**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)**

***Definitions and Implications for the Classroom***

**What Identifies a Student as ELL?**

Put simply, an English Language Learner (ELL) is a person who needs support with the English Language. ELLs vary in terms of level or language proficiency and time spent in Canada. The following categories define the three main types of ELLs in our division.

1. **Newly Arrived with Adequate Schooling:**

These students have recently arrived in Canada, but have attended school in their country up to appropriate grade level. There may be cultural differences, but they basically understand school culture and are familiar with most content and academic assessment. Examples may include students from “western countries” such as France, Spain or Germany; as well as students from Asia, such as China or Japan.

1. **Students with Limited Formal Schooling:**

These students are also new arrivals, but may have either not attended school before or have had interrupted schooling. Examples include refugee students.

1. **Long-Term English Learners:**

These students have been in Canada for seven years or more. Many were born here, but they may speak another language at home or have parents who do not speak (much) English. Examples include, students whose parents immigrated from another country, students who came to Canada when they were very young and aboriginal students, particularly our Cree and Dene speakers from northern Canada.

**Implications in the Classroom**:

1. **Newly Arrived With Adequate Schooling:**

These students tend to be familiar with most assessment methods, instructions and content. Some may even be ahead of grade level in content, such as in math. The main challenges for these students tend to be cultural – they are often accustomed to more traditional formal education where the teacher talks and students listen. These students may need some time before they are comfortable participating, making eye contact and offering opinions in class. They often respond well to structure, homework and learning facts. They do tend to catch on quickly to English and culture and often require the least ongoing English support.

1. **Students With Limited Formal Schooling:**

These students require considerable support in English and school culture. They are learning every day English (social English), academic English as well as the initial content. Whereas the ELLs with adequate formal schooling may be simply translating what they already know, ELLs with limited formal schooling often lack prior knowledge in content areas and classroom procedures. These students tend to be refugees and may also be suffering from trauma, extreme culture shock and other psychological or even physical (malnutrion) issues. These students require considerable support in terms of culture and catching up to the language and content of their peers.

1. **Long-Term English Learners:**

These students also need support with English – mainly academic English. These students often go undetected as ELLs because they tend to master social English and others think that it is logical that they are fluent English speakers since they have been here for so long. Often these students need help with literacy, academic or high level vocabulary, and writing and formal oral language skills. Because they go undetected as ELLs, they are often misdiagnosed as having learning disabilities or simply do not receive support. As a result, they tend to struggle in school, feel alienated and have very little confidence.

**Types of English:**

English can roughly be broken down into two main categories:

1. **BICS: Basic Intrapersonal Communication Skills**
   * Essentially this is social, everyday English.
   * Students hear it constantly and tend to pick it up within 1 to 3 years.
2. **CALPS: Cognitive Academic Proficiency Skills**
   * Essentially this is academic English. The chart below breaks down the two types of academic vocabulary.
   * CALPS is generally not how people speak, so students have less exposure to it.
   * It make take 7 -10 (some studies now say 12 years) years to catch up to same age peers.
   * CALPS is best and most quickly learned through:
     1. Explicit, repeated and meaningful instruction (i.e. teaching the vocabulary of your subject, posting the word on the wall and using it frequently so that exposure is high).
     2. Reading and constant exposure to fiction or non fiction text.

BREAKDOWN OF CLAPS OR ACADEMIC ENGLISH