

# **Rethinking Equity of Teaching English Language Learners (RETELL)**

## *Session 4: Second Language Acquisition in the SEI Classroom*

Face-to-Face Session

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
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# Session Introduction

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# SEI Teacher Endorsement Course Map

## MODULE A: ELLs: Their World and Second Language Acquisition Process in the SEI Classroom

(Sessions 1—4)

1: Examining Data & Policies Relevant to ELLs	2: Diversity within ELL Populations (ONLINE 3 HOURS)	3: Cultural & Social Aspects of Teaching in the SEI Classroom	4. Second Language Acquisition in the SEI Classroom
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## MODULE B: Academic Language and Literacy Development in the SEI Classroom

(Sessions 5—16)

### 5. Sheltering Content (ONLINE 3 HOURS)

6: Vocabulary for ELLs I	7: Vocabulary for ELLs II	8. Vocabulary for ELLs III (ONLINE 2 HOURS)
9: Reading for ELLs I	10: Reading for ELLs II	11: Reading for ELLs III (ONLINE 2 HOURS)
12: Writing for ELLs I	13: Writing for ELLs II	14. Writing for ELLs III (ONLINE 2 HOURS)
15. Large-Scale Assessment for ELLs; Capstone Lesson Presentations		16. Capstone Lesson Presentations; Course Evaluation



# Agenda

- ★ Session Introduction (10 min)
- ★ Language Acquisition Theories (50 min)
- ★ Other Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories (20 min)
- ★ Break (10 min)
- ★ Other SLA Theories and Implications (30 min)
- ★ Stages of SLA and Factors that Influence it (55 min)
- ★ Assignments and Preparing for Upcoming Sessions (5 min)



# Objectives

- ★ Identify and explain **key theories of first language acquisition** (*Behaviorist, Innatist, and Interactionist*)
- ★ Describe **stages of second language development**
- ★ Express familiarity with **fundamental theories and understandings related to SLA** (Common Underlying Proficiency, BICS & CALP, language transfer, language competence vs. performance)
- ★ Demonstrate an understanding of **how long it takes for ELLs to become proficient** in English and how **effective SEI and ESL/ELD instruction can accelerate** that process



# Objectives

- ★ Understand the **significance of key factors of second language acquisition** (age, prior schooling and literacy in L1, familiarity with school culture and academic discourses, metalinguistic/metacognitive awareness, motivation, and personality)
- ★ Explain when to emphasize **fluency and communication vs. explicit error correction**;
- ★ Distinguish **between myths and facts** related to Second Language Acquisition (SLA)
- ★ Define **“sociocultural,” “political,” and “ideological”** in regard to second language acquisition



# Objectives (cont.)

- ★ Demonstrate knowledge of **sociocultural, political, and ideological factors that can affect second language development** (social distance, social and cultural capital, race/ethnicity, and identity);
- ★ Create schools and classroom **environments that reduce the environmental “affective filter.”**



# Language Acquisition Theories

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# What Do You Know About Language Proficiency?

- ★ Languages are complex systems. Becoming proficient in a language involves myriad connected skills and knowledge and yet...we all learn to use language(s).
- ★ *What does it mean to become proficient in one's first language? What does it mean to become proficient in a second language?*
  - ★ Complete the statements.
  - ★ Turn and talk to a partner about your ideas.



# Language Proficiency

- ★ Language proficiency means being able to use a particular language appropriately in a variety of contexts, for a variety of purposes, while engaging with a variety of audiences.
  - ★ Grammar, word order and meanings, sounds
  - ★ Language functions (how to use language) and related social conventions – *how to enter a conversation without interrupting others*
- ★ Learning a language also includes learning **social and cultural norms** associated with the language. (*Peregoy & Boyle, 2008*)



# First vs. Second Language Acquisition (FLA vs. SLA)

- ★ All children with normal cognitive function become fluent, expert speakers of their first language (L1)
- ★ The rate of successful second language (L2) acquisition is not as high for children or adults
- ★ Both FLA and SLA require **exposure** to the target language and **meaningful language use**
- ★ Both FLA and SLA involve an **active** and **creative** process of rule construction by the learner



# Language Acquisition Theories

- ★ Language acquisition is a complex process influenced by multiple factors.
- ★ Several theories contribute to our understanding of language acquisition and current language instructional approaches:
  - ★ First language acquisition: Behaviorist, Interactionist, Innatist
  - ★ Second language acquisition: Krashen, Cummins

**Why is it important to know about the theories behind instructional approaches when teaching ELLs?**



# Language Acquisition Theories Presentations

- ★ What are the most significant language acquisition theories? What implications do they have for instruction of ELLs?
  - ★ Work with a small group to summarize one FLA or SLA theory.
  - ★ Create a poster to present about this theory to the group – 1 minute presentations!
  - ★ Use the appropriate graphic organizer from your *Participant Manual*.



# Language Acquisition Theories – Instructional Implications for ELLs

## *Modified True and False*

- ★ According to these theories, what should teachers of ELLs do in their classrooms to maximize language development?
  - ★ Read each statement, answer T (if true) or F (if false) given the theories studied.
  - ★ If the answer is **false**, write the correct answer on the line.



# Language Acquisition Theories – Implications for *YOU*

- ★ Reflect on instructional implications of the language acquisition theories studied for YOUR own teaching practice.
- ★ In your *Participant Manual*, write about
  - ★ **3 practices** that you already use that align well with theory,
  - ★ **2 practices** you should try in your class as a result of learning this theory,
  - ★ **1 current practice** you should consider changing,
- ★ Give **concrete examples** of each practice.



# Other SLA Theories

- ★ Imagine you are taking a trip to Vietnam **tomorrow**.
- ★ Rate each communicative or language task by the level of difficulty you would experience if you had to do it all in **Vietnamese**.
- ★ **Share** your ratings & answer **discussion questions** with a partner.



## *Rating Scale*

1=Piece of cake!

2=With a little help from my *Vietnamese* friends (or if they know a little English!)

3=Tough, but possible

4=Impossible!



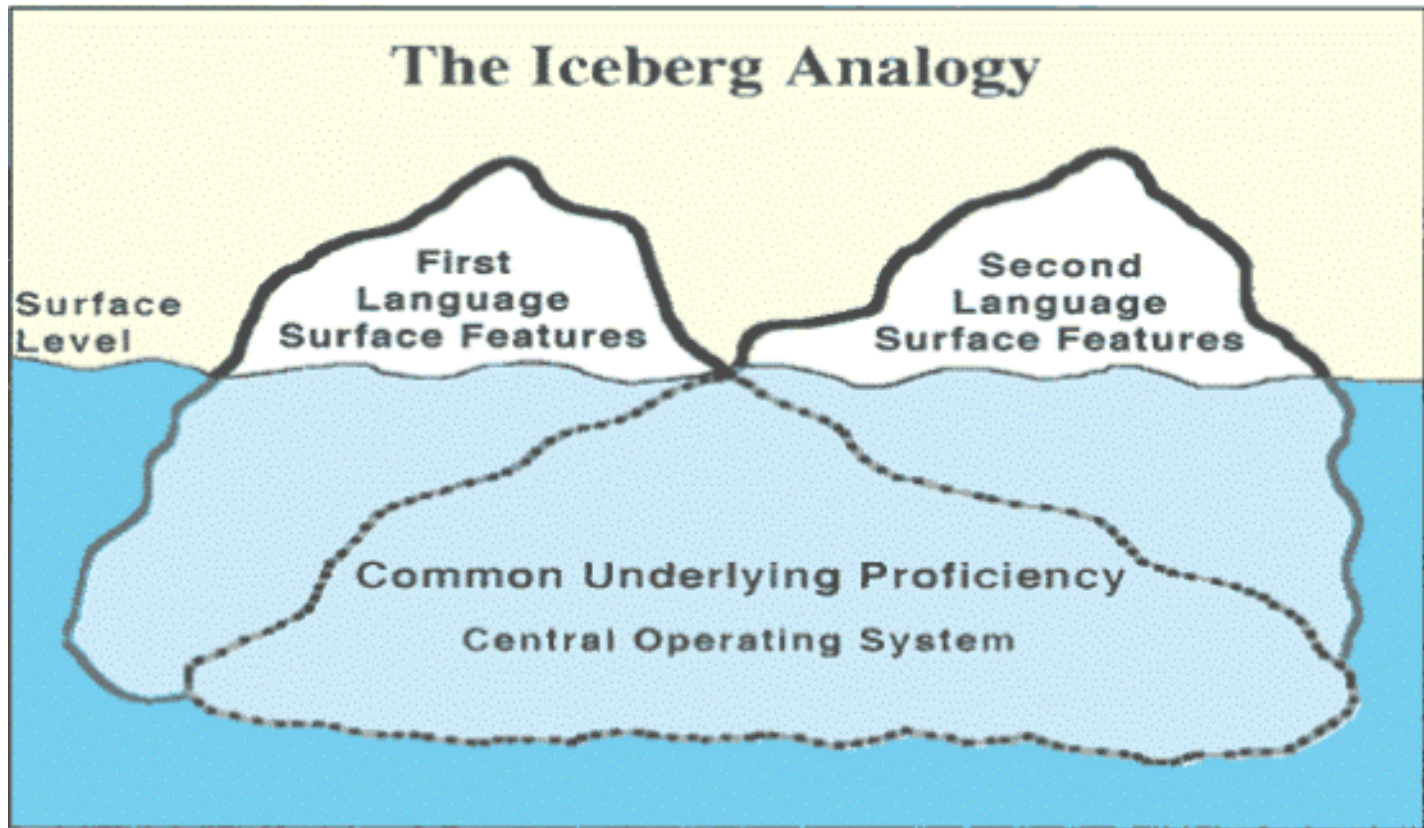


# Other SLA Theories

- ★ Jim Cummins' theories provide insights about second language acquisition – and our trip to Vietnam:
  - ★ Common Underlying Proficiency (2000)
  - ★ Basic Interpersonal and Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (1980)
  - ★ Four Quadrants Model



# Common Underlying Proficiency Theory (Cummins, 1980)



Source: [leap.tki.org.nz](http://leap.tki.org.nz)



# Implications of Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency

- ★ Metalinguistic knowledge and skills (deeper features) in the first language (L1) can be transferred into a second language (L2).
  - ★ *Example:* Knowledge that symbols represent real life objects.
  - ★ L1 proficiency helps ELLs build L2 proficiency.
- ★ However, this transfer is not automatic – it requires teacher guidance.

**What does this theory mean for teaching ELLs? How can teachers guide transfer from L1 to L2?**



# Break (10 minutes)



# BICS and CALP (Cummins, 1980)

## Basic Interpersonal and Communication Skills (BICS) *Social Language*

- “surface level” language
- used in social situations, where tasks are context-embedded and less cognitively demanding
- faster development:  $\pm 2$  years
- often mistaken as an indicator of language ability

## Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) *Academic Language*

- “deeper” language
- language used in academic tasks and contexts where tasks are context-reduced and more cognitively demanding
- longer term development:  $\pm 5-7$  years, may be faster with good instruction & good L1 literacy skills
- requires active development through scaffolding (Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development”)

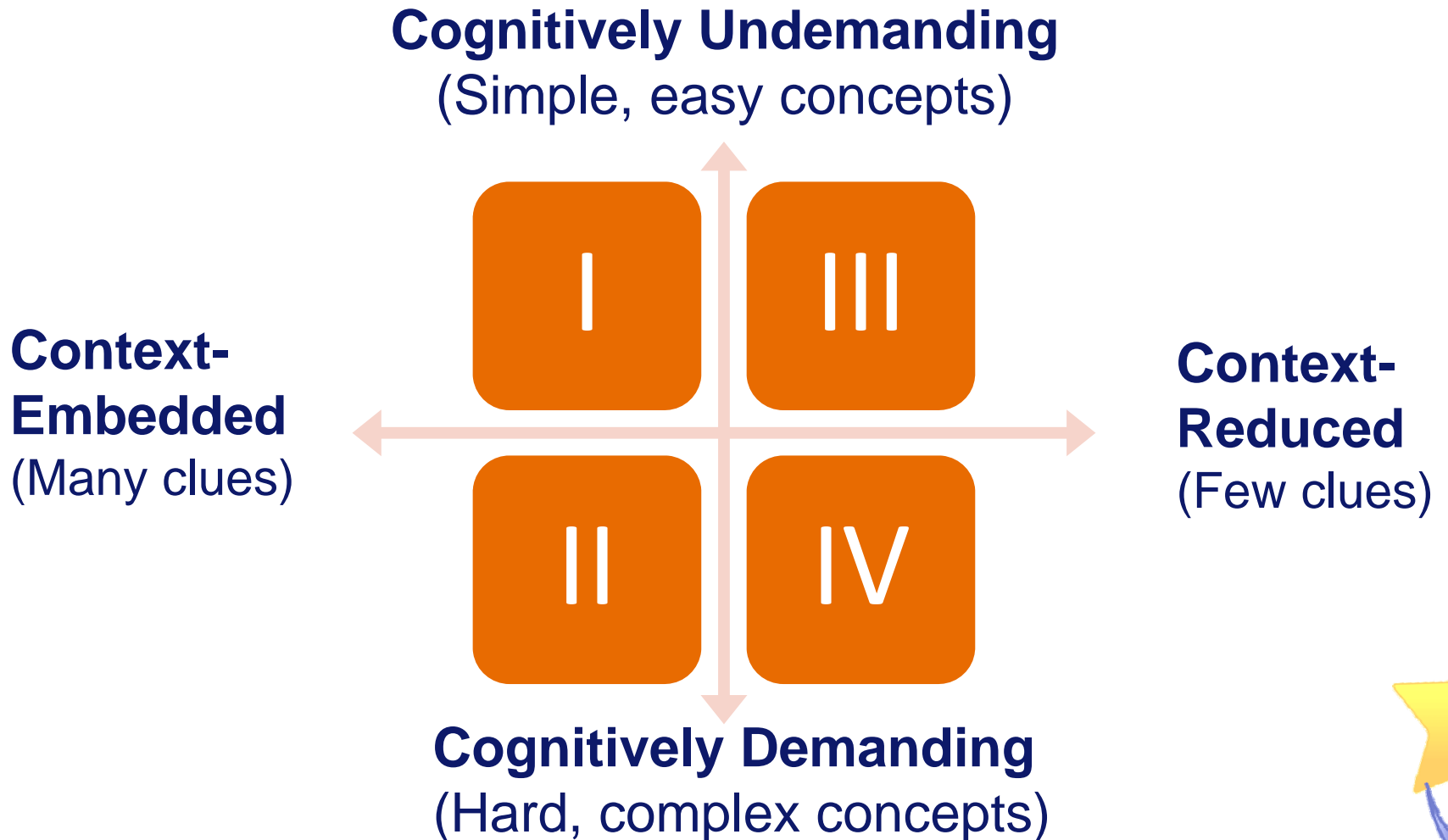
**Why is CALP (Academic Language) more difficult to attain?**

# Cummins' Four Quadrants Model

- ★ Communicative tasks (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in another language may be **easy or difficult** depending on the **task** itself and the amount of **contextual support** provided.
- ★ The **demands** of a communicative task can be represented as a relationship between
  - ★ **Cognitive demand** – whether the concepts to be communicated are hard/complex or easy/simple and
  - ★ **Contextual support** – whether there are additional clues to support communication.



# Cummins' Four Quadrants Model

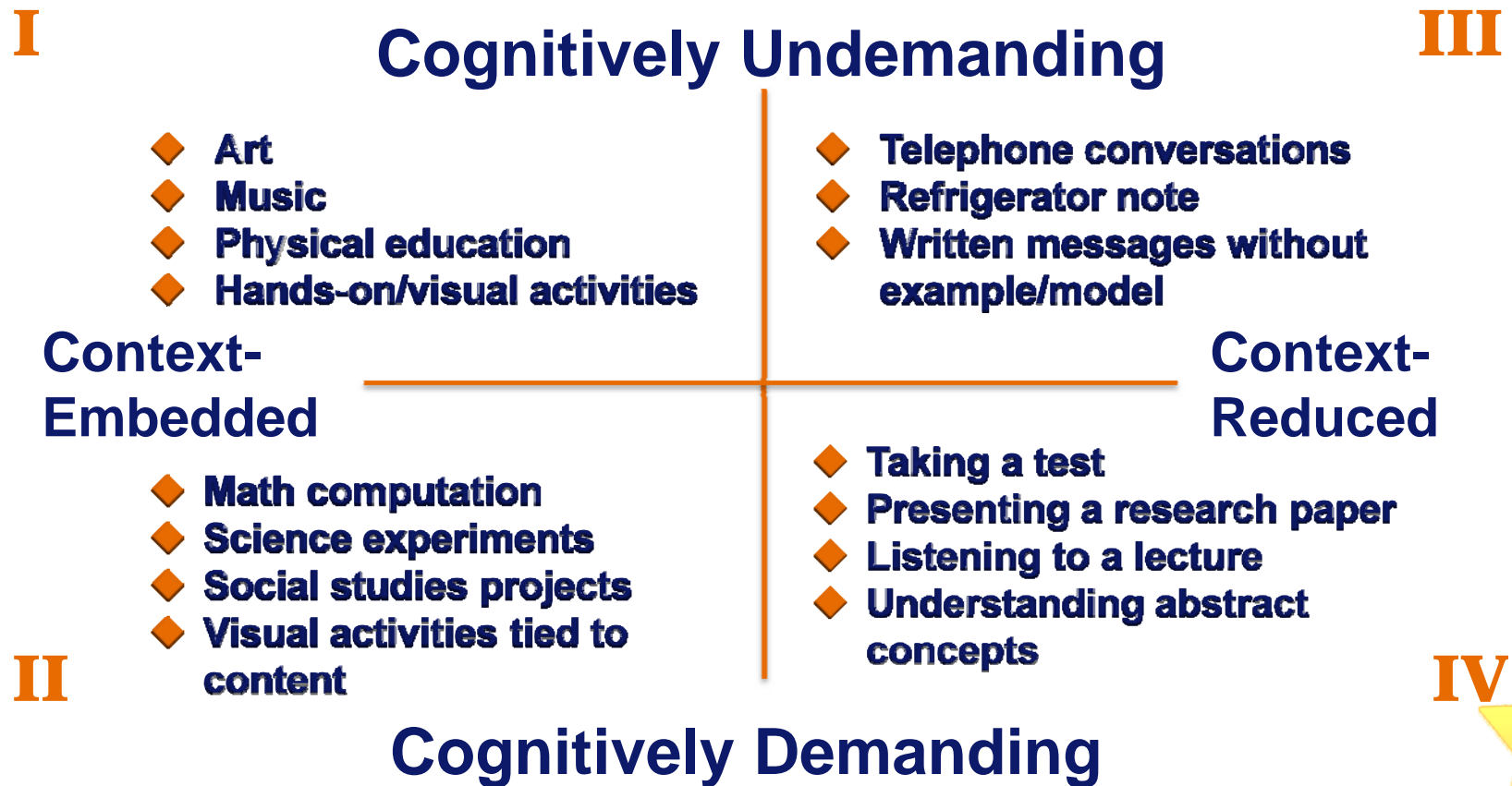


Source: Adapted from Echavarría & Graves, 2011 OR Cummins, 1981b

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# Common Classroom Activities in the Four Quadrants



How can you use Cummins' Model in your classroom?



# Other SLA Theories – Correcting ELLs' Language Use

- ★ *Errors* are different from *Mistakes* (Corder, 1967).
  - ★ **Mistakes:** performance slips, can be self-corrected, common to Native speakers
  - ★ **Errors:** reflect a learner's underlying system of rules – his/her progress towards acquiring language
- ★ Errors are not to be avoided and immediately corrected – use as a window into the SLA process.
- ★ However, ELLs need explicit instruction and feedback to refine language.

**What should teachers keep in mind when correcting an ELL?**

Source: Corder, S. P. 1967. "The significance of learners' errors". *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 5: 161-9!

# Instructional Implications

- ★ Use what ELLs bring (previous knowledge, L1) to develop L2.
  - ★ Find out what ELLs bring and capitalize on it.
- ★ Make sure to consider both BICS and CALP when assessing a student's language proficiency level.
- ★ Be aware of cognitive demands and context clues in tasks.
  - ★ Provide contextual clues for cognitively demanding tasks.



# Stages of Second Language Acquisition & Factors that Influence It

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# Stages of SLA

- ★ All second language learners go through stages of language acquisition until reaching proficiency.
- ★ These stages are similar to first language acquisition stages.
- ★ Compare and contrast two set of SLA stages:
  - ★ Krashen & Terrell (1983): five stages of second language acquisition
  - ★ WIDA ELD Standards: six levels of language proficiency

**How could you use these stages/levels in your classroom?**



# Stages of SLA – Instructional Implications

- ★ Teachers should know and understand at which stage of SLA each ELL is in order to effectively **differentiate instruction**.
- ★ Knowing the proficiency level or SLA stage of each ELL helps teachers
  - ★ Ask high-order thinking questions,
  - ★ Design appropriate tasks and scaffolding,
  - ★ Choose appropriate language objectives and assessments (set appropriate expectations),
  - ★ Distinguish between language acquisition and potential disabilities.

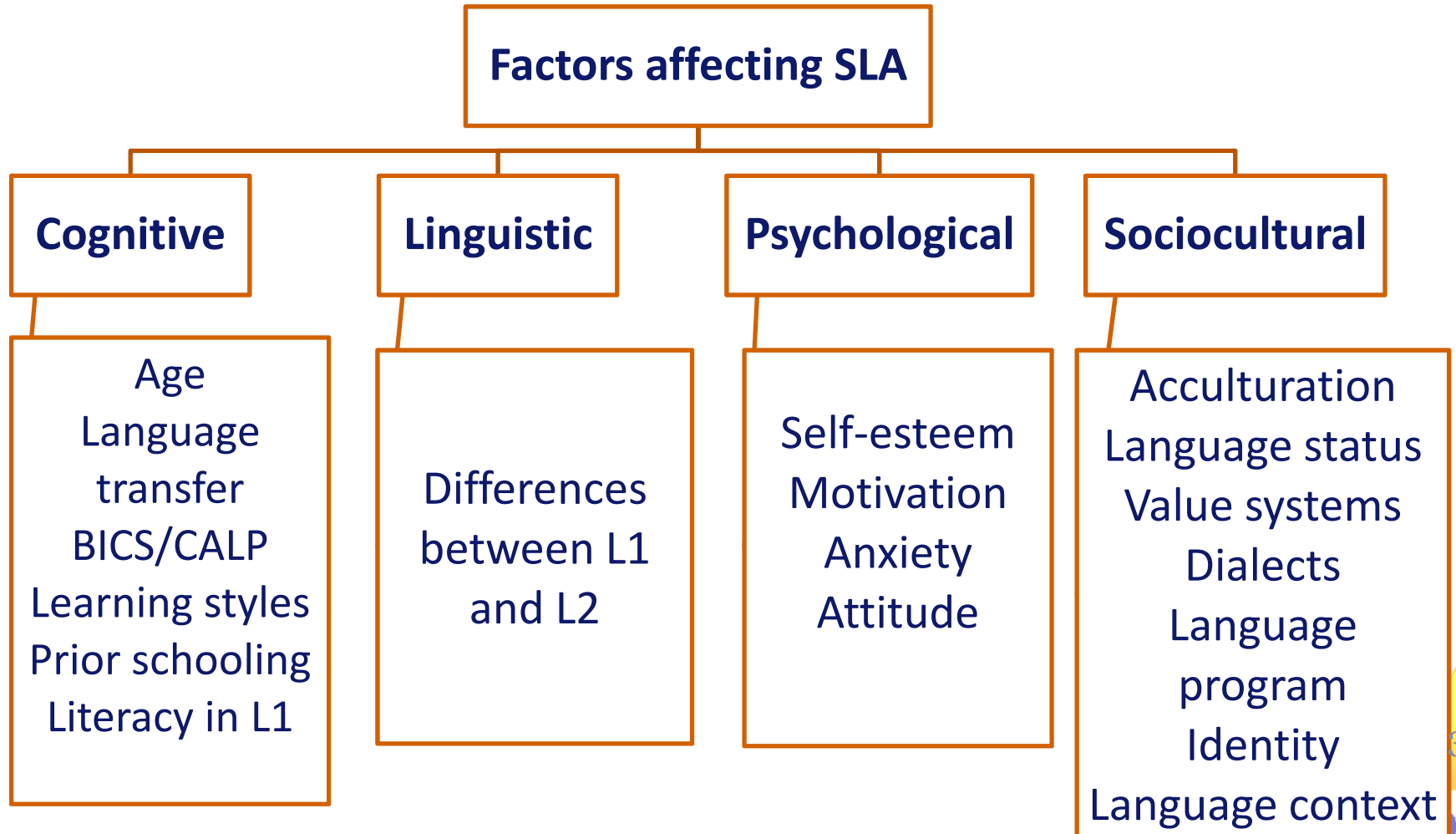


# How Long Does It Take an ELL to Reach Proficiency?

- ★ Rate of second language acquisition is influenced by a host of factors:
  - ★ Cognitive – learner’s cognitive abilities
  - ★ Psychological – learner’s personality or emotions
  - ★ Sociocultural – social and cultural norms
  - ★ Linguistic – related to L1 and L2
  - ★ Instructional – quality of instruction
- ★ Second language acquisition process is different for *each ELL*: different rate, different trajectory to proficiency



# Factors that Influence SLA



# Sociocultural Factors Affect SLA in a Variety of Ways

- ★ Family cultural capital plays an important role in learning for all students:
  - ★ **Cultural capital:** human, social, and material resources families can use to reach desired goals
  - ★ Home literacy practices, parents' English language and educational level, SES
- ★ Identity issues
  - ★ Social and cultural norms of L2 may conflict with ELLs' L1 culture
  - ★ Resistance to learning L2 as a way of maintaining L1 culture, ELL may be teased for acculturation





# Sociocultural Factors Affect SLA in a Variety of Ways (cont.)

- ★ Sociocultural factors can interfere with opportunities for language learning interactions
  - ★ Specific cultural expectations and norms in L1 or L2 culture
  - ★ **Social distance:** degree of acceptance or rejection of social intercourse between individuals belonging to diverse racial, ethnic, or class groups (Merriam Webster)

Source: <http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/social%20distance>



# Analyzing Sociocultural Factors: ELL Scenarios

- ★ Analyze how sociocultural factors may affect second language acquisition in each given scenario.
- ★ Discuss the guiding questions for each scenario.
  - ★ What role could family/school/cultural norms and conventions, identity, and other sociocultural factors play in each student's language development?
  - ★ What advice would you give their teachers?

**Do you have a scenario of your own to share? After today's lesson, do you have new insights about it?**



# One Key Take Away: the Affective Filter

- ★ Affective variables play a significant role in language development.
  - ★ They are closely related to other individual variables: age, personality, motivation, and identity.
  - ★ High *affective filter* impedes communication.
- ★ Top priority for teachers of ELLs: Lower the affective filter
  - ★ Maintain a low-anxiety learning environment that still provides challenging input and output opportunities.

**How can teachers maintain a low affective filter without diminishing rigor?**



# In Conclusion, Remember...

- ★ To provide challenging, yet comprehensible input in a non-threatening environment in which EVERYONE is valued;
- ★ That social language skills develop faster than academic language;
  - ★ Students may seem fluent with friends, but struggle with academic language.
  - ★ Students need explicit instruction in how English works.
- ★ That language is inherently connected to culture, so consider sociocultural factors when analyzing ELLs' instructional needs.



# In Conclusion, Remember...

- ★ To maximize language development by providing opportunities for natural conversations and negotiation of meaning;
  - ★ Create authentic communicative tasks where language is used as it is in the “real world.”
- ★ To maintain tight balance between explicit error correction and no feedback;
  - ★ Keep a low-anxiety environment (allow time for “silent period”), but provide supports to push for the next level.
  - ★ Best feedback is at the  $i + 1$  level.



# Assignments & Preparing for Upcoming Sessions

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# Assignments due by Session 5

## Journal Entry on Moodle:

- ★ Describe several different ways in which you help to keep your English learners' affective filters low. This might include any aspects of your classroom environment, teaching practice, or interpersonal interactions with students and families. Include some additional ideas you are considering as a result of course readings or discussions.



# Required Readings for Session 5

- ★ Echevarria, J. and A. Graves. 2011. Sheltered instruction in the content areas. In *Sheltered Content Instruction: Teaching English learners with Diverse Abilities*, 4th ed., 44–54. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- ★ Coleman, R. and C. Goldenberg. 2010. What does research say about effective practices for ELLs? *Kappa Delta Pi Record* 46 (2): 60–65.

