target language. Languages are not acquired by

studying, by traditional practice, or by listening and repeating. Languages are acquired as we hear or read messages in the language that we can understand.

The term 'comprehensible input' (C.I.) means messages in the target language that the learner can understand. C.I. is *Goldilocks-level input*—not too hard, not too easy—just right for the learner right now. C.I. should be at the current level of acquisition, and just a slight bit above it. Krashen calls this level $i + 1$, an admittedly vague term in which " i " is where the student is right now, and " $+1$ " is what the student is ready for—language they can process and understand from context, drawings, gestures, and from what is already known. Input that is too simple or already acquired (the i or $i + 0$ level), or too complex (the $i + x$ level) is not useful for second language acquisition.

Comprehensible (or Comprehended) Input can be:

- a. **Understanding messages** in the language at your level, and just a bit above it. Krashen calls this $i + 1$. The " i " in this formula is the student's current level of acquisition, plus just a little bit more. The $i + 2 / 3 / 4...$ levels would be language that is not understandable to the student for some reason, be it unknown vocabulary, grammar the student has not heard before, unfamiliar topics, or subjects that are familiar but too deep for the current language level of the student.
- b. **Independent reading** in the TL at the 95% or better comprehension level
- c. **Listening to and understanding** almost everything said in the TL. This understanding can be with the aid of gestures, body language, context and pictures.

Because the term *comprehensible input* is being used so often and is becoming waterer-down, a better term may be ***comprehended input*** (Terry Waltz). If what you say is not understood, it is virtually worthless for acquisition.

APPLYING THE INPUT HYPOTHESIS IN YOUR CLASSROOM:

- **Discard listen and repeat.** For acquisition there is little place for the "Listen and Repeat" strategy because students can repeat phrases without understanding or engaging meaningfully.
- **Encourage output.** Language is acquired by input, but that does not mean students should not be encouraged to speak. Give students opportunities for sophisticated language use by...
 - Repeating back and embellishing the basic statements that students make
 - Asking a variety of questions in a variety of formats to the group and to individual students
 - Inviting students to create with the language
 - Repeating, responding with formulas, dialogues and conjugating verbs is not output.

Students can think at high levels—even in beginning courses. Memorization is one of the **LOWEST** levels of thinking in the [New Bloom's Taxonomy](#) and other measures. We need to encourage students to analyze, evaluate and design at all course levels and all age levels.

- **Plan for output.** Students feel like they are “part of the club” when they can speak. They want to express themselves. So provide them with tools and set up situations where they can express themselves often. [Rejoinders](#) are one way to encourage output, awareness of levels of questioning is another.
- **Use Comprehended input.** The teacher speaking in the TL alone is not enough—even if the teacher is speaking slowly and simply some students may not get it. Students must understand messages in order to acquire language.

It doesn't matter that the teacher is speaking perfectly—if the students do not understand, it doesn't count.

It doesn't matter that students *should* know it. Input, reading or listening in the target language, only counts when the students understand it. Lack of understanding = It is not Comprehensible Input.

The term C.I. has been used so much the meaning is no long clear to many teachers or students. For some, it has come to mean “what students ought to know by now.” Mandarin/Cantonese/ Spanish/Hawaiian teacher Terry Waltz, PhD came up with a better term to combat this trend: Comprehended Input. Only input at is comprehended counts.

- **Clear language and interesting topics.** Your job is to speak clearly in the target language about interesting topics. The students' job is to show when you are not being clear.
- **Comprehensible to all students.** The language we speak in class must be comprehensible to all students, not just the top students that are responding all the time.
- **Make sure all students understand.** Use differentiated comprehension checks questions to be sure individual students understand at different levels.
- **Create a classroom culture where NOT understanding is OK.** Avoid putting students in situations in class where they have only limited comprehension of the language—it is extremely frustrating. See an example of trying to read and comprehend with limited understanding in the document “80% Comprehension”

MANIAC

5. The **Acquisition/Learning** Hypothesis ← Very important

Language acquisition and language learning are two different things.

Language acquisition is an unconscious process. Acquisition happens when the student is hearing the language or reading in the language but is focused on something other than on the language itself as subject matter. Acquisition happens when the student is focused on the message.

Language learning is conscious, focused and purposeful. Learning can feel difficult. What passes for learning is often short-term memorization that is quickly forgotten.

Acquisition is a by-product of hearing or reading messages in the target language. Acquisition tends to be long term. Only language that has been acquired can be used instantly and readily. Anyone of normal cognitive ability can *acquire* language, but consciously *learning* a language can be done by only a limited percentage of students.

Read more about the acquisition/learning distinction in the document [Understanding TPRS](#).

APPLYING
THE ACQUISITION / LEARNING HYPOTHESIS
IN YOUR CLASSROOM:

- **Minimize explicit grammar.** Keep the acquisition/learning distinction in mind and go light on explicit teaching and learning of grammar—especially with younger students.
- **Emphasize acquisition over learning.** For the most part, focus on meaningful, contextual, acquisition-based activities rather than lists of vocabulary or long discrete grammatical units.
- **Focus on the message.** Remember that practice looks different under the acquisition model. In a traditional classroom with a learning-based model, students are shown a grammar rule and then they practice it. This rarely results in fluent language use and the rules are quickly forgotten. Students acquire the grammar and vocabulary of the language without being consciously aware as they focus on messages. With enough input, students begin to develop an ear for the language. They are able to apply grammar rules because “it sounds right” to them.

MANIAC

6. The **Compelling Input** Hypothesis

When the input is compelling you acquire whether you are interested in improving or not.

Compelling input trumps almost everything else. This hypothesis emphasizes the role of subconscious acquisition while attention is focused elsewhere. Language comes along for the ride when students are engrossed in a topic. The goal is to find material and topics that captivate students, not just merely amuse them or mildly interest them. This hypothesis is sometimes titled by Krashen as [The Compelling \(Not Just Interesting\) Input Hypothesis](#).

APPLYING
THE COMPELLING INPUT HYPOTHESIS
IN YOUR CLASSROOM:

- **Make the input so interesting they cannot help but get involved.** Search for ways to make the input so enchanting that students cannot look away. Keep in mind that low level language does not always require low level thinking. The chart on the *Free Stuff* page about [The New](#)

[Bloom's Taxonomy and World Language](#) describes learning activities that all ages and levels of language learners can do.

- **Let them choose.** Provide students with plenty of materials that are likely to be compelling to them.

- **Allow self-selected reading.** When possible, allow students to choose their own topics and materials. [Self-Selected Reading](#), where students choose what they want to read, is a more effective practice for acquisition than expecting all students to read the same material at the same time—however there can be other valid reasons for the class to read together such as class control, class unity, and curricular requirements.

- **Engage the social life of students.** Talk about them and allow them to talk to one another—just do it in an organized way and in the target language. An organized way to do this is with regular [“Special Person” student interviews](#). Much recent brain research corroborates the importance of engaging the social life of students in our instruction. See *Social*, by Matthew Lieberman.

- **Adjust your curriculum.** Choose topics that fit with your curriculum and are likely to be compelling to your students. Present them in varied ways to keep student interest. Figure out ways to use [humor](#) and [music](#), even at [beginning levels](#), to make the input compelling.

Other Krashen Hypotheses

(There is much overlap between each of these as well as with the previous hypotheses):

- **The Net Hypothesis** (A refinement of the Input Hypothesis)

Given enough comprehensible input at the $i + 1$ level, all the vocabulary and grammatical structures the student is ready to acquire is automatically provided.

- $i + 1$ is the level of language that has been acquired (i) and just a little bit more ($+1$). $i + 1$ is a level of language that can be understood by the listener, often with the help of the context of the comprehended words around it, visuals or gestures. When students are exposed to language at this level they will effortlessly and unconsciously acquire the next structures they need.

“When someone talks to you in a language you have not yet completely acquired so that you understand what is said, the speaker “casts a net” of structure around your current level of competence, your “ i ”. The net will include many instances of $i + 1$, aspects of language you are ready to acquire.” (Krashen, 2013, p. 33)

- **The Comprehension Hypothesis** (A refinement of the Input Hypothesis)

We acquire language when we understand it.

- Grammar and vocabulary are the result of language acquisition, not the cause.

- Language that is comprehended is pleasant and is acquired almost immediately. There is no need for delayed gratification. No need to convince students of this kind of thinking: “*Someday, years from now, if you study these complicated verbs charts long and hard enough, you will be able to order a cup of coffee in Madrid.*”

- **The Reading Hypothesis** (A special case of the Comprehension Hypothesis)

Reading is the source of our reading ability, writing ability, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar.

- The more we read in a second language, the greater our vocabulary and understanding of grammar will be.

- The most powerful form of reading is free voluntary reading (FVR). FVR is the kind of reading we almost never allow students to do in school. It is reading what you want to read, when you want to read it and in the way you want to read it. It can mean reading books that are below or above your predicted reading level, if they appeal to you. It can mean reading just part of a book and putting it down and not picking it up again.

After Reading / Discussion:

What have you picked up?

1. What do the letters in the mnemonic acronym MANIAC stand for?

2. What would world language teaching look like if instructors were using all / most / or even just some of Krashen's hypotheses to guide their courses?

3. Which traditional instructional activities might be altered to fit these hypotheses?

4. Which traditional instructional activities might better be omitted altogether?

5. What types of activities could take their place?

6. Why do you think textbook publishers have been slow to adopt these hypotheses and other findings about second language acquisition (SLA) as a basis for their products (in spite of 40 years of research indicating their validity)?

7. What traditional methods might align with recent SLA research?

After Reading and Discussion: Check Your Understanding

1. _____ is the unconscious absorbing of language when exposed to comprehended messages.
 2. _____ is conscious, focused knowledge of elements of language.
 3. _____ results in knowing about the language.
 4. _____ results in being able to understand and use the language.
 5. The _____ hypothesis suggests that certain elements of language are acquired in a predictable sequence that cannot be altered by focusing on certain features.
 6. The _____ hypothesis is the idea that emotional factors such as anxiety, stress, social acceptance and self-confidence can have a significant impact on learning.
 7. The _____ hypothesis is a refinement of the Input Hypothesis. It asserts grammar and vocabulary are the result of language acquisition, not the cause.
 8. The _____ hypothesis is the idea that reading in the target language is the best and easiest way to improve one's reading ability, writing ability, vocabulary, spelling and grammar.
 9. The _____ hypothesis states that language is acquired by comprehensible input rather than by conscious learning.
 10. The _____ hypothesis declares that if the input is interesting enough, learners will acquire the language regardless of whether they are focused on improving or not.
 11. The _____ hypothesis says that knowing grammar can help students to correct their speech and writing.
 12. The _____ hypothesis states that with enough comprehensible input students will automatically get the vocabulary and grammar they are ready to acquire.
-

Word Bank

(Some are used more than once)

Acquisition
Input
Net

Affective Filter
Learning
Reading

Compelling Input
Monitor

Comprehension
Natural Order