'Quadrants' Model: What Can Students Do in Each Quadrant?

Canadian language researcher **Dr. Jim Cummins** created a four-quadrant model to illustrate how the variables of ***cognitive demand*** and ***context*** impact language learning and progress from BICS to CALP. Canadian author and EAL specialist **Elizabeth Coelho** adapted the Cummins' model by repositioning Quadrants D to the upper right corner (See Adding English, Second Edition. 2016. p. 294). Coelho warns that Quadrant D is a potential 'boredom zone'. The chart below is a blend of both the Cummins and Coelho Quadrants (adapted by Nadia Prokopchuk).

CONTEXT EMBEDDED

COGNITIVELY UNDEMANDING

Quadrant A - **BICS***, beginner language levels, language to fulfill basic needs.

Learners can:

- answer yes/no or short answer questions
- buy lunch, shop for personal items
- carry on friendly conversations
- send greetings or participate in chats using social networking.
- do basic math (using numbers, symbols, measurement terms)
- describe everyday routines or events
- understand class or game rules
- write short notes or make lists (e.g. grocery list, phone contacts)
- read signs, symbols, announcements, charts, brochures, simple maps, bus routes, schedules, posters (with the help of illustrations or photos)
- understand storytelling with props, gestures, dramatic interpretations

Quadrant D - routine, commonplace tasks involving minimal cognitive demand ***and*** very low anxiety levels.

Learners can:

- follow instructions to conduct a simple lab experiment or fill out an application
- complete math calculations, formulas, and questions containing common math terms
- read and relate basic news items from media sources such as newspapers or telecasts
- understand or give instructions for specific needs in familiar situations
- understand the meaning of abbreviations
- learn about driving rules using signs and symbols
- make a short presentation on a familiar topic
- locate basic information in books, reference guides, or electronically.
- understand phone calls, recorded messages, radio broadcasts, announcements
- conduct a simple interview
- make personal entries in a journal, diary or blog

Quadrant B – **"BICS bridging to CALP"** hands-on or analytical tasks involving higher level cognitive functions.

Learners can:

- record chemistry procedures from an experiment
- find geographic locations on a map or with the help of technology
- learn to drive, with guidance
- problem-solve using math manipulatives, charts, graphs, or supporting technology
- represent knowledge in various ways for school assignments or projects
- participate in artistic productions, such as drama, music, or dance
- analyze information using comparative charts or other organizational tools
- comprehend video presentations, news
- reports, or lectures on subject-specific topics (with visual cues such as charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations, maps)

Quadrant C- **CALP**** or advanced language fluency

Learners can:

- understand text-dense lectures, seminars, most literary genres, lengthy texts
- read or write editorials, critiques, reports
- conduct in-depth research
- participate in literature circles, book reviews, debates
- explain subject specific concepts from the sciences, humanities or social sciences.
- express a point of view using subject specific concepts and terms.
- participate in or conduct in-depth interviews
- synthesize information from various sources to create presentations on academic topics
- respond to text-dense multiple choice questions or open-ended essay questions.
- deliver lengthy monologues, lectures, or speeches.

COGNITIVELY DEMANDING

CONTEXT REDUCED

***BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills** ****CALP Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency**

Definitions:

"Cognitively Undemanding" indicates that language learners have ***many*** surrounding cues, visuals, gestures, sounds, or props to support comprehension. Learners use these contextual cues to guess meaning, predict responses, or participate in a task. Language demands are simple and uncomplicated, allowing users to carry out everyday tasks in the home, school, or community.

"Cognitively Demanding" means that language is supported by ***very few*** contextual cues, visuals, or props. Language is often text-dense and focused on specialized, academic, or abstract topics. Some examples: subject specific presentations, editorials, critiques, essays, reports, lectures, journal abstracts or research articles use cognitively demanding language.

"Context Embedded" indicates that environmental or other clues are available to assist the learner in understanding what is being communicated. In other words, the 'setting' provides clues to help the learner understand and respond. Environmental clues might be oral prompts, illustrations, props, demonstrations, gestures, maps, charts, posters, or realia*.

"Context Reduced" means that there are very few clues available in the environment to help the learner gather the meaning of the communication (oral or written). In other words, the learner must rely on personal language proficiency and knowledge of specialized vocabulary.

**realia – objects or activities used to relate classroom teaching to real life (synonym – 'real things')*

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