



LANGUAGE AWARENESS FOR TEACHERS

Key Takeaways

Definitions

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are the language skills used to communicate in informal situations e.g. in the playground, on the phone, chatting.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is the level of language skill required to explain complex concepts in an academic context.

Functional language is the type of language required to perform tasks e.g. making a complaint, giving an opinion, asking and answering questions etc.

Content-obligatory language is the language that is specific to a certain topic within a subject e.g. Industrial Revolution, factories, steam engine.

Content-compatible language is more general language related to a subject e.g. to cause, to affect, to take place, to invent.

Fun Facts

Speaking multiple languages has many cognitive benefits e.g. improved working memory, attention, selection and problem solving skills.

Skills learned in one language can be transferred to other languages so learning multiple languages supports development in all.

Different types of language develop at different speeds and learners may have varying fluency levels depending on skills or situations.

There are many reasons why an EAL pupil may be silent or appear not to be making progress e.g. undiagnosed SEN, trauma, home life, making progress in other areas.

All learners need to have explicit language teaching to support their CALP development.

Teacher Tips

Tidy up your speech: use fewer words, avoid filler words, model correct grammar.

Slow down!

Rephrase.

Give your learners clues (visual, body language, gestures).

Use concept and instruction checking questions.

FlashAcademy® Helpful Resources

Strategies to Support resource

Proficiency Framework

Language Outcomes Planning Tool

Language Profiles

Extra Reading

Chadwick, T. (2012). Language Awareness in Teaching: A Toolkit for Content and Language Teachers. Cambridge University Press.

Lightbrown, P. and Spada, N. (2013). How Languages are Learned. Oxford University Press.

Swan, M. and Smith, B. (2001). Learner English: A Teacher's Guide to Interference and Other Problems. Cambridge University Press.

<https://www.cambridge-community.org.uk/professional-development/gswla/index.html>