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## Concepts to Remember for Preservice Teachers when Working with English Learners Students during CalTPA Cycle 1

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**Concepts to Remember for Preservice Teachers when Working with  
English Learners Students during CalTPA Cycle 1**

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Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy Stipends (Q2S-EP) Community of Practice Report  
Supporting and Mentoring Teacher Candidates during  
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### Abstract

The Community of Practice Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy where I participated focused on “*Supporting and Mentoring Teacher Candidates during Teaching Performance Assessment*”. This CP discussed and shared information on best pedagogical practices for teaching, supporting, and mentoring preservice teachers as they engage in identifying students with specific academic needs before planning, delivering, assessing and reflecting on tasks required by the state-mandated assessment (CalTPA). This test is required for certification. My contributions to this CP resulted in this reflection/handout. The most salient topics were Implementing Effective Instruction, which means being able to know and apply Standards-based Instruction, SDAIE methods, Lesson Planning, Differentiating Instruction for ELs, Engaging English Language Learners in Critical Thinking Skills, Incorporation of Technology for New Teachers, Building Resources lists, and continuing learning with Professional Development Opportunities.

**Keywords:** Q2S, pedagogical practices, English language learners, SDAIE, technology, resources for teaching, support, preservice teachers.

## Introduction

The US and California Departments of Education have in place educational policies and mandates that require all public schools to provide instruction to all students and ensure attention is given to the academic and linguistic needs of students whose primary language is other than English (English learners- ELs). ([US Department of Education](#), 2018)

A significant portion of students attending public schools in California are considered English Learners (EL) students. ELs in California constitute 19.3% (1,195, 988) of the total enrollment of students in the state's public schools system (CADOE, 2019). ELs, like any other student in the state, must have access and participate in a twenty-first-century education, in which they can master grade-level standards and attain high levels of English proficiency (CA, DOE, 2020). It is very likely that our future teachers will have English learners in their classrooms.

Our preservice teachers in order to get certified, must pass successfully the CalTPA Performance Assessment (Cycle 1 and 2) demonstrating competency of instructional planning, teaching, assessing, reflective and applying knowledge of pedagogical practices, including equitable and culturally responsive teaching to promote each student's academic success and well-being (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, [CTC], 2019).

### **How can a preservice teacher help English Language Learners in their classrooms?**

The students in our Credential Teacher Preparation Program for Single and Multiple Subjects must demonstrate knowledge and ability to work with ELs in order to get certified. They need to identify an appropriate content focus, and develop a lesson plan based on the applicable California content standards and/or frameworks, content-specific pedagogy, and knowledge of the student, describing assets and learning needs of the students (CalTPA, 2019).

For this purpose, well-prepared teachers of ELs possess a deep understanding of second language acquisition theory and the correlation between primary and second language development of oral and literacy skills, are knowledgeable of different pedagogical practices, and possess the knowledge and ability to differentiate instruction based on student's language proficiency levels and learning abilities.

All preservice teachers in our program receive instruction on [Second Language Acquisition Theories](#) and the different cognitive demands that social and academic language require for learning in a second language. According to Krashen (Schütz, 1998), "language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill" and "comprehensible input" is the crucial and necessary ingredient for the acquisition of language". The best methods, according to Krashen, are those that "supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really understand. For this reason, SDAIE methods help teachers communicate the lessons in a low stress, safe and friendly environment suitable for language acquisition without forcing or correcting students' language production.

Cummin's conceptual distinction about the nature of language proficiency (1979, 1980) furthers preservice understanding of the language demands required to be successful in a classroom. There are distinct language demands for communicating and understanding academic content. Cummins (2008) suggest that teachers should focus attention

on creating instructional and learning environments that maximize the language and literacy development of socially marginalized students. Because academic language is found primarily in written text, extensive engaged reading is likely to be a crucial component of an effective learning environment. (p. 82)

Cummins also supports the idea of creating spaces for collaborative learning and talk about the text, and provide opportunities for authentic writing to consolidate aspects of the academic language they have been reading.

Last, Cummins conceptual distinction about the nature of language proficiency, the preservice teacher must have deeper "understanding of the nature of academic language and its relationships both to conversational fluency and other forms of literacy." (p. 82) The understanding of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS "involve those language skills and functions that allow students to communicate in everyday social contexts that are similar to those of the home" (Diaz-Rico, 2019, p. 49). CALP is the language needed to perform school tasks successfully" (p. 46) such as comparing, analyzing, categorizing, etc. CALP focuses on depth of knowledge that characterizes a well-rounded student in our modern society.

The preservice teacher must understand that BICS and CALP language skills develop at different times, and an English language learner transfer his/her knowledge from their native to the second language, thus requiring of constant teaching and learning of academic and specific vocabulary to convey meaning in English. BISCs and CALP are concepts that may present challenges for planning and delivery of instruction if not learned and understood by our preservice teachers. Cummins theory places emphasis on creating language and text rich environments and the time that a person takes to learn a concept in the second language. BICS takes 1-2 years to develop and is associated with language used for every day communication. CALP is more demanding and complex than social language taking from 5-7 years to develop. Developing BICS and CALP is necessary for ELs in order to be successful at school. The preservice teachers must understand these concepts, BICS and CALP, when writing lesson plans and planning opportunities for interactions that support social and academic language acquisition. These theories are embedded in the SS and MS Credential curriculum (EELB313 and ESEC 413 courses).

In addition, preservice teachers also need to prepare ELs "with the linguistic, academic, and social skills and competencies they require for college, career, and civic participation in a global, diverse, and multilingual world, thus ensuring a thriving future for California." ([CA, DOE, 2020](#)). English language learners bring to the classroom unique knowledge and experiences that help enrich the lessons. Thus, preservice teachers must be able to get to know their students' culture, learning styles, and connect instruction with their background knowledge. Preservice teachers need to tap on students' "funds of knowledge" and, provide explicit, sequential, and

scaffolded direct instruction while maintaining lessons that are culturally relevant and comprehensible. Students get access to the same curriculum as their English-only speakers.

For English language development, teachers must think how to provide opportunities for the student to use primary language while developing second language in and outside the classroom, allow for social and academic interactions between student/student and student/teacher. Preservice teachers must consider important to make differentiation of instruction based on language proficiency levels of their students (beginners, intermediate or advanced) and provide opportunities for ELs to engage in the practice of all language domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Preservice teachers must be well verse in the English Language Development Standards (ELDs) and identify the tasks, skills, and knowledge of language that ELs must achieve before moving to more advanced language proficiency levels. Thus, differentiating instruction according to language proficiency and content knowledge.

In addition, preservice teachers must understand how to merge and implement English language development standards and teach content that is comprehensible to the student, make connections with the lesson by tapping into EL students' funds of knowledge, life experiences, and support primary language use to gain new educational experiences.

### **Implementing Effective Instruction: Standards-based Instruction, SDAIE, Lesson Planning and Differentiating Instruction for Els**

#### **Standards-Based Instruction**

The preservice teacher must follow and be knowledgeable of state content and language standards to plan instruction and development of lesson objectives in order to meet grade level academic goals . Below are the main state standards for K-12 grade levels:

California State Board of Education. (2012). *California English Language Development Standards* <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/eldstndpublication14.pdf>

California State Board of Education. (2013). *California Common Core State Standards English/Language Arts in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects* <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>

Curriculum and Instruction Subject Areas

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/cimegasubjectareas.asp>

Next Generation Science Standards

<http://static.nsta.org/ngss/20130509/CombinedTopicArrangementBookmarked5.1.13.pdf>

These standards guide instruction in public schools from PK-12 and preservice teachers should have copies and/or easy access to each of these materials above when planning for instruction.

#### **Planning for Instruction**

A major challenge for any preservice teachers is designing and implementing a lesson plan. The teacher must be familiarized with SDAIE strategies, English language development standards and Universal Learning Design to plan for effective instruction. Preservice students must learn how to prepare and delivery lessons that meet the cultural, social, cognitive, and psychological needs of English learners. They also must learn how to provide primary language support in

addition to developing English as a second language in their classrooms. SDAIE or Specially Design Academic Instruction in English is an approach to teach academic content and make learning comprehensible. In addition, preservice teachers must know their students prior content knowledge and language proficiency levels to modify instruction. English learners perform better academically and socially when they have access to instruction that is conducive to their learning.

### **ELDs and SDAIE**

Content standards and English language development standards (ELDs) in addition to SDAIE or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English are part of the planning of instruction. When well implemented, SDAIE facilitates the learning of subject matter and acquisition of the second language in a cognitive demanding environment (Boyle and Peregoy, 2017). I suggest using the following checklist when preparing a lesson plan.

#### **SDAIE Effective English Learner Instruction Checklist**

(adapted from Peregoy & Boyle, 2017)

1. The teacher organizes instruction around grade-appropriate content, often theme-based (i.e., literature, math, science, integrated themes, and social studies).
  - a. Instruction provides access to the core curriculum
  - b. Content is academically demanding
  - c. Language objectives are established according to students' English language proficiency levels concerning the language demands of lesson
  - d. Language and content learning are integrated
  - e. Content is presented from multicultural perspectives
2. The teacher designs appropriate learning sequences.
  - a. Assesses and builds on students' interests and prior knowledge, including cultural knowledge
  - b. Explains the purpose of activity
  - c. Helps students develop learning strategies for reading, writing, thinking, problem solving
  - d. Provides multiple opportunities for students to process information verbally and nonverbally (draw, dramatize, discuss, review, question, rehearse, read, write about)
3. The teacher modifies language used during instruction.
  - a. May use slightly slower speech rate
  - b. Speaks clearly, repeating if needed
  - c. Defines new words in meaningful context
  - d. Paraphrases in simple terms when using more sophisticated forms of expression
  - e. Limits use of idiomatic speech
4. The teacher supports verbal explanations with nonverbal cues

- a. Gestures, facial expressions, action to dramatize meaning
  - b. Props, concrete materials
  - c. Graphs, pictures, visuals, maps
  - d. Films, videotapes, overhead projector, bulletin board displays
5. The teacher plans ways to ensure the participation of all students, keeping in mind the English proficiency of each student.
- a. Monitors lesson comprehension and clarifies concepts as needed
  - b. Reviews main ideas and key vocabulary
  - c. Plans for students to actively participate in learning activities verbally and nonverbally according to functional English abilities
  - d. Provides opportunities for students to contribute based on their modalities of strength: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, oral, written pictorial
6. The teacher provides a variety of flexible grouping formats to provide opportunities for social, linguistic, and academic development.
- a. Heterogeneous groups
  - b. Pair work
  - c. Short-term skill groups
  - d. Teacher-student conferencing
7. The teacher provides a variety of assessment methods that permit students to display learning through their modalities of strength (e.g., oral, written, visual, kinesthetic, auditory, pictorial).
- a. Performance-based assessment
  - b. Portfolio assessment
  - c. Learner self-assessment
  - d. If used, standardized tests are modified to accommodate English learners (e.g., extra time to complete)

### **Implementing Universal Design for Learning**

English learners benefit from the differentiation of instruction and assessment when SDAIE and UDL are implemented. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework “to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.” (CAST, 2018). As SDAIE, UDL guidelines help with the differentiation of instruction. UDL focuses on three learning networks: affective, recognition, and strategic. These three refer to the Why, What, and How of learning. The teacher designs instruction in a way that removes barriers to learning and creates flexible paths for learning (engagement for learning, representation of information, and content representation). To understand the framework and how UDL can be used,

- handouts can be downloaded by accessing the UDL Guidelines at <http://udlguidelines.cast.org/>



- a video-clip about Universal Design for Learning <https://youtu.be/bDvKnY0g6e4>
- Universal Learning Design provides multiple opportunities for English learners to practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the classroom by Novak, K. (2019, March 9). Why UDL Matters for English Language Learners? *Language Magazine*. <https://www.languagemagazine.com/2020/03/09/why-udl-matters-for-english-language-learners-2/>

### Engaging English Language Learners in Critical Thinking Skills

The development of critical thinking skills is essential for meeting college and career readiness standards ([CA Common Core Standards](#)). Preservice teachers can learn how to implement cognitive demanding tasks with the help of questions stems and Bloom's Taxonomy levels. The following resources assist in the development of lessons using sentence stems organized by different levels of difficulty.

- Actively Learn. (n.d.). *What is Depth of Knowledge? Add Depth of Knowledge*. <https://help.activelylearn.com/hc/en-us/articles/115000831414-Add-Depth-of-Knowledge>
- Teaching with Infographics: A Modern Approach to Posters. *Empowering ELLs*. <https://www.empoweringells.com/infographics/>
- [Different Types of Question based on Bloom's Taxonomy](#)
- Bloom's Critical Thinking Cue Questions [www.saydel.k12.ia.us](http://www.saydel.k12.ia.us)

### Incorporation of Technology for Teaching and Learning

The integration of technology for teaching and learning is one of the standards that preservice teachers must demonstrate competency as well. English learners are also expected to learn and use technology while learning content and acquiring their second language.

On Feb 25, 2020, I attended the Annual National Association of Bilingual Education Conference in Las Vegas, NV. The information gained from a session titled “Integrating Technology in the classroom to enhance academic vocabulary: A six step process to improve instruction” (Martínez & Garza, 2020) was relevant for teaching ELs through the use online tools. This session was geared toward practitioners and preservice teachers at the K-12 level. Based on Marzano’s (2004) framework for building background knowledge for academic achievement, the presenters suggested strategies for introducing, practicing, and assessing academic language with technology.

Introduction, Practice, and Assessment

- Introduction to new words, academic language, and subject matter concepts using online dictionaries: [Vidtionary](#), [Lexipedia](#), [Visuwords](#), [wordhippo](#), and [Google Dictionary \(a Chrome extension\)](#).
- Practice and review of vocabulary words suggestions for activities and games such as Who/What I am? Pictionary, Jeopardy, Bingo, or Spelling City, Padlet, LMS Edmodo, QR Code CodeWordWall, Vo-back-ulary, and Google docs for collaboration.

- Assessment of vocabulary and content concepts, platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Quizlet, Socrative could be as engaging as games and are less threatening to ELs.

From other sessions, teaching online for developing academic language and content can be implemented by using

- **Educreations** is a platform for teaching and learning with options to record video tutorials, supports different document formats, insert webpages, pictures, or any content to be shared with students <https://www.educreations.com/>
- **Explaineverything** is an interactive whiteboard to teach present, sketch, note, create videos, and collaboration work completely online and mobile app. This will a good tool for providing opportunities to Els to develop, share, and practice language skills while developing content. <https://explaineverything.com/>
- **Flipgrid** is an online tool to record and share short videos <https://info.flipgrid.com/>
- **Edpuzzle** is an online tool to make videos and check students' comprehension of the content presented. <https://edpuzzle.com/>
- **Padlet** is an online tool that helps to post, copy and paste, drag, and drop anything. Uses sigh, sound, and touch. <https://padlet.com/features>

### Where to Go in case of more help?

#### Resources

Build a repertoire of resources and/or create a portfolio on topics of interest for EL instruction. For example, I selected *Colorín Colorado* (n/d). **Teaching English Language Learners**. This website has a plethora of resources for teachers (new and veterans), parents, administrators, and community members interested in the education and well-being of students, mainly students whose primary language is other than English (ELs). In the section “*Teaching English Learners*” the preservice teacher can access videos podcasts, ideas, strategies, recommendations, and resources addressing every aspect of instruction, delivery, and assessment of English Learners at K-12 levels at different language proficiency skills. <https://www.colorincolorado.org/teaching-english-language-learners>

#### Continuing Learning: Professional Development Opportunities

Last, having access to Webinars, Blogs, or attending Conferences, preservice teachers can continue with their professional development. These, outside the classroom resources, are a good way to keep current with our profession, current research and teaching practices. The selected organization promote, advocate, and support the learning of English learners. This are the major associations/organizations on Els.

- Annual Conference National Association of Bilingual Education ([NABE](#))
- Annual Conference California Association of Bilingual Education ([CABE](#))
- Annual Conference California Teachers of Students of Other Languages ([CATESOL](#))

- Annual Conference Teacher of Students of Other Languages ([TESOL](#))
- Webinars by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition ([NCELA](#))
- Intercultural Development Research Association ([IDRA](#))
- Institutes by Center of Applied Linguistics ([CAL](#))

Preservice teachers are responsible for the education of all students, particularly English language learners. Getting to know your students' culture, language, and learning styles, connect instruction with their background knowledge, tap on students' "funds of knowledge" and, provide explicit, sequential direct instruction while maintaining lessons that are culturally relevant and comprehensible to meet the state mandated standards is what I hope preservice students are able to do.

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