**Acronyms and Definitions Commonly Used**

**in Relation to English Language Learners**

**Acronyms**

**BICS**- Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills

**CALP**- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

**DLL**- Dual Language Learners

**ESEA**- Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

**EFL**- English as a Foreign Language

**EL**- English Learner

**ELL**- English Language Learners

**ENL**- English as a New Language

**ESL**- English as a Second Language

**ESOL**- English for Speakers of Other Languages

**ESP**- English for Special Purposes

**L1**- Refers to a student’s first language. This can also be referred to as “home language.”

**L2**- Refers to a student’s second language.

**LEP**- Limited English Proficiency

**NABE**- National Association for Bilingual Education

**TESOL**- Teachers of Students of Other Languages

**WIDA**- World-class Instructional Design and Assessment

**Definitions of Common Terms**

**Academic Language**- Academic language refers to the oral, written, auditory, and visual language proficiency required to learn effectively in schools and academic programs—i.e., it’s the language used in classroom lessons, books, tests, and assignments, and it’s the language that students are expected to learn and achieve fluency in. Frequently contrasted with “conversational” or “social” language, academic language includes a variety of formal-language skills—such as vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, syntax, discipline-specific terminology, or rhetorical conventions—that allow students to acquire knowledge and academic skills while also successfully navigating school policies, assignments, expectations, and cultural norms. Even though students may be highly intelligent and capable, for example, they may still struggle in a school setting if they have not yet mastered certain terms and concepts, or learned how to express themselves and their ideas in expected ways (Hidden Curriculum, 2014).

**BICS**- **Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills** refer to “social” language. BICS is what students need to know in order to function in everyday life and to communicate on a very basic level. When a person has BICS we say that he/she is “conversationally” fluent (McNeil, 2015).

**CALP**- **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency** which requires students to demonstrate understanding and comprehension of academic terms. Students move from basic conversation skills to actually understanding and participating in the regular classroom (McNeil, 2015).

**Code switching** - Using two different languages within the same conversation. The term is used “to describe any switch among languages in the course of a conversation, whether at the level of words, sentences or blocks of speech. Code-switching most often occurs when bilinguals are in the presence of other bilinguals who speak the same languages” (NCELA website).

**Cognates**- Cognates are words in two languages that share a similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation. While English may share very few cognates with a language like Chinese, 30-40% of all words in English have a related word in Spanish. For Spanish-speaking ELLs, cognates are an obvious bridge to the English language (¡Colorin Colorado!)

**Dominant language** - The language in which the speaker has greater proficiency and/or uses more often (NCELA, 2015).

**Dual Language Learners-** Dual language learners (DLL), the term currently used to refer to students or children who are learning two or more languages, either simultaneously or sequentially.

* *Simultaneous language learners* are those who learn two or more languages at the same time from birth or who start learning a second language prior to age three. Additionally:
  + These learners often master both languages, each of which is considered to be their “first language.”
  + Though both languages will develop at the same pace, the pace for learning two or more languages might be slower than that of a child who is learning only one language.
* *Sequential language learners* are those who begin to learn an additional language after they have turned three years of age. In addition:

By the age of 36 months, these learners have often reached at least basic mastery in their first language. Basic mastery usually indicates that they have learned roughly 3,000 words and the use of simple phrases (similar to Stage 3 in the table below).

Many preschool children who communicate effectively in their home language go through the stages of second language acquisition, more information about which can be found in the table below from the IRIS Center (2015).

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| **Second Language Acquisition Stages** | |
| **Stage 1: Pre-production** | * Often characterized as a silent period * Child has minimal comprehension * Child does not verbalize. * Child nods “yes” and “no” * Child draws and points |
| **Stage 2: Early production** | * Receptive and active vocabulary develops to about 1,000 words * Child has limited comprehension * Child produces one- or two-word responses * Child uses key words and familiar phrases |
| **Stage 3: Speech emergence** | * Vocabulary increases to about 3,000 words and simple phrases * Child has good comprehension * Child can produce simple sentences * Child commits grammar and pronunciation errors |
| **Stage 4: Intermediate fluency** | * Vocabulary dramatically increases to over 6,000 words, in addition to the use of complex sentences * Child demonstrates excellent comprehension * Child commits few grammar errors |
| **Stage 5: Advanced fluency** | * Near native-speaker use of the language |

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP)-** Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or "LEP" (LEP.gov).

**Second Language Acquisition-** The process whereby non-native speakers learn a new language; the speed and process is determined by the type and purpose of the language being acquired (IRIS Center, 2015).

**Sheltered Instruction**- Instruction delivered outside of the general education curriculum. The teachers use simple English to convey academic information. The grade level content is still taught, but the students are all English Language Learners. This allows the students to collaborate with students at their proficiency level on academic content (Brown University, 2017).

**Social Language-** see BICS

**Tiered Vocabulary:**

* **Tier 1:** Tier one consists of the most basic words. These words rarely require direct instruction and typically do not have multiple meanings. Sight words, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and early reading words occur at this level. Examples of tier one words are: *book, girl, sad, run, dog,* and *orange*. There about 8,000 word families in English included in tier one.
* **Tier 2:** Tier two consists of high frequency words that occur across a variety of domains. That is, these words occur often in mature language situations such as adult conversations and literature, and therefore strongly influence speaking and reading. Tier two words are the most important words for direct instruction because they are good indicators of a student’s progress through school. Examples of tier two words are: *masterpiece, fortunate, industrious, measure,* and *benevolent*. There are about 7,000 word families in English (or 700 per year) in tier two.
* **Tier 3:** Tier three consists of low-frequency words that occur in specific domains. Domains include subjects in school, hobbies, occupations, geographic regions, technology, weather, etc. We usually learn these words when a specific need arises, such as learning *amino acid* during a chemistry lesson. Examples of tier three words are: *economics, isotope, asphalt, Revolutionary War,* and, *crepe.* The remaining 400,000 words in English fall in this tier (Hutton, 2008).

**References for Compiled Information and Additional Resources**

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