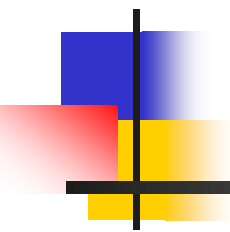


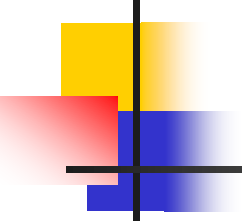
English Language Learners and Special Education: A closer look at Differences



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November 18, 2008

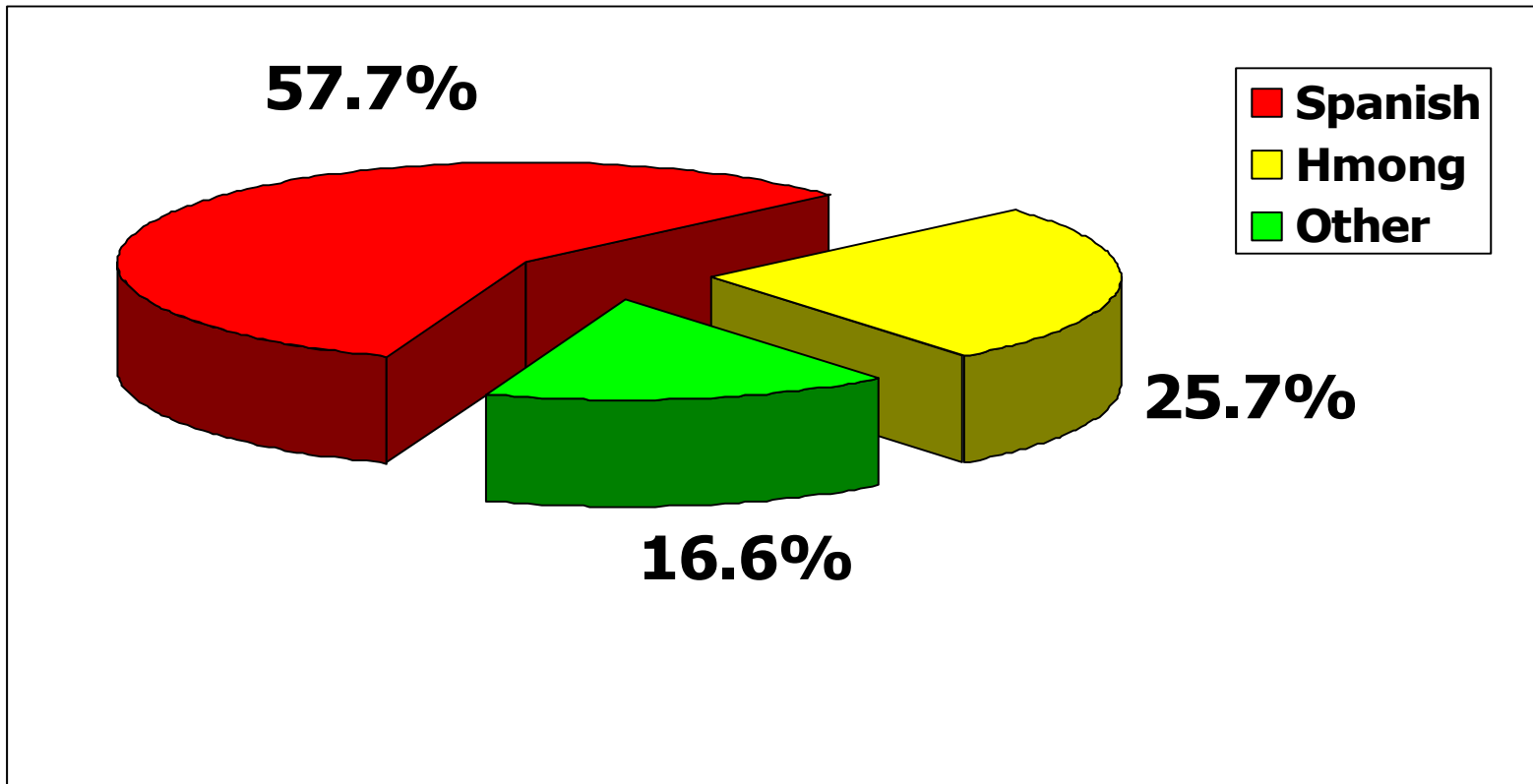
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-
- **What are you hoping to learn from this session?**
 - **What are your burning questions?**



In Wisconsin

- In March 2008, 44,800 ELLs took the ACCESS test
- Approx. 29,000 Spanish Speakers
- Approx. 13,000 Hmong Speakers
- 140 home languages

Wisconsin Language Groups





IDEA 2004 Requirements

"The States [must submit a plan that provide assurances of] policies and procedures designed to prevent the inappropriate over identification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities."

20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(24)



What have we learned from research?

Under & Over Identification

- Limited & insufficient data collection
- Lacking of understanding of cultural & linguistic differences
- Improper use of interpreters
- Over emphasis of standardized tests
- Data rich, information poor
- Difficulty in interpreting the data
- Poor instruction, services & monitoring



First: Meet Legal Requirements

Lau v. Nichols (1974): US Supreme Court Landmark case for ELLs

Interpretation of the Civil Rights Act indicated that local school districts and states have the obligation to provide appropriate services to limited-English proficient students



Factors to Consider:

- Data to be considered should include, but not limited to include:
 - Home Language & Culture
 - L1/L2 Acquisition Characteristics
 - Academic History (L1 & L2)
 - Attendance Stability
 - Teacher Concerns
 - Response to Interventions
 - ESL Testing Data
 - Parent report pertaining to medical history, development, language development & learning



Information on Cultural & Linguistic Characteristics

Critical Step – All data will need to be interpreted through this lens. You need resources for this!

- Dialectical speech patterns
- Language patterns
- Social discourse
- Academic preparation & behavior
- Family hierarchy and communication
- Gender relations
- Geopolitical & religious differences
(understanding of war & refugee issues)



Warning and/or Cautions:

- Comparisons to siblings & Peers
- Teacher observations
- ESL Testing
- Communication (L1/L2)
- Parent Observations



Typical vs. A-Typical:

Characteristics of a Traditional Learner vs
Characteristics of a Non-Traditional Learner
are

....Difficult to Diagnose....



LD & Second Language Acquisition:

- Can appear quite similar
- Many have been labeled LD incorrectly



Second Language Acquisition:

- The length it takes students to acquire English varies a great deal
- There are many different variables that affect the language acquisition process:
 - Time in school
 - Access to good & sufficient instruction
 - Background knowledge
 - Years in the country
 - Age/grade
 - LEP level



ELP Levels & “Can Do” :



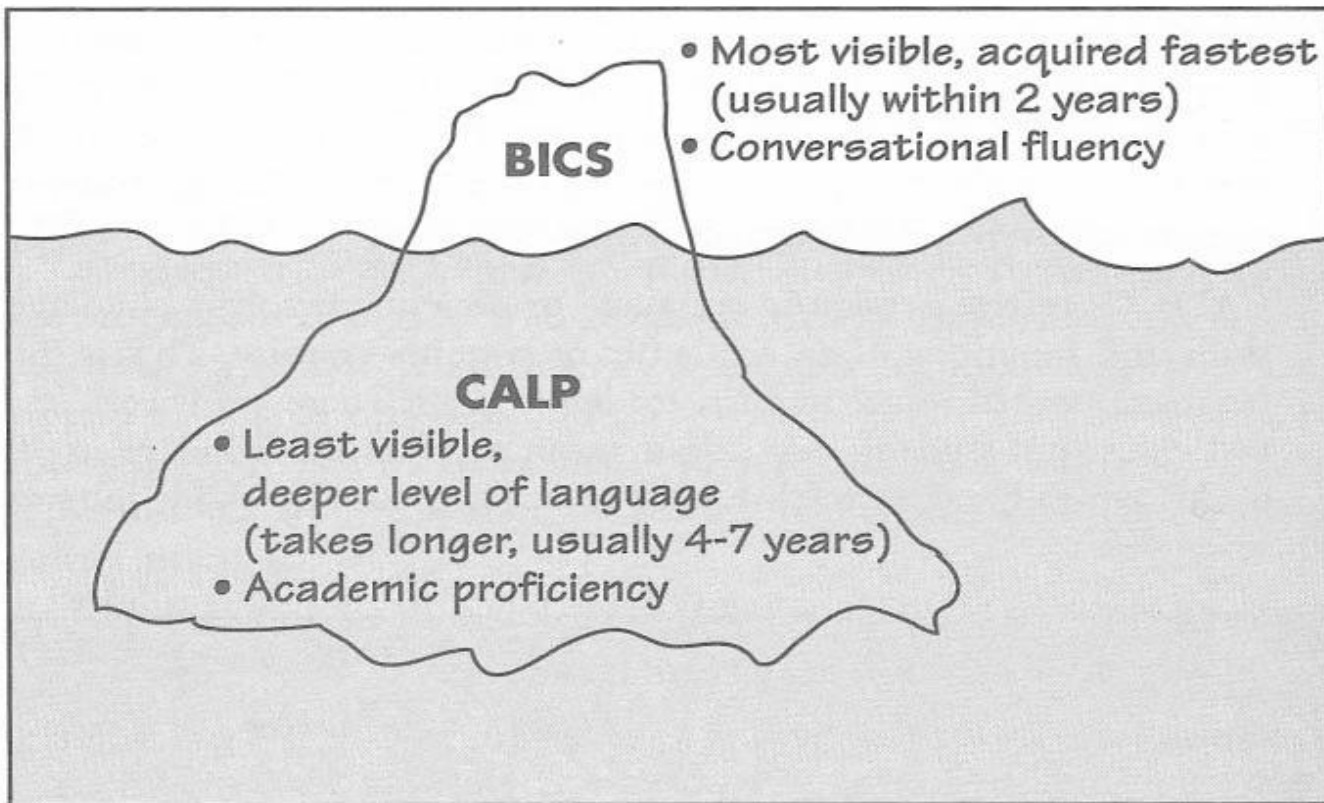


How long has the student been in the US?

- 1-3 years to develop Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)
- 3-7 years to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

(Cummins, 1986)

Language Acquisition:

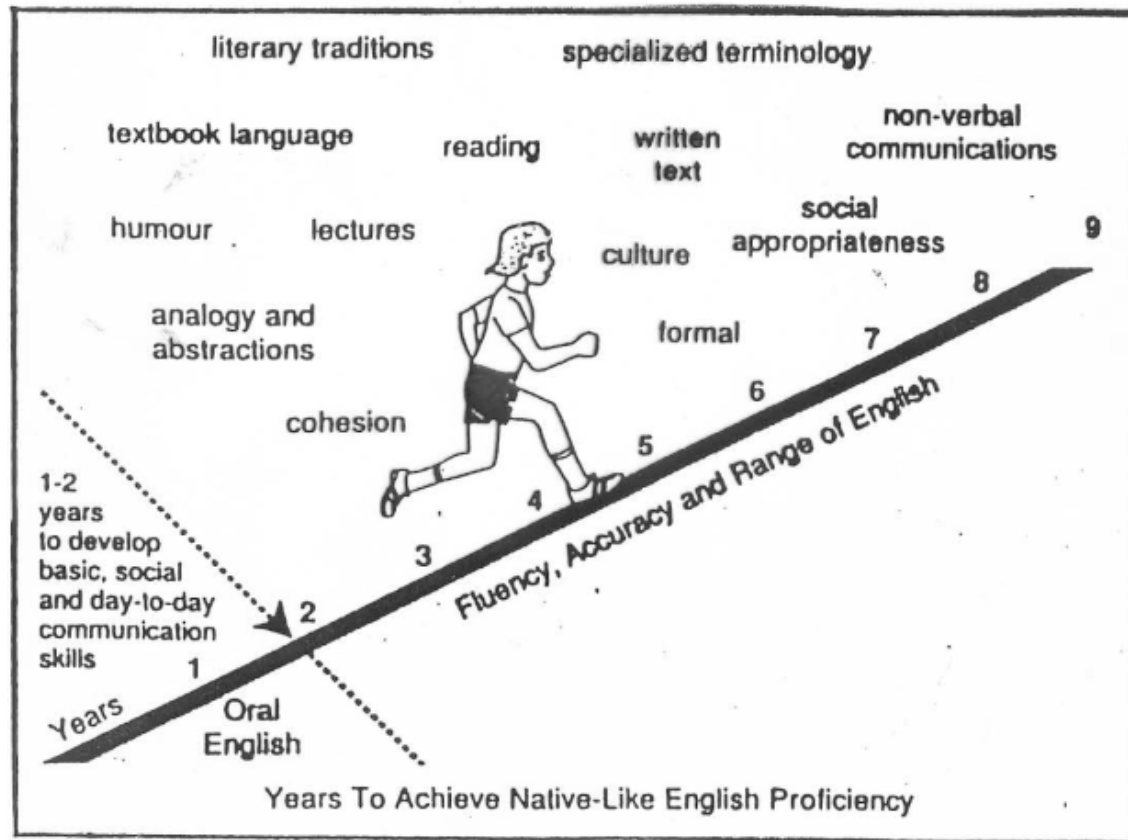




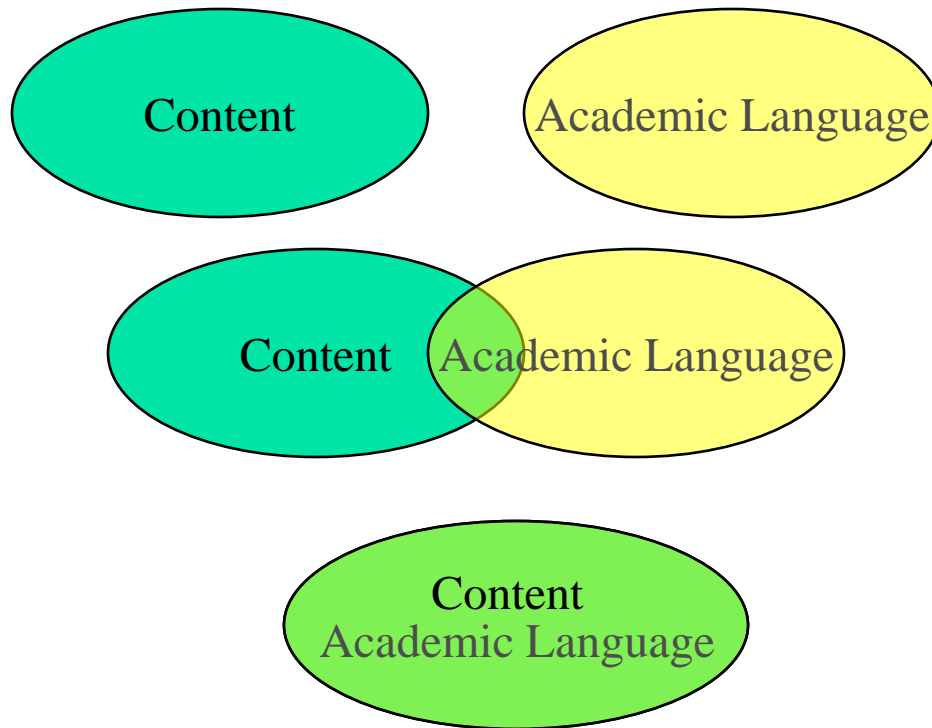
CALP: Lengthy Development

CALP language is not heard in everyday conversation and is comprised of low frequency words (primarily from Greek and Latin sources), complex syntax, and abstract expressions

An Upward Continuum....



Content and Academic Language: Strong Relationship





Interacting Dimensions of Content and Language

- Content/Topics
- Cognitive Demands
- Language Demands—Academic English
Language Functions
- Language Complexity

- “Academic language development is a complex process”



Two Suspect Disabilities:

- Learning Disability
- Speech and Language

“seeing an over-representation”



Learning Disability:

“Judgmental” Category

- Student Needs help
- Lack of other resources
- Not scientific/subjective

(Klinger, Hoover & Baca, 2008)



Most common area: **READING**

- Most area of struggle
- Why: Lack of Pre-K readiness skills
- Low Phonemic Awareness
- Lack of opportunities to read/practice
- Limited background knowledge
- Low vocabulary



Writing

- Many of the perceived writing problems are typical of second language learners and should be expected



Factors to consider:

- Attendance Stability
- Insufficient instruction
- Under prepared teacher
- ESL/Bilingual Program variances
- Mostly taught by paraprofessionals
- Pull out models that don't work



Testing native language proficiency:

- May yield invalid results that could lead to inappropriate educational services
- Some conclude, abandon the practice



Questions to guide teachers:

- Do I value the students' linguistic & cultural background?
- Do I pay sufficient attention to the development of oral language?
- Am I aware of aspects of reading that can be confusing for ELLs?
- Do I adjust instruction (i.e. explicit & supplemental opportunities)?
- Do I pre-teach key vocabulary, use multimedia, other visuals?
- Do I provide varied ways of demonstrating learning?



Improve General Education: Strategies

- Teacher teams to improve instruction in general education
 - Data driven
 - Collaborative
 - School-wide interventions
 - Appropriate language supports
- Parent and community involvement
 - How can schools understand their students if they don't understand where they come from?



Struggling ELLs should be provided with:

- Small group language and literacy interventions that are explicit, responsive to their needs, personalized and relevant
- Supplemental supports that complement the general class curriculum
- Data-driven decisions: Gather data to determine effectiveness of the intervention in meeting student needs
- Modeling & scaffolding
- Exposure to rich & robust instruction
- Skillful pull-outs (if needed)
- Purposeful academic language instruction



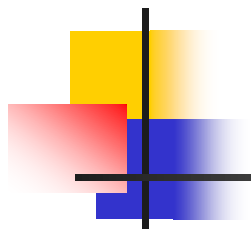
Culturally relevant instruction:

- Literature
- Assessing and valuing prior knowledge
- Funds of knowledge
- Curriculum



References:

- Klingner, Hoover & Baca. (2008). Why do English language learners struggle with reading?
- Young & Hadaway. Eds. (2006). Supporting the Literacy Development of English Learners: Increasing success in all classrooms.



QUESTIONS?

Thank You!

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