Factors Affecting Second Language Acquisition

The following factors affect second language acquisition. Determine whether each factor is related mainly to the student, to the family or to the environment of the second culture. Use the following code:

S = factors primarily in the student
F = factors primarily in the family
E = factors primarily in the environment of the second culture

___ 1. Age
___ 2. Socioeconomic status
___ 3. Classroom culture
___ 4. Cognitive development in home language
___ 5. Family support
___ 6. Whether environment provides adequate L2 input
___ 7. Literacy level
___ 8. Stage in acculturation
___ 9. Whether school environment provides language use opportunities
___ 10. Maintenance of home language
___ 11. Motivation
___ 12. Expectations of child
___ 13. Sense of identity in the classroom
___ 14. How host culture views student's culture
___ 15. Proficiency in the home language
___ 16. Facility with English and ability to help child
___ 17. Role models in the community
___ 18. Date of arrival in the U.S.
___ 19. Personality
___ 20. Whether student has enough opportunities to use English
___ 21. Reason for coming to the U.S.
___ 22. Attitudes toward second culture
___ 23. Literacy in home language
___ 24. Teacher's expectations
___ 25. Preferred learning styles
___ 26. Projected length of stay in the U.S.

Adapted from Maitland, K. (1997). *Adding English: Helping ESL Learners Succeed*. Good Apple. ISBN 1-56417-903-6.
1S, 2F, 3E, 4S, 5S, 6E, 7F, 8S, 9E, 10S, 11S, 12F, 13S, 14E, 15S, 16F, 17E, 18S, 19S, 20E, 21S, 22F, 23S, 24E, 25S, 26F

Second Language Acquisition: A Process, not an Event

Learning a language is like:

A ROLLER COASTER RIDE
It is filled with highs and lows, dizzying twists and turns.

GOING ON A JOURNEY
The path is new terrain, filled with surprises.

SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN
One minute you're floating and the next you're overwhelmed by a wave.

BECOMING A NEW PERSON
You try new ways of behaving; sometimes it is comfortable and sometimes it is not.

When learning a new language, learners use everything they have:

Their culture
Their first language
Their educational background
Their personal experiences
Their new environment

When learning a new language, learners must learn:

New sounds
A new grammar
Lots of new vocabulary
Social and academic language
Strategies to mend communication breakdowns
How to say things appropriately in different social contexts
Many different functions of the language (disagreeing, complaining, arguing, etc.)

Students acquire a second language (and learn academic content) when they receive understandable messages. They need comprehensible input.

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