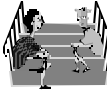


**Introduction to BICS/CALP**


An introduction to BICS/CALP and language proficiency

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**What is BICS/CALP?**




BICS =  
Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills



CALP =  
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency


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**What is BICS/CALP?**



BICS =  
Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

The language necessary for day to day living, including conversations with friends, informal interactions.



CALP =  
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

The language necessary to understand and discuss content in the classroom.

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**Comparing BICS/CALP**

| BICS  | CALP   |
|---|--|
| Context embedded  | Context reduced  |
| Context embedded means that the conversation is often face-to-face, offers many cues to the listener such as facial expressions, gestures, concrete objects of reference. | Context reduced is the language of the classroom in which there are fewer non-verbal cues and the language is more abstract. |

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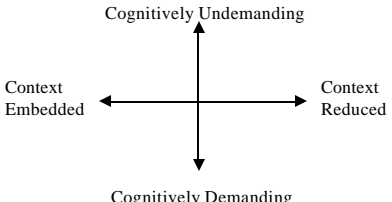
**Comparing BICS/CALP**

| BICS   | CALP  |
|--|---|
| Cognitively undemanding  | Cognitively demanding   |
| Cognitively undemanding language is easy to understand, deals with everyday language and occurrences and uses simple language structure, | Cognitively demanding language relates to abstract concepts, has specialized vocabulary and uses more complex language structure. |

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**Cummins Quadrants**

A more detailed picture of BICS/CALP can be obtained by looking at language along 2 scales...



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### Cummins Quadrants

Various school activities and subjects can then be fit into each quadrant in this chart..... [Click for more](#)

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### One language model of BICS/CALP

Sometimes BICS/CALP is represented as an iceberg....

What implications or meaning can you derive from the idea of an iceberg?

[Click for more](#)

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### What does this mean for school children?

While BICS/CALP can be used to describe the language proficiency of single language students, it is primarily used as a way to understand and evaluate the language level of students learning English as a second language.

[Click for more](#)

Cummins studies of second language learners indicates that children can develop BICS (social language) in 2 years, but it takes 5-7 years for a child to work on the same level as native speakers in CALP.

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### 2 language model of BICS/CALP

Now, let's expand the "iceberg" idea to represent a person with 2 languages ...

There is a common area of language proficiency which provides the foundation for use of both languages.

Common Underlying Proficiency

[Click for more](#)

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### Implications for L2....

The implications of the 2 iceberg model are that:

- The second language grows from the foundation of the first language.
- The stronger the first language, especially CALP, the stronger the second language can be.
- Deaf children may not have had the opportunity to develop BICS and CALP in their primary language

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### What does this mean for school children?

A child's language ability can easily be over-estimated by looking at the BICS and not realizing the complexity and difficulty that second language students have in acquiring CALP in the second language.

[Click for more](#)

Think about the student with whom you work. Can you see a big difference in their BICS vs. their CALP abilities?

Think about yourself in Sign Language. How's your BICS vs. your CALP?

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