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DEVELOPING COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (CALP) IN DIVERSE CLASSROOMS

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

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in the Department of English

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Abstract

Developing Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in Diverse Classrooms

The process of second language acquisition was studied by examining the distinction between basic interpersonal conversation skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). This distinction, originally proposed by linguist Jim Cummins, relates to current trends in the U.S public education system. A review of the literature was conducted and integrated with information obtained by interviewing local language arts teachers. The primary goal of the study was to learn how public school teachers conceptualize second language acquisition and literacy instruction. The thesis also addresses how the BICS/CALP distinction can be applied in real classroom settings. Teachers reported that low student motivation and various cultural factors affect second language acquisition. Further study is needed to determine the extent to which these factors affect the development of CALP. While developing CALP is especially critical for English Language Learner (ELL) student populations, teachers felt that intervention strategies will benefit all students.

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Introduction

Increasing language diversity is one of the greatest challenges and opportunities for teachers in American schools today. According to a recent report, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that "the 5.4 million LEP (Limited English Proficient) students in U.S schools are our fastest-growing student population and are expected to make up one out of every four students by 2025." There are consistent data from multiple sources that indicates teachers in the United States are not meeting the needs of diverse learners. The resulting achievement gaps are especially pronounced in low-income and urban communities. According one researcher, certain trends continue to hold true in some subject areas, including language arts. For example,

> In 1999, by the end of high school only 1 in 50 Latinos and 1 in 100 African American 17-year-olds can read and gain information from specialized text—such as the science section in the newspaper (compared to about 1 in 12 whites), and fewer than one-quarter of Latinos and one-fifth of African Americans can read the complicated but less specialized text that more than half of white students can read (Haycock, 2001).

While educational inequity is certainly a daunting challenge, this thesis focused specifically on how linguistic research informs teaching practices to address the learning needs of ELL (English Language Learners) in today's classrooms.

Literature Review

The work of one linguist, researcher Jim Cummins, was particularly relevant to the goals of this study. Cummins has focused on language acquisition in bilingual children. His research began with a study conducted in 1979 that was based on the earlier work of Swedish scientist Skuthabb-Kangas Toukomaa (1976). Cummins and his team followed the progress of recent Swedish immigrants as they acquired a second language, English. They noticed two significant patterns in the language acquisition process. First, proficiency in the first language (L1) helped to develop the second language (L2). Cummins used the term developmental interdependence to

describe this interaction. The second observation was that older Swedish children seemed to do better at acquiring L2 proficiency. This observation led Cummins to believe that there was a difference between surface fluency and cognitively or academically related proficiency (1983). In time, Cummins began to describe surface fluency as basic interpersonal conversation skills (BICS), while higher level proficiency was called cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Thus, the BICS/CALP distinction was born to describe the different stages of second language acquisition.

As Cummins continued his work with bilingual children, other patterns began to emerge. A study conducted in 1981 revealed a specific time-line for the development of CALP. Most bilingual students were fluent in the second language 0-2 years after arrival; however, it took much longer, 5-7 years, for bilingual students to approach normal levels of CALP. This was a significant finding considering the economical, but less than effective, "quick exit" language programs of the 1980s. During this time, many school districts operated on reduced budgets. In an effort to save money and reduce class sizes, ELL students were rushed through language programs. Many educators mistakenly felt that language students with proficient BICS levels had full mastery of the English language. Later, literacy test results showed that bilingual students were unfairly disadvantaged. Cummins writes, "Assessments created academic deficits because they failed to distinguish between L2 BICS and L2 CALP" (1983). One of the greatest advantages of the BICS/CALP distinction is that it prevented the inappropriate use of standardized tests and intervened successfully to reverse inappropriate labeling and/or placement of students (Cummins 1983).

In addition to providing educators with a new way of talking about second language acquisition, the BICS/CALP framework also provides a continuum for describing language

activities in the classroom. This continuum is based on two intersecting ranges of cognitively demanding and undemanding activities and context embedded vs. context reduced activities (see Appendix B). Cummins's continuum (1981) combines and builds on the prior work of other linguists (Bruner, 1975; Donaldson 1978; and Olson 1977). Educators can assist students in acquiring CALP by scaffolding language instruction. The idea is to begin in quadrant A with context-embedded, cognitively undemanding activities and slowly progress to quadrant D, which includes fewer contexts and is more cognitively demanding. Cummins's continuum has profoundly influenced bilingual education and the way in which classroom language activities are assessed.

While many scholars have recognized how Cummins's work contributes to the on-going academic discussion related to second language acquisition (e.g. Cline & Frederickson, 1996), a recent article published by Maren Aukerman questions whether "the CALP designation itself tells us anything pedagogically useful about the children in question" (2007). Aukerman acknowledges the positive aspects of the distinction –mainly, that it provides teachers with a way of talking about second language acquisition and considers the students' proficiency in the native language—but feels that the BICS/CALP distinction is too narrowly defined and does not adequately represent a child's language capabilities. Aukerman writes, "Pedagogically, there is no 'prerequisite language' for success, no such thing as 'not enough CALP': there is only starting from where each particular child is, and working to help new academic material become sensible and relevant" (2007). Often it is the essential element of relevance that Aukerman feels is missing from language assessments and activities. The author concludes by summarizing the differences between decontextualized and recontextualized language. Essentially, Aukerman is stating that reading instructors should seek to more fully understand the student's home literacy

and frame of reference rather than categorizing them by using Cummins's BICS/CALP distinction.

Cummins has also been criticized by childhood reading specialist Carol Edelsky, who questions the way in which Cummins and his colleges define literacy—reading and writing activities—in terms of achievement test scores and "exercises with artificial texts" (1983). She believes that once Cummins's limited definitions of literacy are accepted, "it becomes necessary to explain failure...by blaming the learner, the teacher, the language of instruction, the materials, *anything* but examining the validity of how literacy was conceptualized in the first place" (1983). In addition to criticizing Cummins's research framework, Edelsky has argued that "the notion of CALP promotes a 'deficit theory' insofar as it attributes the academic failure of bilingual/minority students to low cognitive/academic proficiency rather than to inappropriate schooling" (1990). Edelsky, like Cummins, is a supporter of bilingual education, but feels that literacy incorporates a much broader spectrum of classroom tasks that cannot be classified according to the BICS/CALP distinction. In addition, Edelsky has advocated for a more holistic approach to language instruction. Given the concerns expressed Edelsky and Aukerman, this study seeks to examine both the strengths and the limitations of Cummins's framework as it relates to actual teaching practices.

Purpose and Methods

In order to determine how teachers conceptualize second language acquisition and literacy instruction, local secondary language arts teachers were interviewed. The interview component of this project was a qualitative case study relying heavily on thick descriptions. Eight secondary language arts teachers were involved in the study. Participants were selected from five different sites: two middle schools and three high schools from mostly rural and

suburban communities. The average class size for most teachers ranged from 20-35 students. Teaching experience of the individuals varied from 5 to 33 years. While some teachers may or may not have already understood the BICS/CALP distinction, in-depth knowledge of Cummins's work was not required for participation in the study. It should also be noted that Cummins's research was conducted as part of an immersion bilingual education program for Swedish immigrants. The teachers interviewed in this study worked mostly with Hispanic students in transitional bilingual programs. In addition, Cummins's research focuses more on the beginning stages of literacy taught in the primary grades of a child's education (K-3). The teachers interviewed for this study taught students in the secondary grade levels (7-12). While the contexts between Cummins's original research and the teaching situations in this study differed, the BICS/CALP distinction still applies to any level of student in any learning environment. The purpose of this research was not to reproduce Cummins's work but to see the framework he created at work in the classroom. The results from this study will provide a greater insight into the process of second language acquisition in contemporary classroom settings.

In addition to the primary and secondary interview strategies, a pre-interview survey was given to all participants. (See Appendix C.) The pre-interview survey was used to collect background information and some quantifiable information. It was decided that the survey would increase the efficiency of the interview process and maximize the amount of available information.

Guiding Research Questions

The following five research questions were asked to each participant: 1) How do the learning needs of ELL students differ in terms of number or degree from the needs of mainstream students? 2) How do teachers think CALP is relevant to their teaching practices? 3) How do teachers negotiate possible differences between home literacies and CALP? 4) What significant trends or changes in literacy instruction and students learning needs have occurred? 5) What should novice teachers know regarding students' learning needs, literacy or language instruction? (See Appendix D.) While guiding research questions were in place, if during the course of the interview the subject spontaneously provided the information, the researcher used discretion in skipping questions for the sake of honoring time restraints. The results of this study and the following discussion are organized according to the teachers' responses to each of the five research questions. For clarity's sake, the transcripts of the interviews are not presented in the main body of the text but can be found in their entirety in Appendix E.

Results

1) ***How do the learning needs of ELL students differ in terms of number or degree from the needs of mainstream students?***

In response to the first research question, many teachers described the particular learning needs of the ELL students in their classrooms. There was a general consensus that the ELL students had considerably more learning needs than their mainstream peers. One teacher stated, "I'd say they have significantly more needs than the native speakers in my classroom. In fact it's almost like when I plan my lessons now, they are my main focus."

In terms of academic content area areas, most teachers found that ELL students seem to have a more difficult time with reading comprehension and grammar. Teachers also mentioned that

ELL students may or may not have the same background knowledge as most mainstream students. In the following paragraphs, the teachers' concerns and specific strategies related to reading comprehension, grammar, and increasing background knowledge are presented.

Low reading comprehension is one example of how conversational skills in a second language do not always translate into academic language proficiency. One teacher observed, "I notice that [students were] able to go through the motions of being able to read, figuring out the words and stuff, but then the comprehension part is where they struggle the most." The teacher's comment illustrates how the BICS/CALP distinction often defines the difference between learning to read and reading to learn.

The academic language on standardized tests is another specific area of reading comprehension that many teachers are especially concerned about. One teacher held strong opinions about potential language bias in standardized tests. The following comment reveals the teacher's feelings on this subject:

> Tests are so hard, especially all those stupid –sorry use my word—standardized tests that we do. Last year, when I was looking over a kid's shoulder reading the end of level test, I thought 'Wow, there's some really specific test language here that I bet all the kids are thinking "what's that really asking?" 'so I know the ELL kids are in the dark. So one of the things we talked about as a department this year is try to think of some specific terms like that, just the academic terminology for lack of a better way to say it, that will help smooth their way.

In addition to reading comprehension, the teachers recognized other areas of the language arts curriculum such as writing and grammar that seem to be more challenging for their ELL students. One teacher articulated the BICS/CALP distinction as it applies to writing by stating, "They [ELL students] understand language, but they don't, it's hard, written language is hard." In this example, the teacher describes the difference between conversational, contextualized language, and decontextualized, academic language. Traditionally, grammar has been taught out

of context. Many teachers are concerned that all students, not just those with diverse language needs, do not understand the concepts that fall into the decontextualized end of Cummins's spectrum. One teacher made this observation by stating, "I think it's a little harder for them to grasp it [grammar], but most students have a hard time with grammar and parts of speech, and trying the subject-verb agreement and things like that."

2) How do teachers think CALP is relevant to their teaching practices?

Many teachers consider language to be "the number one factor." Language proficiency is often an indicator of future academic achievement. One teacher spoke directly on how CALP applies to students by stating, "They [students] need to know what it means to go beyond just the basic conversational skills...in order to be successful at school you have to get to the CALP." The teacher continued, "I think it [CALP] is relative to all [students]." Another noted the importance of language skills across disciplines by stating that students are "listening...speaking...reading, all day long, [in] every subject." Not only do students need strong language skills, many teachers feel that students' language is shifting more towards non-standard, non-academic dialects. One educator gave the following illustration:

> You have these little kids who have them now, and they're texting. I mean, there [are] little fourth graders who are texting. They're texting and they're doing the "lol" and they're doing the lower case "I" and they're doing all this stuff, it becomes a part of their fluency, which is going away from what's going to be on a standardized test. You know? And what's going to be on the ACT when they get older. So they've got to know the English skills, and they've got to learn how to separate the two, and it's getting harder, because they're so strong in the texting world and they're so strong in their technology world.

This is an intriguing example of how students' use of techno lingo and texting shorthand influences outcomes on standardized tests. The same teacher indicated that students vary in their abilities to code-switch between multiple discourses by stating,

> You always have the students who will always achieve, and be amazing students, those students will always succeed, and they'll always separate the text and the language and how you speak and then how you write, but you'll always have the students who get it all mixed up too.

3) How do teachers negotiate possible differences between home literacies and CALP?

One of the problems teachers encounter when trying to develop CALP is not only that students don't understand decontextualized vocabulary and background knowledge, but some students come to classrooms without an understanding of the language and culture of school. One educator pointed to the multiple linguistic and cultural discourses that students participate in by stating, "Written language is very different from spoken language. How you speak to your parents is different than how you speak to your friends is different from how you speak at work. I mean we have all these different types of language." Some teachers worry that students don't understand the language of school. Another commented, "We do spend time talking about the vocabulary too and teaching the vocabulary of school. Just so they understand what it is we are asking them to do." Across the board, several teachers mentioned that students, especially ELL students, don't know what to do. One instructor observed, "It's not that they can't do [assignments], it's that they're not understanding what we are saying to them." The following quote demonstrates how academic and behavior expectations are not always understood by students:

> Well if they, if the student's not verbalizing, if they're doing well in class, or if they're struggling in class, and they don't have the ability to come and chat with me about some difficulties that they have, then they become bored in class, and they're not going to do their assignment. They start failing in class, and they begin to give up because they start drowning. And, again this can be applied to all students out there that have a hard time.

While teachers felt that additional feedback can help students overcome academic hurdles, teachers must be able negotiate possible cultural differences between home and school learning

environments. One teacher mentioned that journaling is one activity teachers can use to narrow the gap between home and school. This teacher stated the following:

> I would have them write in journals and things I started to find out a lot… they were more worried about working, about getting enough money to take care of themselves, or to help out with just their mom who they are living with, or just their dad, or their uncle, or to send money back home.

The teacher continued, "Yeah, [journaling] is probably one of the best ways to get information, especially when I have the ELL class, and also my UBSCT (Utah Basic Skills Competency Test) class." Other teachers used activities besides journaling to specifically talk about culture in their classrooms. One teacher shared the following, "We also talk about culture. And I think that that's really important. What are the values in your culture as compared to the values in this culture? And understanding those cultural values really helps me to connect with them." Establishing a personal connection with students is another way in which teachers handle possible differences between home and school. One teacher described the importance of personal relationships at length by stating:

> What is important to me needs to become important to you, and if I can connect it to something that I know is important to you, then you're going to do better with it. And that's kind of where I go when I'm trying to learn about their cultural values and those kinds of things because I need to know how to make it important to them….if I can connect to them personally, then they are more willing to work for me….So sometimes it's just a one on one discussion, and as I'm walking by or catching them as they walk in the door, those kinds of things, just so that I can let them know that I think they're important.

While most teachers would agree that it's important to have appropriate, positive interpersonal relationships with their students, some teachers are more concerned than others about possible cultural conflicts. All teachers were sensitive to their students' needs, but teachers varied in their perceptions of cultural conflict in the classroom. One teacher felt that cultural differences were a big concern. One teacher stated, "Well I think my biggest concern is

that there seems to be sort of a cultural divide between what background they have and what they know and how well they fit in with the [school] culture. They seem to have either a difficult time or a kind of a propensity to not want to fit in to give up that culture." Other teachers were surprised by unexpected conflicts. The following example demonstrates an unexpected conflict between the culture of school and values taught to students at home. The teacher explained what happened and how she felt by stating,

> I had two students who cheated and I called them on it and gave them consequences and their parents were very upset, particularly one parent who told me that it was culturally acceptable for them to do that. But that in their culture everybody shared, that's what they did, didn't matter what the assignment said, I mean she just had a million cultural reasons why her son really didn't cheat although clearly he did. And that upset me and I would hope that's not the norm.

Even in the relativity homogenous communities of northern Utah, students and teachers have picked up on subtle racial tensions. One teacher explained, "Sadly, and this is not just me, teachers across the school get this, the ELL kids, who mostly happen to be Hispanic, are very sensitive to treatment." Sensitive students often respond to correction by accusing their teachers of racism. A teacher noted, "There's a portion of them who will always say 'that's because I'm brown,' and 'You're a racist,' which is totally not the case, but you know it does happen a lot."

While some teachers deal with racial tension on a regular basis, others do not feel that linguistic or ethnic diversity effects the classroom environment. In terms of demographics, one of the teachers in a charter school felt that the "classes aren't that diverse." The teacher continued, "To be honest, we don't have that here…we don't have students who have a hard time with their language...most of the students that we have here actually are fluent in English." Other teachers, when planning for the needs of their ELL students, expected to more differences between home and school languages. One teacher explained how there aren't as many language/culture barriers as he expected by stating,

> I always thought that there would be more problems with that. From my perspective, I haven't really seen any big problems. I mean, sometimes kids say things that are inappropriate that you can tell are probably allowed at home and things, and so there is that expectation that you need to set in the class…I think that is pretty normal in every class, but I think that might be the only problem there might be, but I haven't seen a huge problem between the home language and the school language.

4) What significant trends or changes in literacy instruction and students learning needs have occurred?

Though the length of their careers differed, all of the teachers noted significant changes in literacy and language instruction that had occurred during their tenures. One teacher stated, "It has changed a great deal since I started teaching… my first year of teaching, we had maybe one or two ELL students in the regular classes and now we can count on having at least five in a class." Another agreed, "When I started here, I believe, I could be wrong…[but] I believe we had about 5 percent Latino population and now we are probably around 55 percent. So [the] population shift has been huge." One teacher noticed changes in the ELL demographics and speculated on reasons for those changes by stating, "There are so many more of them [ELL students] than when I first started teaching, for a lot of reasons: population shift, bigger class sizes, funding cuts in the ESL programs." The demographics of each school and school district are unique, but in general local teachers have seen the same national statistics and trends mirrored in their own classrooms.

The demographics found in language arts classrooms vary in part due to the various structures of organized ESL pullout programs. Most teachers felt like the organization of pullout programs had varied a lot over the course of their careers. One teacher stated, "When I started there was no such thing as ESL. I don't know where those children went." Another stated, "We didn't have like the greatest ESL program, like there wasn't all the testing and making sure everyone was where they were supposed to be, and that kind of stuff, as well as it is now." In most high schools, the ESL system has evolved to accommodate students with various levels of English proficiency. One teacher gave the following example:

> What we do is we have two tracks for our ESL kids here…those who reach a certain level of proficiency by taking the U test or some other testing standard, would move into regular English classes. What we do with level A through C students is that we put them in what's called a sheltered English class, where you're supposed to be teaching them language arts curriculum. They're supposed to have literature, they're supposed to have writing, but they're involved in ESL only instruction. We also a have third program in which we use a program called Language which is kind of an acquisition program where vocabulary acquisition, reading skills and those, that program is for the lower level ESL students to get them acclimated and caught up to grade level in some of the academic areas.

While educators have debated about the effectiveness of ESL tracking systems, testing standards and commercialized programs, such as the Language program, continue to influence the organization and curriculum of ESL programs. The teacher continued,

> I'm not even sure how much longer we will be doing separate classes … [we might] have all ESL students in the Language program until they're ready to test out to regular ed. classrooms. I see that transition realistically like happening within a year or so.

In addition to learning specific teaching strategies, teachers can prepare to assist students and families by learning about what other resources are available at school and in the community. Many teachers shared ideas for how parents and students get the tools they need to take a more active role in their education. One teacher mentioned, "At our parent conferences we have translators and that's awesome. That works really, really well." The teacher continued, "We had a principal a couple years ago who was just committed to getting the [ELL] parents…here in the building and so that's been great." In addition, other teachers mention things like "a multi-cultural club…an ESL liaison.., a once a month shindig with ESL parents and our counselor…forms from the office translated into Spanish, etc." Teachers have seen the enabling power of school and community resources and the positive results they have brought. One teacher stated, "I've been so pleased at the increase in parents who come to conferences even though they don't have the language skills. The teacher described some of the challenges parents face by stating, "Some of them just say 'Oh, this is scary for me, my language my

English is terrible' and I'm 'Oh your English is better than my Spanish.'" Despite the challenges, teachers can see that parents' efforts to be a part of their child's education make a significant difference. The teacher concluded, "If we can connect with the parents, and school can connect with the parents, then the kids, again, those cultural differences can be bridged." Finding community resources improves not only students' language proficiencies, but also the benefits the families of English language learners.

Beyond demographics and formal ESL organization structures, national changes in assessment and curriculum standards have greatly impacted language arts instruction. One teacher described how legislation has impacted the classroom by stating, "Unfortunately, I know…Leave No Child Behind…create(s) expectations that all kids will learn and can learn and can be as high in proficiency in school…but there are quite a few kids who don't want to. And it's really hard to teach a kid that doesn't want to." Many teachers are concerned that pressures to achieve are taking away from the joy of learning. One teacher observed, "I think there's more emphasis on kids actually learning and being able to…show that learning, rather than just, oh look he can read it now." Another agreed, "I think that kids don't want to be in school and so the learning is getting much more difficult for them because it's not fun anymore." Even teachers are disappointed that testing affects the learning activities they are able to do in their classrooms. The following excerpt demonstrates how standardized tests have affected instruction:

> T9: Oh it has affected instruction a great deal. Everything's about the test, and I think it's really sad that a lot of that background knowledge, the hands-on kind of thing, is being lost because everything is being centered around that test. And I think way too often the only thing that anybody's worried about is those test score…people are teaching to the test and it's really, it's ruining the fun in education. And I think that kids don't want to be in school and so the learning is getting much more difficult for them because it's not fun anymore."
>
> KL: So you think it limits your options?

T9: I do.

Many educators feel that tests take the fun out of learning for both students and teachers.

Besides increasing accountability, many educators have also seen shifts in curriculum For instance, one teacher felt that there is now a "huge emphasis on critical thinking skills…what we need to do is teach them how to think, how to find out, how to, how to be critical readers, don't believe everything you read on the internet." Teachers are now focusing on how to teach students to be critical consumers and producers of information.

The focus on informational text affects not only what is taught, but also influences revolving trends in pedagogy. One teacher noticed this pattern by stating, "It's kind of funny…once you've taught for a long time you see old trends renew themselves. It's kind of circular…what's important in teaching gets a new label." Teaching reading across the curriculum is one example of an idea that has resurfaced over time. One teacher described changes in who teaches reading in the following example,

> When I started, we were, you know, secondary training in all, across the board was about your content, and that's a shift and it's kind of a hard shift for science teachers, the math teachers, they don't love being teachers of reading, that's not their training that's not their comfort level, but a huge focus on everybody has to be a teacher of reading.

One teacher described some of the principles of reading instruction they had discussed as a faculty by stating,

> [We] teach them how to make connections to the text, how to synthesize what they read, how to question what they read, visualize what you read, just kind of decoding it. Reading is not magic, reading is a skill, and if you're lost, there are things you can do to find your way back.

In an age where many subjects require students to obtain highly technical and specialized vocabularies, teaching reading comprehension and encouraging CALP is essential for all students.

Not only has society become more and more reliant on the transmission of information, changing business models and globalization has increased the necessity for collaboration in the workplace. Given these developments, teachers are encouraged to use group work and student-centered learning in their classrooms. One teacher explained, "student-centered learning…where we do, like group work, those kinds of things…Um, when I very first started teaching that was really, really popular." The teacher noted that an emphasis on group work is one teaching trend that has surged and faded by stating, "they had...learning communities and a lot of that stuff. And then it just kind of faded out for about three years, and then last year they started pushing and pushing and pushing it again." Just because certain techniques become more popular than others, doesn't mean that all teachers jump on the bandwagon for all learning situations. One educator observed, "you know, learning communities are good, they're excellent, but I think they're more important with certain groups of kids then they are with other kids." Pre-service educators must critically evaluate trends in pedagogy. Only those techniques that coincide with a teacher's philosophy and encourage the development of CALP should be used.

Often, beginning teachers struggle to define their beliefs about teaching and student proficiency in their first few years of teaching. The interviewed teachers offered a lot of insights on collaboration and seeking professional development. Many teachers gave specific advice about receiving training related to the language proficiency needs of their students. One teacher shared the following statement, "And early on in my career, I really did do a lot of training and that sort of stuff...my ESL endorsement really helped." Others noted the value of professional development workshops. One teacher remarked, "We used to have an awesome workshop at Utah State…it was [an] English workshop." The teacher continued, "It was a big workshop that gave us different strategies. And I use those in my classes." While teachers valued the skills and

knowledge they gained in workshops, many teachers felt that "there's just not as many opportunities now as there used to be because of budget cuts and stuff." Educators had other suggestions to offer. They suggested that new teachers should "read some books, talk to your colleagues, there's always someone somebody in the building smarter than you are that can help you sound things out." Collaborating and sounding things out with colleagues can help pre-service teachers learn even more about CALP and how to continue to grow as a professional.

5) What should novice teachers know regarding students' learning needs, literacy or language instruction?

So far, this study has examined the ways in which practicing teachers recognize the learning needs of ELL students, identify the relevance of CALP in their own classrooms, strive to bridge gaps between home and school literacies, and notice patterns in literacy and language instruction. The final research question posed to all teachers explored other challenges pre-service educators should be familiar with by the time they begin their careers. Several teachers noted on the pre-interview survey that one of the biggest challenges that merited their attention more than CALP was teaching a large number of students who are all at different skill levels. Most teachers felt that large class sizes left them little time to tailor instruction to the needs of individual students. One teacher articulated this problem by stating,

> I have students who should be in, I mean they are high school writers, like I have the students who can cope with this, and this attempt, and this great writing ability and then I have a student who is still in fourth grade. Not just in their comprehension skills, but they write like my nephew who is eight.

Another teacher made a similar humorous comparison by stating, "In my sixth hour class, I have a kid who just read Plato this summer and other kids who are like 'Play-doh!' you know?" With such a wide range of interests and abilities, teachers find it difficult to maintain their students' attention. One teacher commented,

> It's not just boring for the student who doesn't understand it, like for the ELL students, it's also boring for the really high achieving students, because I have huge spectrums to teach in my class. And so I have such diverse and their learning, that both ends are getting bored because I can't teach to both.

Teachers recognize that large, diverse classrooms are one of "the biggest [challenges] in all schools, across the nation." Another teacher noted, "We have a conglomerate of these students who are in one room and their abilities are not the same. And it's hard because you can't teach and help all of them." Another teacher expressed similar frustrations by stating, "I can just feel their frustration level, and I'm frustrated too, because I do not have the time to help them."

In order to cope with the challenges brought by large, classrooms, teachers suggest reducing class sizes and implementing a differentiated approach to instruction. One teacher stated, "If I could change anything at all right this second, I would change class sizes....give me fewer kids in a class so that I can spend more one on one time with kids I need...[I'd] have more time to offer them additional opportunities." Almost all teachers have little or no control over the number of students they are assigned to; however, giving kids reasonable options is one way to accommodate different learning styles. One teacher discussed ways in which group activities can be modified by stating, "As a teacher, you need to give [students] options. Allow kids that work better in a group to work in a group, and allow the kids that don't to not." When asked to elaborate on this differentiated approach, the teacher said it was necessary because "kids aren't all the same. They can't just subscribe to one [teaching method], that's just the way that I feel about the kids that I teach." In addition to understanding CALP, beginning teachers should recognize that they must be able to be flexible in their teaching methods and provide multiple accommodations simultaneously.

Students vary not only in their abilities and interests but also in their motivation to learn. Many teachers listed student motivation and behavior as their number one concern. One teacher

stated, “I still think that the biggest conflict between me as a teacher, and them as a student, is just that desire, and wanting to [learn].” A lack of motivation is present in all students, but some teachers noticed it “more in the Ell students.” The teacher elaborated, “There’s this idea that well, we’re not here to work, [and] we’re not here to learn. We’re here to play because somebody makes us play.” Another teacher wrote in the pre-interview survey that ELL students need to “understand the importance of their education for their future.”

While many teachers acknowledged the importance of motivating their students, some teachers felt that it was difficult to measure the impact of specific teaching behaviors. The following demonstrates one teacher's musings:

> It’s hard to kind of what made them do what they do. Do you know what I mean? Like, I don’t know, there is always something that triggers the kids. We don’t know if it was a teacher who stopped them in the hall and said ‘Hey, that was awesome work in my class today,’ and that made them think, ‘Wow, I really can do it,’ or if it was an assignment that they got a smiley face on. I don’t know. That’s the hardest part. When do you know that the kids are actually triggered enough that the actually get it, to be motivated enough to keep going.

Despite the difficulties associated with motivating students, most teachers felt it was well worth the effort they put forth. In fact, many told stories of high-performing ELL students who had taken Advanced Placement classes and received scholarships.

Teachers have observed that student performance and language proficiency are closely linked to motivation. Most education programs include courses on motivation, but teachers offered suggestions to complement what pre-service students are learning. One teacher talked about the importance of teaching good material by stating,

> For English, I really believe that if the material engaging, they’ll make the effort to get it. Now there might be parts of it that they’re a little unsure of that I can pull them through, but overall if it’s engaging, they’ll get it.

Although this study did not originally consider the students' role in developing CALP, the observations shared by teachers during the interviews indicate that motivation is a huge factor that influences learning in real classroom settings.

In addition to considering the importance of student motivation, new teachers should be aware of what types of behavior to expect in a classroom setting. One teacher described typical behavior problems by stating, "In a class of thirty, it's keeping the peace, and you hope you get a little more beyond that." Some teachers expressed concerns about recent changes and trends in their students' social behavior by stating, "They're getting worse. Honestly. I feel that students are socially retarded. Like, they're socially slow because they don't interact with people enough. I think that they have become technologically driven." When asked to explain how students' patterns of interactions affected their learning, the teacher explained, "They don't know how to treat each other properly any more... they're shier and withdrawn because they don't get out and meet people." New teachers should implement effective strategies so that class time is spent learning academic subjects and developing cognitive academic language proficiency.

In terms of student behavior, it is often what students are not doing that has teachers the most concerned. One teacher explained,

> They don't know how to ask for help. They don't know what questions to ask in order to gain the knowledge that they need, and I think that a teacher really needs to think about, okay, what could possibly be a problem here? What are the potential problems with this assignment? What might they not understand in this particular situation?

Another teacher advises new teachers "to expect a lot of 'deer in headlights' looks, more and more all the time." The teacher went on to explain that "the farther you get away from college, the harder it is to remember how to be a learner, rather than just a teacher and you just have to constantly try to remember what it's like to be in their shoes." Another agreed by stating, "When you're planning your lessons or whatever, try to see it through their eyes. What's going to be

clear to you, that's going to be total foggy mystery to them." Because students, especially ELL students, don't always ask for help, it's important for teachers to be extra conscious when checking for understanding.

Slowing down the pace of instruction and incorporating more hands-on activities are two suggestions for increasing understanding. One teacher felt that one of the best ways to make sure that students understand is to "slow down and make sure they get it...repetition is good." While teachers understand that there is limited class time available, it's important to make sure that students are getting the most out of class activities. One teacher gave some good reminders in the following statement:

> I think a lot of times, I know that I have done this myself, you know the material you have to get through, and sometimes you get so worried about what you have to teach, that you forget about if the kids are getting it or not. And I think the more that they can do, hands on, I mean, we have so much technology now, smart boards, and projectors, and all that kind of stuff, but I think there is so much you can do to get kids to be hands on, even with writing, I mean, I think there is a lot more they can do to see and work together as class. It doesn't always mean you have to grade more paper, just write more. Just writing more isn't always the key. It is like writing and then showing them how it works. And making sure that they can get it and they can prove to you, hey, this is how you do it. So, I think that more kids can do hands on more and show you what they can do the better it is for them.

Discussion

1) *How do the learning needs of ELL students differ in terms of number or degree from the needs of mainstream students?*

The teachers in this study described four main learning challenges experienced by their ELL students. First, ELL students seem to have a more difficult time understanding certain elements of the language arts curriculum such as vocabulary and grammar. Second, ELL students seem to have lower reading comprehension levels. Third, ELL students experience prejudice in the learning environment. And fourth, teachers felt that some ELL students lack motivation. While Cummins's research does not address these specific subjects directly, it can

be inferred that teachers who strive to provide meaningful contexts for grammar instruction for all students will be more likely to encourage the development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

The teachers in this study also described Cummins's work, though not directly, when discussing the importance of first language fluency. Specifically, teachers noticed how the principle of developmental interdependence affected language acquisition in their classrooms. One teacher mentioned the importance of proficiency in the first language and the ways in which it affects proficiency in the second language. This teacher stated on the pre-interview survey that one of the top learning needs for her ELL students included increasing proficiency in the first language. Even when transitional bilingual ESL programs are used, practicing language arts teachers recognize the value of increasing CALP for both the first and second languages.

2) *How do teachers think CALP is relevant to their teaching practices?*

Many teachers did not use the word "CALP" specifically but showed understanding of the main ideas behind CALP while discussing specific classroom strategies. Teachers discussed the ways in group work, visuals, one-on-one conferencing, and pre-teaching vocabulary and grammar support the development of literacy skills.

The teachers also discussed the difference between context embedded and context reduced language activities in their classrooms. Although the teachers did not use the BICS/CALP quadrants (see Appendix B) to describe these activities, the ideas were represented in their statements. One teacher articulated BICS/CALP distinction as it applies to writing by stating, "[ELL students] understand language, but they don't. It's hard, written language is hard." In this example the teacher describes the difference between conversational, contextualized language, and decontextualized, academic language of writing. Others discussed

meta-cognition techniques they use to teach vocabulary words during reading assignments. Instead of teaching words and definitions out of context, teachers try to embed vocabulary words and their meanings into classroom discussions.

Not only do teachers strive to scaffold vocabulary instruction from context-embedded to context-reduced activities, one teacher uses an explicit code-switching exercise to get her students thinking about language. The teacher explains an assignment she uses to teach the nineteenth-century classic *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to ELL students by stating, "[It] is pretty tough because it's nineteenth-century language in a twenty-first-century world for kids who sometimes don't have the language skills." She continues, "So I took paragraphs from the first chapter of that book, which were pretty intense paragraphs, and then I put them into groups to translate that into their own language." The students in this class were asked to "translate" Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's words into speech that would be used and understood by typical eighth graders. At first her students felt confused, but the teacher concluded that eventually they made the connection and "suddenly it's like the light bulbs go off, 'Oh I get it.'" This translation assignment is one example of how assignments can build reading skills to encourage the development of cognitive academic language proficiency.

3) How do teachers negotiate possible differences between home literacies and CALP?

In response to the third research question, most teachers shared some specific techniques such as journaling and other personal writing assignments they have used to learn about their students. There was some disagreement about the differences between home and school literacies. Some teachers felt that there were significant differences between home and school culture for ELL students, while other teachers felt that these differences were not as pronounced in their classes. In general, the educators in this study did not know much about the home

literacy or how to assess first language proficiency levels. Several teachers expressed their desire for workshops or other professional development opportunities. The educators in this study were eager to learn more about how to bridge the gaps between home and school language.

While teachers recognized the value of transitioning between contextualized and decontextualized language assignments, some teachers felt that their own context-reduced instructions impeded the learning process for some students. Across the board, several teachers mentioned that students, especially ELL students, don't know what to do. Another instructor observed, "it's not that they can't do [assignments], it's that they're not understanding what we are saying to them." The following quote demonstrates how students do not always understand academic and behavior expectations:

> I think that that is a big problem that they face because when I look at them and they're sitting there and they are doing nothing, I go up to them and I ask them, Ok, what's the problem? They really don't know. They don't know what the problem is, but they really don't know what to do. So it's that cognitive ability to comprehend what's being asked of them.

Nearly every teacher in this study mentioned that all students, but especially ELL students, don't recognize or ask for additional needed help. One teacher suggested a possible explanation for why it is especially hard for ELL students to ask for help:

> ELL students, I think, have a harder time coming for help. I don't know if their grammar's good enough or if they can't portray what their trying to do very well, like finding the right words to say their frustrations or confusions. In the ELL population in general, I think that they lack the confidence to come and ask for help.

Another teacher stated, "The farther you get away from college, the harder it is to remember how to be a learner." While teachers did not explicitly state Maren Aukerman's idea of recontextualization—an idea mentioned in the review of the literature for this study—they unconsciously demonstrated the principles supported by Aukerman in their teaching behavior.

4) What significant trends or changes in literacy instruction and students learning needs have occurred?

While teachers disagree about the degree or prevalence of cultural and linguistic differences, almost all of the educators interviewed had seen changes in the ELL student demographics. The top three changes observed by most teachers included a growing population shift, a lack of motivation for all students, and the negative effects of education reform legislation such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It should be noted that the context for Cummins's research—work that began more than thirty years ago—is remarkably similar to contemporary circumstances in the U.S. education system. Much like today, testing in the early 1980s affected the structure and organization of ESL programs. The BICS/CALP distinction was developed as a tool to prevent inappropriate testing and to reverse some of the trends brought about by quick exit programs. Recently, district budget cuts have once again influenced the way ESL programs are organized. For example, a teacher in one district felt that the focus has shifted away from a multi-discipline, multi-track sheltered instruction program to a test-out commercialized curriculum program. She explained the change by stating,

> I'm not even sure how much longer we will be doing separate classes … [we might] have all ESL students in the Language program until they're ready to test out to regular ed. classrooms. I see that transition realistically happening within a year or so.

Like Cummins, the teachers in this study worried about how the high stakes assessment will not test what students actually know. They express concern that the tests are unable to measure the finer points of CALP. While there is nothing inherently wrong with standardized, language proficiency tests, the concern is that the assessments don't adequately measure L2 BICS and CALP levels. If the proficiencies of ELL students are not adequately represented, academic deficits will occur once ELL students enter mainstream language arts classes. This is a problem

Cummins identified thirty years ago. Teachers noted that as standardized testing and teacher accountability standards increase, they could use the BICS/CALP framework in order to think about how to help students make the necessary transitions between conversational fluency and academic tasks such as reading and writing. Pre-service educators should expect changes in ELL demographics and district mandated changes in ESL programs. All teachers should prepare for the diverse language learning needs of students by studying techniques that encourage the development of CALP.

While Cummins has vigorously stated on numerous occasions (1983,2000) that the BIS/CALP distinction does not represent a deficit theory, many teachers in this study cited student motivation and 'cultural' factors as two of the biggest challenges in developing CALP. Many teachers listed student motivation and behavior as their number one concern. One teacher stated, "I still think that the biggest conflict between me as a teacher, and them as a student, is just that desire, and wanting to [learn]." A lack of motivation is present in all students, but some teachers noticed it "more in the ELL students." Carol Edelsky's work identifies this particular weakness in Cummins's work, the possibility that the BICS/CALP distinction "blames the victim." Teachers falsely attribute academic failure to the students' inherent deficit of cognitive/academic language proficiency, when other factors may be present.

5) What should novice teachers know regarding students' learning needs, literacy or language instruction?

Most teachers advised novice teachers to learn more about differentiated instruction. New teachers should seek to accommodate for multiple modalities in the classroom learning activities. Assessment strategies can also be adapted to include a variety of learning outcomes. In addition, teachers felt that novice educators should seek professional development

opportunities. Specifically, new teachers should learn how to implement effective plans to manage behavior, motivate students, and build positive relationships with their students. The teachers also encouraged beginning educators to think about ways to motivate students, slow down the pace of instruction, and check for understanding. The teachers' comments indicate that the BICS/CALP framework can be extended to include a wide variety of students, not just those who are English Language Learners.

Conclusion

Jim Cummins's work, both its strengths and limitations, is presented here as a specific way of thinking about second language acquisition. Based on the information that was obtained from interviews with local teachers, the BICS/CALP distinction does give teachers one way to think about second language acquisition; however, the complexity of the classroom suggests that there are other factors are at work as well, providing possibilities for further research. First, motivation and behavior impact the development of BICS/CALP in ways that neither Cummins nor his critics address. Second, based on the findings from this study, the influence of cultural tension in the development of CALP is difficult to determine. Both of these considerations present intriguing possibilities for future study.

Several teachers in this study agreed that classroom behavior affects the development of CALP. One teacher described typical behavior problems by stating, "in a class of thirty, it's keeping the peace, and you hope you get a little more beyond that." Some teachers expressed concerns about recent changes and trends in their students' social behavior. "They're getting worse. Honestly. I feel that students are socially retarded. They're socially slow because they don't interact with people enough. I think that they have become technologically driven." When asked to explain how students' patterns of interactions affected their learning, the teacher

explained, “They don’t know how to treat each other properly any more... they’re more shy and withdrawn because they don’t get out and meet people.” This comment reveals that motivation and behavior impact the development of BICS/CALP in ways that neither Cummins nor Aukerman address. Future studies could examine the ways in which specific student behaviors encourage or delay the development of CALP.

In addition to classroom management issues, some teachers are concerned about possible cultural conflicts when working with ELL students. All teachers were sensitive to their students’ needs, but teachers varied in their perceptions of cultural conflict in the classroom.
Other teachers do not feel that linguistic or ethnic diversity affects the classroom environment. With such varied responses, it is difficult to determine the influence of cultural tension in the development of CALP. To obtain a more accurate picture of the cultural climate in classrooms, future studies could compare teacher and student perceptions of cultural conflict. In addition, research connecting teachers' perceptions of diversity with learning outcomes could be applied to the specific learning objective of developing CALP.

While the BICS/CALP distinction is especially useful to teachers with ELL students, the framework can also be used in the classroom as a general theory that applies to all students. It is often the case that specialized training leads to better academic outcomes. One teacher noted, “I know that it is essential for English Language Learners because they really [need] those higher level thinking skills, but this could be applied to any student.” Another teacher confirmed this statement by saying, “When you go to the ELL training... most the stuff they tell you about could pertain to the students in general.” The teachers further observed that even though the emphasis is on teaching strategies for ELL students the principles apply to “being a better teacher, being more thorough, being more aware of what’s happening with your students...[which is] something

we should probably do with all of our students." While the limitations of Cummins's work have been discussed, the data from this study confirm that the BICS/CALP distinction is one example of pedagogy theory that can be applied to real teaching situations in order to achieve positive learning outcomes. Developing CALP is an especially important goal as we consider the pressing language needs and exciting opportunities for growth present in contemporary diverse classrooms.

Appendix A: Definitions

The following list of definitions briefly summarizes the fundamental ideas related to the study. These terms are organized alphabetically. The definitions are provided here for the reader's convenience and will be discussed in greater detail in the body of the text. This list of definitions was also provided to each participant interviewed during the course of the study. For more information, refer to the Methods section of the text.

BICS- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

Experts such as Jim Cummins differentiate between social and academic language acquisition. Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) are language skills needed in social situations. It is the day-to-day language needed to interact socially with other people. English language learners (ELL) employ BIC skills when they are on the playground, in the lunch room, on the school bus, at parties, playing sports and talking on the telephone. Social interactions are usually context embedded. They occur in a meaningful social context. They are not very demanding cognitively. The language required is not specialized. These language skills usually develop within six months to two years after arrival in the U.S. (Haynes 2002)

CALP- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CALP refers to formal academic learning. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing about subject area content material. This level of language learning is essential for students to succeed in school. Students need time and support to become proficient in academic areas. This usually takes from five to seven years. Recent research (Thomas & Collier, 1995) has shown that if a child has no prior schooling or has no support in native language development, it may take seven to ten years for ELLs to catch up to their peers.

Academic language acquisition isn't just the understanding of content area vocabulary. It includes skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. Academic language tasks are context reduced. Information is read from a textbook or presented by the teacher. As a student gets older, the context of academic tasks becomes more and more reduced.

ELL- English Language Learners

The term English Language Learners (ELLs) refers to students whose first language is not English, and encompasses both students who are just beginning to learn English (often referred to in federal legislation as "limited English proficient" or "LEP") and those who have already developed considerable proficiency. ELL is preferred term for the purposes of this study; however, both the literature and participants in this study used the terms ESL (English as a Second Language) and LEP synonymously.

Appendix B: Four Quadrants of the BICS/CALP Spectrum

Cognitively undemanding (easy)

Context embedded (clues)	A. ESL, Art, Music, PE, Following directions, Face-to-face conversation	C. Telephone conversation, Note on refrigerator, Written directions w/o diagrams or examples.
	B. Demonstrations, A-V assisted lessons, Math computation Science experiments, Soc. Studies projects	D. CTBS/SAT/CAP tests; Reading and writing; Math concepts, applications; Explanation of new, abstract concepts; Lecture

Context reduced (few clues)

Cognitively demanding (difficult)

Appendix C: Standard Interview Questions/Note-taking Form

This is a composite list of all of the possible interview questions. The interview is expected to take 30 minutes. These questions are aimed at eliciting specific information and/or directing the interview. If during the course of the interview, the subject spontaneously provides the information, the researcher will use discretion in skipping questions for the sake of honoring time restraints. The researcher will explain the interview's purpose and procedures and obtain the participant's signature on the informed consent form before beginning the interview. Participants may stop the interview or withdraw from the study at any time.

Primary Questions:

1- How do the learning needs of ELL differ in terms of number or degree from the needs that native speakers have?

2- How do you feel CALP is relevant to your teaching practices? If it is not relevant to your teaching practices, explain why.

3- How do you negotiate the tensions between home literacies and CALP?

4- What are the significant trends or changes in literacy instruction and students learning needs?

5- What advice would you give to novice teachers regarding students' learning needs, literacy or language instruction?

Secondary Questions (ask if time):

-Briefly describe two instructional models you have used or heard of (SIOP, whole language, other, etc.

- Describe your school's current model.

-Describe the process for approving linguistic models for instruction

-What would you use to measure students' proficiency?

-How do you evaluate curriculum materials used to develop CALP?

Appendix D: Pre-Interview Survey

1-What is your name?

2- How long have you been teaching language arts?

3-Briefly (3-4 sentences) describe your teaching assignments.

4- Briefly list the top three learning needs of ELL(English Language Learner) students in your classroom that you are most concerned about.

2-Briefly list the top three teaching strategies you use to address those needs.

3- Circle below to indicate how often you think about the language needs of students when planning lessons.

Never Rarely Sometimes Always

4- Circle below to indicate how often you talk about CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) and related issues (ELL) with other teachers.

Never Rarely Sometimes Always

5- Circle below to indicate how often you attend conference panels, in-services or read professional literature on CALP and ELL issues?

Never Rarely Sometimes Always

6- Name 2-3 challenges that merit more of your attention than CALP.

7-Name 2-3 challenges teachers face while trying to develop CALP?

8- Name two or three challenges students face while trying to develop CALP?

9-Name the top 2-3 places where you find curriculum materials to supplement your literacy/language objectives.

Appendix E: Transcripts

Teacher 1: Note: Due to recording errors, this transcript is only partially complete. Efforts were made to transcribe the information as completely as possible. Also, it should be noted that in all transcripts specific names and places have been deleted due to privacy concerns.

KL: So looking briefly over this pre-interview survey, you said that the top three learning needs that you see in your ELL students are reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary. Can you explain a little bit more what you mean by that?

T1: They understand language, but they don't, it's hard, written language is hard. So, I would say reading comprehension, because reading (Inaudible) is quite different, and also grammar. More structured language, grammar wise. (Inaudible)

KL: So you see a big difference in the conversational language, the way they speak, and the written language that they write in their assignments?

T1: Yeah

KL: In terms of these learning needs that you just discussed, do they differ in any ways from the native speakers that you have in your classroom?

T1: In terms of learning needs?

KL: Yeah, are there more? Can you describe?

T1: Yeah. As far as assignments, they generally do well, they pick up stuff pretty well, but they do need a little more time and that stuff is hard, to try and catch them up, like [in] grammar..(inaudible) because we are kind of at a more advanced level. Grammar (inaudible) they can get those things, but they have got questions, so there is a lot of catching up that needs to be done that we don't cover in class. So that's probably the biggest challenge.

KL: So in your classes do you teach a lot of grammar?

T1: We do every week teach some grammar, so more advanced stuff to help them out. (inaudible)

KL: Is that a negative concern for you as a teacher, those standardized tests or are there other things you are more concerned about?

T1: I'm not really worried about the standardized tests. That's were we get a lot of our curriculum from. Um, it's just part of all the assignments that you want them to do well on, even if it's not a grammar assignment. It might be something else we are focusing on. It maybe word usage (inaudible).

KL: So you said that you teach grammar once a week. Do you also have lots of writing assignments then?

T1: Uh huh. They have journals every day. They have projects.

KL: How many projects do they have in a year?

T1: Per trimester, they have maybe 3 or 4. (Inaudible)

KL: So what my project is looking at is this cognitive, academic language. Did you have a chance to review it?

T1: Yeah, I looked at it.

KL: It sounds to me that the spoken language you are talking about is more congruent with the basic, personal conversation. And this higher written language, as you describe it is more of the CALP (the cognitive academic language proficiency). So looking over that, how do you feel the CALP is relevant to your teaching habits? I know that you talked a little bit about grammar and writing assignments. Is there in other thing that you specifically try to do, either in planning your lessons or giving instruction to try and encourage that cognitive academic language?

T1: I think mainly the journals is the main thing. That's where they do poetry or an essay and they summarize it one paragraph. That is the main way to get use of the written language there. Transferring conversation in class to written ideas.

KL: Sounds like a good assignment. You would be able to monitor their progress that way. Sometimes, when we are talking about this cognitive language, like the school language which differs from the language spoken at home or the culture at home, have you seen any tension between home language and school language or home culture or school culture? Do you know what I mean?

T1: They will use slang. I don't know if that is home, but maybe cultural. So I will see a little bit of that. Not much. Usually, once they have done it enough, I think that is the biggest thing, because they are smart. They know language. They know …and it's just a matter of practicing so that they can get used to it. The daily thing really helps them get their minds focused. So as we go a long, I try and give some suggestions now and then. So I would say, no, not very much.

KL: So you use the journals to kind of practice those language skills. Have you seen any significant trends in literacy construction? In the past 5 years that you have been here, is there any changes in the way they want you to teach reading and language or literacy?

T1: Some. We changed the focus on more writing; more narrative writing is the big push. We're also doing some technical writing (inaudible).

KL: It says hear that you really talk about these things with other people or seek out professional development for these kind of issues, is that just because it's not a big concern for you or it is because there isn't the opportunity? Can you explain a little bit more?

T1: Yeah, I'd say it's more (inaudible). Talk to the other teachers and focus on the specifics of the class. It's not a huge population. There is not enough that I've noticed (some inaudible conversation).

KL: What advice would you give to beginning teachers regarding student's learning needs or literacy language instruction?

T1: I would say, for the most part, just have active minds. If you can give them the opportunities, that is where the learning happens. I can try and go walk through everything, but a lot of time that teachers just don't have, but if their just constantly writing, that's how natives learn. So I would just say constant practice, every day.

KL: So these learning opportunities are the way your students are actively doing something. Writing or speaking.

T1: Writing, active writing. Different types of writing, so that they can get a feel for it, and then they can do that, an apply it (inaudible).

KL: So it sounds like you use a lot of the student's writing to measure their proficiency in language. Are there any tools that you have to measure their proficiency?

T1: (inaudible)

KL: Could I ask you for a copy of those journal prompts?

KL: One more thing, I have studied for this project a few different instructional models like sheltered instruction, whole language. Have you heard of those? Could you talk about those? Or are there any other models that you use?

T1: No. That's kind of out of my realm. (inaudible)

KL: Well, whole language is not actually used as much in secondary level, but more the primary grades. Where, instead of teaching phonics and breaking it down, they look at the whole word and they say, ok, what does this work mean? Draw a picture with this word, or tell a story with this word. They try to attack it by using the child's previous knowledge instead of breaking it down. That's why it isn't really used at the secondary level.
T1: No. That's not (inaudible).

KL: Yeah, what you were describing sounds more like bilingual education.

T1: That's what I learned. Give the same classes. Some taught in their primary language. So, I don't know. That's kind of out of my expertise.

KL: At _____ they have a similar program. They have different tracks. And some of it takes place in sheltered instruction. It is interesting.

Teacher 2:

KL: Teacher two and that's just the code that we'll use for the project

T2: Okay.

KL: So, I was wondering if you can give us a little summary about your teaching experience, where you've been, how long you have been teaching, that kind of thing.

T2: Okay.

KL: Just describe your assignments briefly.

T2: I've been teaching, this is my 12th year here at _____. I taught one year at _____ Middle School, 8th and 9th grade students, English and French. And then I came here, after that first year. I have been here ever since and I taught English 1010, which is a concurrent enrollment class for Utah State. And then English 2200 and AP English and I taught ESL, well kind of. It's like just a sheltered ESL class.

KL: Uh, huh

T2: It wasn't like the whole ESL program, just a sheltered English class. And then also a UBSQT class, which was for all the high school seniors who had not passed the UBSQTT test.

KL: And can you just kind of describe, you said that is wasn't an ESL class but that it was a sheltered program. Can you just kind of explain how that works here at Skyview?

T2: Yeah, I did…It was quite a few years ago, but when I did it, it was just a special English class, just for ESL students. So it was anyone, any one, mostly Hispanic students but there were a couple of students who were not Latinos, they were, I think I had, two kids from like China, I had one kid from Iran. And it was just basically an English class, but I just went slower and did things a little more thorough. So, and we didn't have, I don't know how you would say that, we didn't have like the greatest ESL program. Like there wasn't all the testing and making sure everyone was where they were supposed to be, and that kind of stuff, as well as it is now. I know there are a lot more specific about how things happen now and where kids get placed and how they are followed and stuff, that was pretty much, they're doing really horrible in English and they need some extra help. There could have been more of a program then I knew about but, as far as I was involved, there wasn't.

KL: So you feel like it's more of an organized process now.

T2: Oh yeah, now it is, definitely.

KL: Do they still have, you know, teachers that are involved with that, or do they have counselors?

T2: Yeah

KL: Or counselors?

T2: Yeah, I know Mr. _____ is the ESL person right now. He's the official teacher and he has a couple of classes of just ESL classes. I don't know everything that goes on in there, but I know that he's pretty organized. He also has a, oh, what's her name? He has, a…I don't know what you call it, he has an assistant, another lady in there. Most the kids are Latinos. She speaks really good Spanish, I think she's from Chile, or something like that, but she's in there all the time with them as well. Plus, we have a couple oh, (sigh) what do you call them, sheltered classes, but it's, wherever some of the ESL students are, they have a team taught classes with English and math. There might be another one, but I know for sure, English and Math, where we have the Special Ed teacher and the ESL teacher and the regular English teacher or Math teacher, who kind of work together with the classes. So…

KL: Sounds good. Um...just thinking about the ESL students that you have now, or you have had in the past, what are some of the top three learning needs or things that you are concerned about, um, with those students?

T2: Do you still have my paper still I gave you? (Laugh)What did I do with that paper I wrote down?

KL: Oh the survey?

T2: Yeah.

KL: Sorry, it might be in my email, I just...

T2: No, it's okay. I didn't even, I just wanted to look at that because that was...I wrote down my three… let's see…Oh, wait now, here it is. Okay. Sorry.

KL: No, it's fine. I totally understand.

T2: So, I know when I was thinking about those questions.

KL: Oh yeah.

T2: Because I wrote down some of those things, because I sat and thought about it for a little while, about what was the most important thing because it's interesting when you go to the ELL training kind of stuff and most the stuff they tell you about could pertain to the students in general. I mean, just pretty much, being a better teacher, being more thorough, being more aware of what's happening with your students; which is always really interesting because it's focused

on ELL students, and that's something we should probably do with all of our students. So, the three things I put down were comprehension of reading materials, uh, I notice that that was kind of a big one with being able to go through the motions of being able to read, figuring out the words and stuff but then the comprehension part is where they struggle the most. And then, sense of belonging. That was a big one. I mean, we still talk about it in my classes, even without ESL students, it's just feeling comfortable in the classroom, with the other kids, not feeling stupid, feeling like they can participate in the discussions that happen in the class. And then, the third one I put was desire to want to learn because some, I don' know, it feels like some were forced to be here in the education process and didn't really care, didn't really want to have to do anything. Um...but when I would have them write in journals and things I started to find out a lot about why they didn't care, because some of them , you know, their family lives were pretty screwed up. And so, they were more worried about working, about getting enough money to take care of themselves, or to help out with just their mom who they are living with, or just their dad, or their uncle, or to send money back home.

KL: So do you us journaling a lot then in your class?

T2: Yeah, quite a bit. Yeah, it is probably one of the best ways to get information, especially when I have the ELL class, and also my UBISQT class. I have them journal every day because a lot of them don't feel comfortable sharing personal information in class, but when they wrote in their journal, they knew other kids weren't going to see it so they knew it was just going to be me.

KL: So they felt a lot more comfortable?

T2: Yeah, they felt a lot more comfortable to write.

KL: Um. You kind of already touched on this but, what are some of the challenges that you have experienced when the students and the teachers try and develop this cognitive academic (inaudible) proficiency? That is the kind of thing I am looking at in this project, is um.., a theory that says, you know that the first years in acquiring a second language, you have (inaudible) your personal conversation skills, and then as you progress, in 2-5 years, in some estimates, and some estimates more, you start to develop this cognitive academic language. Do you see that distinction in your classroom? Is it relevant in your teaching practices?

T2: That's a good question. I think it is more now than it was years ago, definitely. Because I think there's more emphasis on kids actually learning and being able to, um, show that learning rather than just, 'oh look he can read it now.' So, I think the kids to pick up on that quite a bit. And there's, like I said, other programs set up now. It is kind of hard for kids to just breeze through. But I still think that the biggest conflict between me as a teacher, and them as a student, is just that desire, and wanting to. Because, I think a lot more kids, once they get the spark and they want to learn, it's a lot easier. Unfortunately, I know the whole No Child Left Behind, all that kind of stuff, creates expectations that all kids will learn and can learn and can be as high in proficiency in school and stuff, but there are quite a few kids who don't want to. And it's really hard to teach a kid that doesn't want to. I mean, obviously, we always going to try and teach

them, and hopefully encourage them to be engaged, but I think that is the biggest problem, is just their desire to want to.

KL: So, student motivation is…

T2: Yeah, student motivation is huge, but I have seen kids though, you know when you see them as sophomores. When I first started here I was teaching some sophomore classes and then when I saw them a couple of years later, even the ELL students, when I would see them as seniors, there was a big difference. They, they would pick up on how the system works, I mean, and how everything works as far as academics go.

KL: Uh, Huh.

T2: I don't know if that answered your question (laughs)

KL: No, no. I think that's true. Um, you said you noticed the changes as they progressed themselves towards (inaudible). And you also said you've seen some changes over your time in teaching here. Do you think you could talk about those changes that you've seen?

T2. Um…let's see. There was one boy in particular, I don't know, let's use as an example, his name was _____. He was a pretty funny kid, but as a sophomore he was super quiet. I actually had him in driver's ed. too. I also teach driver's ed. after school. He's a pretty quiet kid. He's actually from Mexico, and I know that he was struggling pretty hard his sophomore year. He also had some brothers and sisters who didn't make it through the program, like through school, they just were taking off. I had a couple of kids actually like this. They had older brothers and sisters that started off sophomore, junior year, by the end of the junior year they had taken off for other places, they just never finished school. And something happened to him. I think a big part of it was teacher interest. Um, I think a lot of teachers saw potential in him and stuff too and kind of challenged him to take some harder classes. He ended up taking my concurrent enrollment class, which is cool because it is a little harder because it is a little more demanding with the academic language and writing and stuff like that. But he took it, and he struggled a little bit in his first couple of papers. I noticed, just kind of getting what he is supposed to do, what kind of language to use and stuff in his paper and things. But he worked so hard. I never seen a kid work so hard and he did really well. And he ended up, actually, getting a scholarship, um, I think it was _____…and he will be like the first kid in his family to like go to college.

KL: Cool

T2: I had a couple of other kids, their whole family, most their family I saw come through the classes. Like I said, the older brother, and the older sister ended up not finishing and stuff, but then the younger sister made it through. But we did a lot with their family. We helped them out with Christmas, things like that. They had a lot of trouble with their kids. It was hard. They had a single mom, you know, and there was six kids altogether. But most of them didn't make it through the system. But the one did, so it was cool to see her graduate. I know that's not super specific. It's hard to kind of what made them do what they do. Do you know what I mean? Like,

I don't know, there is always something that triggers the kids. We don't know if it was a teacher who stopped them in the hall and said 'hey, that was awesome work in my class today.' And that made them think, 'wow, I really can do it.' Or if it was an assignment that they got a smiley face on it. I don't know. That's the hardest part. When do you know that the kids are actually triggered enough that they actually get it, to be motivated enough to keep going?

KL: I can see how it would be pin down the factors.

T2: Yeah (Laughing)

KL: Is there anything that you would tell beginning teachers about helping students developing this cognitive academic language or any advice that you would give them on another topic?

T2: Um, I would say, slow down and make sure they get it. Um, yeah I think a big part of it is slowing down, making sure the kids get it. Repetition is good. And whatever anyone tries to teach. Yeah, I think a lot of times, I know that I have done this myself, you know the material you have to get through, and sometimes you get so worried about what you have to teach, that you forget about if the kids are getting it or not. And I think the more that they can do, hands-on. I mean, we have so much technology now, smart boards, and projectors, and all that kind of stuff, but I think there is so much you can do to get kids to be hands on, even with writing, I mean, I think there is a lot more they can do to see and work together as class. It doesn't always mean you have to grade more paper, just write more. Just writing more isn't always the key. It is like writing and then showing them how it works. And making sure that they can get it and they can prove to you, hey, this is how you do it. So, I think that more kids can do hands on more and show you what they can do the better it is for them.

KL: Can you think of a specific hands-on activity that you can use in your class?

T2: When I was teaching them how to write an essay, how to identify things like a thesis statement, and how to structure an actual essay, I have some picture things that I draw on the board, about what the 5 paragraph essay looks like. And we move beyond that but some kids don't even get the 5 paragraph essay. I have this little monster on the board that I draw and show them how the monster works. How it has to have these different sayings to it and things. But then they also, when they first start writing, I will have them type things in the computer labs and then when they come back, I will put in on to the smart board and things and then they will have to come up and they will have to underline it right on the board. This is a thesis, this sentence is the transition that goes from this paragraph to this paragraph. And then kind of explain it in class. One of the best things is the kids learn the most if you teach how to do it and then have them do it and make them show the class or teach the class. Um, because they get kind of excited being able to touch the smart board and things like that, but being able to say, hey, I get this. This is how you are supposed to do it. Yeah, when they teach it, it works a lot better.

KL: Sounds like a great visual

T2: Yeah, It's kind of fun. I screw up on the smart board all the time, so it's fun because the kids go, no, this is how you do it first.

KL: Well that takes advantage of their knowledge, with the technology, which is great. Is there anything, like, um, I know some times we talk about this home language versus this school language, are there any conflicts between the two?

(Student interruptions)

KL: So, have you seen, I don't want to say tension, but let say difference between the home language and the school language and how that plays out in your classroom?

T2: I always thought that there would be more problems with that. From my perspective, I haven't really seen any big problems. I mean, sometimes kids say things that are inappropriate that you can tell are probably allowed at home. So there is that expectation that you need to sit in the class, and here are things that you can and can't do. I think that is pretty normal in every class, but I think that might be the only problem there might be. But I haven't seen a huge problem between the home language and the school language.

KL: As far as demographics go, have you seen any changes over the years with the number of ELL students increasing or decreasing?

T2: I think they have decreased a little bit. Well, it kind of fluctuates. Like one year we'll have 20-25 kids and the next year we'll have 3 or 4. We're definitely nothing compared to _____ or _____. We're very few in numbers in comparison to them. So…yeah lately, I don't think that we have has had many in numbers.

KL: So, it just kind of depends on the year?

T2: Yeah, but we have always been lower than the other two schools. But then too, _____, I mean, it is kind of turning into a like, inner city school, where you have so many students that come from these different cultures that are teaching at the university and things like that. And then _____ has the bigger factories where a lot of Hispanic families are living and working and stuff and we don't. We don't have as much of that out here. There are some farms that a lot of our students come from and stuff, but the numbers aren't even close.

KL: Okay. Is there anything else that you think we should know about this topic of cognitive academic language proficiency or anything else that we haven't talked about.

T2: (Inaudible)

Teacher 3: Note: Due to recording errors, this transcript is only partially complete. Efforts were made to transcribe the information as completely as possible.

KL: Teacher 3. Okay, so looking at the first three questions on the pre-interview survey, I know you and I have talked about your background before, but can you just sort of summarize where you've been, what you've done, how long you've been teaching that kind of thing.

T3: I've been teaching for thirty three years now, primarily English, ninth through twelfth grade, I've taught some math in the middle school/junior high levels. Started teaching at _____ in _____ for half of the year. I came up here to the _____ school district the following Fall as an employee, been here ever since, with a two year leave of absence I took to go over to _____ to teach in a middle school. While I was there I just taught math at the middle school, but I've been teaching English with a little Math here most of the time.

KL: Okay. Thinking about the English Language Learners in your classroom, those students, what would you say are your top three concerns or the top learning needs you see in that student population?

T3: Well I think my biggest concern is that there seems to be sort of a cultural divide between what background they have and what they know and how well they fit in with the culture here in _____. Oftentimes they come from a Hispanic culture or an Asian culture and it's quite foreign to good old _____. They seem to have either a difficult time or a kind of a propensity to not want to fit in to give up that culture. And oftentimes that gets in the way, but it hinders their understanding sometimes. A lot of times of what we're discussing in class and reading (inaudible). I'm also concerned about their ability to work or a desire, not the ability, but the desire to do their best to their ability. Often times I'll have (inaudible) even up to that level. Sometimes there's not a lot of home support. They just don't have the skills…and the combination. I worry about being not being able to getting them to keep up, but at least keep moving. So that goes into the third concern which is that I feel that I have to divide my time in class to teaching to the various skill levels. The kids that are slow, the kids that are fast, I think the kids in the middle, I think that neither end is satisfied.

KL: So you mentioned dividing students up, is that one of the strategies that you use?

T3: Well, I haven't used that much; no, to be honest. Occasionally, we do get into groups and oftentimes the groups they form on their own. They'll kind of get into sort of their same level. Then they have the same problem of being able to focus. Oftentimes they're not trying. I think in my freshman class, they are a period that is very, very smart and the ELL students are as capable of doing the work as anyone else. Too oftentimes they end up doing the work with less capable students, which makes it difficult for them. So it didn't seem to always work like that. Other strategies, you know it becomes more of an individual thing as much as anything. It's being able to go through and asking them questions, trying to get them started, and moving around the class on an individual basis. Sometimes I get them to do assignments and use that in some of my classes that specifically focus on. For example, some books that focus on Hispanic culture and had them read those for an outside reading novel. Trying to get them with where they are understood. It just becomes very difficult within the classroom setting to divide the class, given you've got thirty five or more in a class. I don't know have too many strategies.

KL: It's hard when you have large class sizes?

T3: It's hard, very hard.

KL: One of the things that I'm studying is the difference between basic interpersonal conversation and cognitive academic language. The theory is that it takes 2-5 years to develop this cognitive academic language. Have you seen that in your teaching?

T3: Oh yeah.

KL: Do you think it's relevant to your practices?

T3: Well, you know as teachers, we always think that whatever we are saying is understood by everyone. And of course we speak in a 'teacher speak,' I call it that. And occasionally we'll be called on it, if they [students] are brave enough or interested enough or inquisitive enough to raise their hand and say 'wait a minute, will you talk about what you mean. I don't understand this particular word.' Most of the time, no one does that and you just go merrily on thinking they must be getting what I'm saying because they're not asking questions. And then of course there's an assessment and you find out that—oh woops—some of the class didn't get it. So I try to be aware of vocabulary and diction and the positive learning that I hope takes place, and what needs to take place. But to be quite honest sometimes, it turns into more of a speaking down to the students and I don't like that. I need to do a better job, a more effective job of thinking about how they are learning what I am trying to present to them. Is that kind of what you are talking about, I don't know if I'm off on a tangent there.

KL: No, that's about it.

T3: Okay. I think that what I think they are learning, they are learning.

KL: Have you seen any changes in the way that literacy or language is taught?

T3: A lot of workshops that I have gone to all the little things come and go, you know all the different sort of ways you can help. I don't know that I've seen anything major, I don't know that I've seen anything that has come in and said 'Ah, a whole different way of learning.' The bottom line is that if you have motivated students they learn, and if you don't, it's pretty tough. No program or theory is going to really change that much. The work with the individual student, to be there and prod and pull and push and encourage, then you'll see some progress. In a class of thirty five, that doesn't get done very often. Oftentimes it's just a crisis management and trying to get as much learning to as many students as you can and hope that you don't have too many fall off. So if they're motivated, then they'll come along. And I don't know how you teach motivation.

KL: So you would say that motivation is more of an issue than actual language.

T3: I think so. I think that most teachers I know are more than happy to compensate for the difficulties they [ELL students] have. And the difficulties they have are with reading. If a kid came up to me and said, 'You know, I read as much as I could and I only got five pages done and I put in the effort' I'd say, 'yeah, you got those five pages, great!' You know, that to me, and most teachers will reward that. You know 'great, you're here every day, you're working.' Now whether or not learning is occurring, as much as possible, you know they're not going to be so

low, but the effort is usually rewarded as least for credit. Oftentimes with the assessment, they're not as high, but still if they've made the effort, they usually do pretty well. I don't know. I like motivation as the number one criteria.

KL: Is there anything else that you think that beginning teachers should know about literacy or language?

T3: Well, I'm old school and I haven't been to a lot of the new literacy stuff. And ESL classes and stuff. So, I don't know. I think that you get a lot done if you can be positive and encourage no matter what their literacy. Oftentimes, even literate students choose not to read or are very unmotivated, but you can still engage them in discussions about the reading. You can still engage them in responses. You can still have them look at particular passages and get something out of it. And that can be true for a pretty wide range. So I think as long as you are passionate about what you are teaching and able to encourage that going to move them along somewhat. The other programs and things, I don't know. I wish I had some in-services. I wish I had some little things that I do. I wish that I had the energy to say well, yes, everyday divide up into three groups for ten minutes for this and we look at diction and word choice and then will come in and... My problem is that I'm not that organized. I end up not being that energetic. And I guess the thing is, you try that for a little while and pretty soon you get tired. And then classroom management comes in and you just go on with what's going to keep a lid on this in the best way. I've probably had problems being able to do that.

KL: No, I… it's the truth and that's part of the whole purpose of this project. Because yeah, you study what this books says and you study all these theories but there's the reality of the classroom. Like you said you have thirty five students.

T3: Yeah

KL: And then there's not time, so I think it's good. That's why I wanted to do interviews, rather than just look at case studies or books because I wanted to see the practical what does it look like in the class.

T3: Yeah, good call.

KL: I appreciate any input that you have.

Teacher 4: Note: Due to recording errors, this transcript is only partially complete. Efforts were made to transcribe the information as completely as possible.

KL: So I'm just reading over the survey and it says that you teach sheltered ESL English, could you explain to me what that is?

T4: Yes. What we do is we have two tracks for our ESL kids here at _____. Those who reach a certain level of proficiency by taking the UALPA test or some other testing standard would move into regular English classes. What we do with level A through C students is that we put them in what's called a sheltered English class where you're supposed to be teaching them

language arts curriculum. They're supposed to have literature, they're supposed to have writing, but they're involved in ESL only instruction. We also a have third program in which we use a program called Language which is kind of an acquisition program where vocabulary acquisition, reading skills and those (inaudible). That program is for the lower level ESL students to get them acclimated and caught up to grade level in some of the academic areas.

KL: So they move from the Language program to the A through C tracks and the D track. Is that how it works?

T4: Normally, yes.

KL: How long does it take for that progression?

T4: Well it really depends on how long they've been in the country and how much English they already have. The program is changing just a little bit because as a standard the school district is going to this Language program for all ESL instruction. So I'm not even sure how much longer we will be doing separate classes for the (inaudible) and have all ESL students in the Language program until they're ready to test out to regular ed. classrooms. I see that transition realistically like happening within a year or so.

KL: As far as the breakdown, how many students are in each track?

T4: I know that last year in my sheltered classes I had 15 students in my class and there was one other teacher that was teaching. She had about the same number. And then I also know that there are normally 2-5 students per regular ed. class that are considered ELL students. (inaudible)

KL: You mentioned using visuals, demonstrations, hands-on activities, and vocabulary. Can you briefly summarize what each of those things are?

T4: With my ESL students I think that it's really important that they have a visual recognition to new vocabulary. So I use a lot of models in class, even if it's literature, even if what they're looking at is in text. When we break that down and when we talk about the different parts, we talk about the different forms, the different structures, but I also a lot of pictures, a lot of overheads, and a lot of visuals to give them something, like what is a verb? We also do a lot of descriptive writing where they're responding to the visuals so they start to get a sense of those sensory words. Sight words. Those kinds of things. They're responding to what they see. You know hands-on, we try to get them actively participating so they do well in the visual arrangement whether it be a graphic organizer, whether it be drawing what they're thinking so that then we can take those drawings and list them. And then I also do a lot of one-on-one conferencing with my students, especially with my ESL, just a conversational style just students who are anxious about the reading and can ask me a question about the reading... either know how to pose the questions or an answer that they're looking for or they just have anxiety about the reading (inaudible). The one-one-one conversation really helps with that.

KL: Just a general conversation, not about a specific assignment?

T4: Yes, you know sometimes I'll touch base with them. Like in one class this morning, I actually spent, the kids were doing some book work and while they were working on the book work I pulled students one-on-one to start asking them about the narrative essays that they are doing. Or sometimes it is a specific content and sometimes it's more just a general and we talk about (inaudible). Or I can ask them questions. Or I can test their comprehension about something.

KL: And how often do you meet with each student?

T4: Well I try to talk to every student at least once a week. Those students that I know are struggling I try to touch base with at least daily in a very quick, informal fashion. Um 'Tell me how you are doing this part of the assignment?' And that way I know that first of all that they understand what assignment we are working on and making progress on it.

KL: Thinking about your mainstream classes, how would you say that the learning needs of your ELL students in those classes differ? Is there a difference that you notice?

T4: I do, but I think with the Language Arts mainstream, sorry with the ELL students, that very often they come without very much literacy in their native language. And so, not only do they have low English but they really can't read and write in their first language either, some of them. And what I have found is just the basic concept of critical thinking, some of those literacy skills, are lacking. But that's not necessarily because they don't understand the language, because they don't have literacy skills in their native language. That's tough. That's a struggle. And I also do find that that anxiety factor where they're not as likely to ask you questions, they're not comfortable working in groups, so it's sometimes difficult trying to get them involved. And then also they don't have the background knowledge, they don't have fourth, fifth, and sixth grade science to help them in their biology class, it's all kind of new to them. So that CALP is lacking. The background CALP is lacking. It's all new CALP

KL: Sometimes in my classroom we talked about the differences from home and school language? (inaudible) Do you see some of those differences with your ELL students? What are your thoughts on that?

T4: You know I do. We have, our primary goal, we're working on culture and that is what I have the most experience with. And I do notice a few things, like they struggle with language, because in their culture, time is not such an issue. They have a laid back society, and they don't rush (inaudible). The other thing I noticed, especially in the classroom is this idea of getting (inaudible) to Latinos we don't motivate enough (inaudible) and if that means we just writing the answers for them or they take your paper so they can write down the answers from your paper, for them that's perfectly (inaudible) like mainstream students they don't let (inaudible) you just past their papers to someone else. They manage (inaudible) what they don't realize is that real learning doesn't take place that way. So that's the cultural difference. We have (inaudible). we don't have twenty (inaudible). So those kinds of things.

KL: So you have class discussion on backgrounds?

T4: Mm, hmm. Yes we do.

KL: Are there any significant trends or changes that you see in the literacy instructions or students' needs?

T4: Well, just what I was saying with recently with the _____district's choice to go with an intensive script Language program where virtually everything, every day is scripted, so it is a very (inaudible) Instruction where the (inaudible) or the ELL instructors, before were coming up with the curriculum on our own, (inaudible) there was very little curriculum in place and most schools literature already on their shelves, so we were scrambling always to develop (inaudible). Where now we changed to the new program, the workbooks, the textbooks, everything is right there, and it is all scripted. And I know there are more and more of these types of programs available. Language just happens to be on the _____ (inaudible). It's probably the most common program nationwide, but there are lots of others out there, that the focus is on general literacy skills, then the curriculum of language arts, if that makes sense.

KL: So what do feel are the pros and cons of the (inaudible) school or program?

T4: I think that the thing that's a con, and I don't think it is a con for the students, it's a con for the teachers, language arts teachers are not, especially are not direct instruction teachers. We have a really hard time with that because we allow the discussions to go the literature takes us and so language arts instruction is always such a (inaudible). And so language arts instruction teachers it is a really, really hard for us to make ourselves do that [direct instruction]. It's hard for us to make ourselves do that. What I see the advantages for the students are that it is a set of knowns, they know what to expect. They know what the breakdown of the days going to be, what the schedule is going to be like. They know that one thing will build on another, and I see this same format being used with low level readers as well. In fact, that's what it was first designed for. It's not specifically an ELL program. Any struggling teacher can definitely (inaudible) instruction. I only taught the program for one trimester last year. We know have a permanent teacher who is doing that specific class. I personally do not have a lot of experience with the program. Mine is more with sheltered language arts curriculum.

KL: Is there any advice you would new teachers about learning literacy or language instruction?

T4: I think that one of the most important things is slow down. And I think that that rings true in any classroom (inaudible). We forget that they're not getting it (inaudible). With ELL students especially (inaudible). Where most of our students will comprehend the main items, ELL students are not (inaudible). They are really into the cultural thing, not to really question, they're just not willing to do that. So the teachers need to say, are you getting it, and ask the question (inaudible). So unfortunately, they get probably get the same instruction as everyone else, whether they get it or don't get it. It has really opened up some discussion between teachers about how we can approach things (inaudible) so that's been the real eye opener for me.

KL: Is there anything else that (inaudible) that you would like to talk about?

T4: You know, I just think that probably the one that gets overlooked a lot is the prior knowledge, the scaffolding, and the background information. If they don't have some of that in their native language, we really are starting way farther behind. It's easy to teach kids

vocabulary words, but the way the mainstream builds vocabulary is by scaffolding, to build on background knowledge. If the ELL students don't have that, then we got to back up.

T4: So one of the questions that I have for you, are you looking for specifically at language are instruction, or you looking at content area as well?

KL: My project is limited to language arts teachers, but my minor is chemistry so I looking at the possible (inaudible).

T4: What I want to do is…we have two other sheltered instruction teachers here in the building. So if and when you are wanting to look at a little broader range they may have some broader perspective.

Teacher 5:

KL: Okay, so we want to start off with the first question on the survey, it deals with the needs of ELL students or English language learners students. You indicated that you think about this always and sometimes talk to the other teachers about it and rarely attend conferences. Just thinking about those learning needs, how would you say they differ in terms of number or degree from those of native English speakers in your classroom?

T5: I'd say they have significantly more needs than the native speakers in my classroom. In fact it's almost like when I plan my lessons now, they are my main focus because there are so many more of them than when I first started teaching, for a lot of reasons: population shift, bigger class sizes, funding cuts in the ESL programs.

KL: You say on your survey that motivation, cultural and vocabulary those were some of your top concerns about ELL students. Can you elaborate a little bit more on those concerns?

T5: I said this somewhere else later in the survey but motivation wise, middle school is a time when kids, a lot of them, school's not their deal, boys in particular. But I do seem to notice more in the ELL students that there's this idea that well, we're not here to work, we're not here to learn. We're here to play because somebody makes us play. And that's not too across board, but it does seem like there's a larger percentage in that population that feels that way. Culturally, um, well I'll give you an experience I had last year. Last year I had two students who cheated and I called them on it and gave them consequences and their parents were very upset, particularly one parent who told me that it was culturally acceptable for them to do that. But that in their culture everybody shared, that's what they did, didn't matter what the assignment said. I mean she just had a million cultural reasons why her son really didn't cheat, although clearly he did. And that upset me and I would hope that's not the norm. You know there's a lot of, especially in English there's a lot of background knowledge that folks from other cultures just need some background on. They just, you know, haven't watched American TV since you were born or just haven't been absorbed in this culture from birth there is stuff that some kids have that you don't. Like one time I had a kid go, 'Yellowstone? What's Yellowstone?' Well, every-, you know…That surprised me. Stuff like that comes up.

KL: Yeah, I think that's interesting you mention the difference between the concept of sharing and the idea of cheating. That's another one of my questions actually, is kind of these tensions

between home language and literacy and school language and literacy. Do you see any tensions or how do you negotiate the differences between this is how we use language or this is the ideas we understand at home and this is how we use language or the ideas we have at school. Do you have any thoughts on that?

T5: Sadly, and this is not just me, teachers across the school get this, the ELL kids, who mostly happen to be Hispanic, are very sensitive to treatment. You correct them, for whatever the reason might be, there's a portion of them who will always say 'that's cause I'm brown,' 'You're a racist,' which is totally not the case, but you know it does happen a lot. 'Okay I need to teach you what that word really means' because telling you not to poke your neighbor with a pencil, telling you to stop talking

KL: So there are a lot of behavior issues.

T5: So there are some behavior issues, mainly, the tension that I see, and maybe tension isn't the right word, is just I worry about parents who don't have the language skills that their students do, getting, feeling like their connected to school, knowing what's going on. At our parent conferences we have translators and that's awesome. That works really, really well and I've been so pleased at the increase in parents who come to conferences even though they don't have the language skills and some of them just say 'Oh, this is scary for me, my language my English is terrible' and I'm 'Oh your English is better than my Spanish.' So I'm just so pleased to see that. And I think some of the programs we've had over the years have really facilitated that. We had a principal a couple years ago who was just committed to getting the non-natives' parents speakers, that came out badly, here in the building and so that's been great. But I worry like when I send home emails to all the parents who have email addresses , just to say here's what's going on in English. Well what happens if they don't have email? If they don't the language skills to interpret that email? There's no way to get that sent information across, and that bothers me. And I really don't know what the solution is, so I find that kind of a tension that I just am never quite confident that those parents get all the information that they would really want actually, to help their kids succeed.

KL: That's really important to you.

T5: Yeah, and I will say other than the cheating kid's mother, I have just super positive interactions with all the parents of my ELL students that I've had the chance to meet.

KL: How long have they had translators at the teachers' conferences?

T5: Um, easily for the last seven possibly eight years. Maybe as long as ten.

KL: And you said that they started a lot of the programs, like were they literacy programs, and were they more geared towards parent involvement? Can you describe those programs?

T5: Okay, there's a multicultural club, we have an ESL liaison, like this year when I had a couple of problems with boys he called their parents because they were Spanish speaking and so he was able to do that communication for me. The principal that I'm talking about, Dan

Johnson, who was here, who left maybe five years ago, he asked the parents in the community who have, the ESL parents, 'I want you here at the school? When can we meet? When can we do?' Well, Friday nights. So Friday nights, like once a month or so, he and his wife would have some shin-dig with ESL parents and our counselor, she's a seventh grade counselor now, she's been very involved in getting those parents involved because she's started out here as our ESL liaison, and our ESL teachers as well, and there's probably other stuff I'm forgetting. But I do like it now that when we get forms from the office, stuff like that, they are translated into Spanish. That's our primary population. I'm not sure how they accommodate the other languages.

KL: Okay, I want to kind of shift the focus now more towards CALP. You read over the little summary, but how do you feel that CALP is relevant to your teaching practice, and if it's not relevant, why, or if there's anything you do that's similar to the ideas discussed in the paragraph?

T5: Well, language is the number one factor. You need to be successful in school because you're listening, you're speaking, you're reading, all day long, every subject, it doesn't matter. So kids if don't have the basic vocabulary to get school, how do they get school? So, when I'm doing lessons I'm always thinking about how to explain this in a way that is not going to be insulting to the high-level kids, and is still understandable to the kids who in that process of language acquisition. And sometimes I think I succeed, and sometimes I think I fail dismally.

KL: So is there any specific things that you do, do you put words on the board, or do you vocabulary words that they write down or…?

T5: Yeah.

KL: When you talk about, think about how you explain it, can you tell me more specifically what that looks like?

T5: When we do literature units I do pull vocabulary words from the book. As I'm reading aloud to students, which I do on many occasions, when we come across words that I know they're not going to get, because it's a word that they'll never have seen before, and this is across the board for all the kids, but I do try to especially think about what the ELL kids might need, I stop and I say that 'that word means' 'that word means' 'that word means'. We do a unit later in the year called *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and we do the entire thing reader's theater, were I read most of it, but all the other kids have a part. And I do that. It's kind of like the Lemmony Snicket books, 'a word which here means' blah blah blah, so a lot of clarification as we go along. Sometimes when we're reading I put a word on the board that, you know, that I know they've never seen before. So that's kind of my, and academic language, you know what, tests are so hard, especially all that stupid –sorry use my word—standardized tests that we do. Last year, when I was looking over a kid's shoulder reading the end of level test, I thought 'Wow, there's some really specific test language here that I bet all the kids are thinking 'what's that really asking?' so I know the ELL kids are in the dark. So one of the things we talked about as a department this year is try to think of some specific terms like that, just the academic terminology for lack of a better way to say it, that will help smooth their way.

KL: So taking the language straight from the standardized test and actually teaching them what those terms mean.

T5: Right, yeah. And I wish I could think of an example, the example right now the one that I just thought 'Oh gosh', because it's not some, the concept wasn't new, we'd talked about it, we'd done it in class, but I hadn't used that specific terminology.

KL: Uh-huh.

T5: And so I was betting, I just wanted to say 'Oh hey, by the way this means…' but of course you can't do that in a testing setting like I would have in a classroom, so we're trying to think about that this year. I hate teaching to the test but, I guess teaching the terminology for the test is alright.

KL: Well, I mean that's what the reality of what the teaching profession. And speaking of that I wanted to know if there are specific trends that you've seen or changes in literacy instruction, in student's learning needs over the course of your career? Like have they looked in literacy in one light and then shifted their focus to a different light, or what have you noticed in terms of what has changed, you know in what teachers teach and what students need to learn, have you seen any differences in what students learning needs are?

T5: Huge emphasis on critical thinking skills, because as the world changes minute by minute there's no way that we can teach them all the content that they're ever going to need to know. What we need to do is teach them how to think, how to find out, how to, how to be critical readers, don't believe everything you read on the internet. Holy cow, please don't believe everything you read on the internet. You get some wild stuff that way. And also on, in terms, more focus especially in secondary, on teaching reading. When I started, we were, you know, secondary training in all, across the board was about your content, and that's a shift and it's kind of a hard shift for science teachers, the math teachers, they don't love being teachers of reading, that's not their training that's not their comfort level, but a huge focus on everybody has to be a teacher of reading. If you're the math teacher, you have to teach them how to read your math textbook. How to look for those clues in the textbook. How to look at the organization and figure it out. You know, same with science, and what have you. And of course the majority of that, you know, focuses eh-falls on the English teacher. We've spent a lot of time talking this year on what on what I basically said. The textbook that we're all reading this year is "Do I have to Teach Reading?" Well, yes we do. And it talks about things like training kids what to do when they don't get the text. Don't just say, 'Oh, well I'm a terrible reader and that's the way that it's always going to be.' Teach them how to make connections to the text, how to synthesize what they read, how to question what they read, visualize what you read, just kind of decoding it. Reading is not magic, reading is a skill, and if you're lost, there are things you can do to find your way back. But you know, people who read just easily, they just do those things naturally, but anytime we're, we're reading something we're not familiar with you got to have those skills. Like I just refinanced my house, you know, reading those mortgage papers? I know a lot of big words, but I didn't know all those big words so I had to apply those skills and it was a really good reminder to me of 'Oh, okay. I have kids in my room who go through this every day.' It makes your brain hurt.

KL: Does this textbook recommend any specific models for teaching literacy, because I know, for instance, I've studied SIOP, you know sheltered instruction, whole language is another one I've looked at briefly, is there any specific program that this is geared towards or has it mentioned any of those?

T5: Um, no, not really. It is just mainly about how, you know, how to teach kids what to do while they're reading.

KL: Uh huh.

T5: Think that from information, think about sensory images, and activate your background knowledge, those kinds of things.

KL: So it doesn't really have a specific method?

T5: No, it doesn't.

KL: Okay. My last question is what advice would give to novice teachers regarding students' learning needs, literacy or language instruction, so what do you think, you know, students just coming out of the university teacher ed. program should, need to know for them to help students?

T5: To expect a lot of deer in headlights looks, more and more all the time. Gosh, that they better listen? Just to, the farther you get away from college, the harder it is to remember how to be a learner, rather than just a teacher and you just have to constantly try to remember what it's like to be in their shoes. Like you know, the example I gave with reading my mortgage papers. When you're planning your lessons or whatever, try to see it through their eyes. What is going to be clear to you that is going to be total foggy mystery to them. And early on in my career, I really did do a lot of training and that sort of stuff. There's just not as many opportunities now as there used to be because of budget cuts and stuff. My ESL endorsement really helped. Read some books. Talk to your colleagues, there's always someone somebody in the building smarter than you are and that can help you sound things out.

KL: So just, continue professional development?

T5: Yep, yeah. You want them to be a lifelong learner; you got to do the same.

KL: Makes sense. Since we have a few minutes, I also wanted to know about like if there's any homework that you give to help with the, to develop the cognitive academic language, if there's any curriculum materials that you have, places that you go, you said online research, ESL training, colleagues. Um ESL training, Is that like?

T5: Um from my ESL endorsement.

KL: So stuff that you got we you were going back to get that?

T5: Uh huh.

KL: What kind of things did you get there?

T5: Gosh, I got a whole binder over on the shelf. It made me really think about how to break down language. I'll use one example of an idea that I got in the endorsement and it's from *Hound of the Baskervilles* again which is pretty tough because it's nineteenth century language in a twenty-first century world for kids who sometimes don't have the language skills. So I took paragraphs from the first chapter of that book, which were pretty intense paragraphs, and then I put them into groups to translate that into their own language, here's how Sherlock homes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, did it. How would an eighth grader put it? And so when we do all that first, and since it's kind of out of context they're like 'What? What?' but then, we get into chapter one and we read those paragraphs in context and they've got their translation there, and suddenly it's like the light bulbs go off, 'Oh I get it.' So since we do a lot of literature, that's always trying to, you know, 'that's how they said it, how are you going to say it?'

KL: And then when you're looking at stuff, you know, material to supplement your objectives is there any sort of criteria you use to evaluate whether or not you're going to use the material?

T5: For English, I really believe that if it's material that's engaging, they'll make the effort to get it. Now there might be parts of it that they're a little unsure of that I can pull them through, but overall if it's engaging, they'll get it.

KL: So make sure it's

T5: They'll want to get it.

KL: Connects to their interests, stuff like that?

T5: Uh huh.

KL: So that's just when you're looking for books to read?

T5: Mm hmm.

KL: Um how many books do you usually use books or short stories, or how many do you usually go through in a year?

T5: We do a historical novel, we do a mystery novel, and we do a play. And the play is great because they can see it in front of them so just, you know, with that visual stuff it helps them so much to get it.

KL: Uh huh.

T5: And we do a lot of short stories. I'm constantly changing and looking for new short stories that might appeal to a broader audience. It is so hard to find short stories that you can do in a

middle school, because I'm telling you, most you just want to whiteout every other word. It's tough.

KL: So it's just censoring issues, or?

T5: Yeah, that's the main issue. But some of the ones that are safe to use are just so darn boring I'd rather die than teach them. So yeah, that's a struggle.

KL: Do you have like reading materials here, do students do free reading?

T5: They do. When we aren't doing a literature unit, they do independent reading in class every day, and it's a book of their choice unless I think it's a book that's um, every once in a while I let them read an easy one, 'Okay next book you've got to challenge yourself a little more.' So when we go to the library to check things out, I'm you know like seeing what they're doing, and then they have a reading record so I can go and look and see, 'You've been on the same book for a month now, let's [laughs], let's figure out what's not going right here.' So they do have an opportunity to brace themselves.

KL: And they just bring those books to class?

T5: Uh huh .

KL: And read? Okay, well is there anything else that you think I should know that we haven't talked about?

T5: Um…

KL: Or you forgot to explain things you see or fix, ELL students, or anything else that's related to this topic?

T5: If I could change anything at all right this second, I would change class sizes. And this is somewhere in there [pointing to survey] but in a class of thirty, I kid you not, in my sixth hour class, I have a kid who just read Plato this summer and other kids who are like 'Play-doh!' You know? So honest to Pete, give me fewer kids in a class so that I can spend more one on one time with kids I need to, so that the kids who are ready to excel, I have more time to offer them additional opportunities because in a class of thirty, it's keeping the peace, and you hope you get a little more beyond that. I can just feel their frustration level, and I'm frustrated too, because I do not have the time to help them. So if I could, magic bullet right this minute do anything, I would lower class sizes across the board.

KL: Is that in all disciplines, or just English?

T5: All, and in English I'm lucky because for newcomers who have no English skills, I don't have those, but my history and science colleagues they do have those, they have twenty more kids on their class load.

KL: So they have more in their classes?

T5: Well, yeah well throughout the day. Like there's some of my classes were I have twenty five as opposed to thirty, but they've got thirty, thirty one, every single class.

KL: In every period?

T5: And some of those kids are the kids who can say "Hi, how are you, where's the bathroom?' What do you do with that? When you also have the kid that read Plato in that class

KL: So you do have a pullout program for ESL, or…

T5: Yeah, there is, there is. Um the kids that are newcomers or uh, just went out of my head, the you know, the…

KL: Lowest proficiency level?

T5: Right lowest proficiency, they haven't passed their test yet they are in a separate ESL class and as I said there's about twenty of them per grade.

KL: About twenty per grade?

T5: Yeah.

KL: And then this is a middle school right, so six through eight?

T5: Six through eight.

KL: And then it's a little bit different in every district you go to, is that pretty general of this area, that there are ESL pullout programs?

T5: I believe that it is, I have a friend of mine who just retired who taught in _____ county and she was the ESL there, and yeah, they had a pullout program too, for their English class and they're in all the regular classes throughout the day.

KL: So when you went back to get your endorsement, did you do that right after you had gotten your teaching license, or did you wait a few years or how did you decide to do that?

T5: When I started there was no such thing as ESL. I don't know where those children went, they were probably in Special Ed, which is probably why we had an ORC review forever. Um, about ten years after I graduated, they started ESL trainings.

KL: And did you just do that here at the school?

T5: I did it through Northern Utah Curriculum Consortium which is _____, _____ and _____districts. They had them put together some funding and offered the training free

to those teachers who wanted to participate. I understand now that they're doing it through _____ credit. We got state office credit and enough if it qualified us for a lane change we could use that. Now I think they're doing it through _____.

KL: And is that still available? Do teachers still go to that to get endorsements?

T5: I think so, yeah, I think so.

KL: What year did you say that was, that they started doing this?

T5: I'm not sure what year they started. I know I was in one of the first classes. I want to say that it was around probably 2001-2002. And it wasn't like professors or anything, some of it we had the ESL person from the county, we had a teacher from _____, so I'm sure that it wasn't always the best training we could have gotten –one of the teachers was particularly bad—but it was certainly better than nothing.

KL: Well I know a lot of times in our classes they're talking about ELL issues more and more and so students are deciding to while they're in school just to go ahead and get their ESL minor/ESL endorsement while they're in classes . I mean, I'm kind of doing English and Chemistry so I don't really have time to add on ESL, but it's something I've definitely looked into.

T5: When I started here, I believe, I could be wrong because I'm trying to look back to my years, I believe we had about 5 percent Latino population and now we are probably around 55 percent. So population shift has been huge. And I appreciate that we've had good leadership in this school, who have been very proactive and made sure we had programs and stuff. Can't say the district's always been the same way, but there was a time that we had a dark period in the district office, in my opinion. But I think things are better now.

KL: Well that's what I've heard, that a good administration makes all the difference.

T5: Absolutely.

Teacher 6

KL: T6.

KL: Can you answer out loud those three questions on the survey, your background….

T6: This is my fourth year at _____. My sixth year teaching overall. I taught at the junior high, 8th and 9th grade. I taught English, my entire time. I taught at a juvenile detention center in _____ for a few months, about 8 months. I taught overseas in _____. I taught English as a second language to classrooms to up to 40 _____ elementary students. I have an undergraduate degree from ____ in English teaching and a master's degree in creative writing. Right now I teach creative writing to seniors and a fantasy course to seniors. I teach 10th grade English and I am teaching debate. I have about on average, 32 students per class.

KL: Just thinking about your ELL students, what would you say are the top three concerns or top three learning needs in that student population?

T6: When you say ELL, primarily the students that are ELL students, are Hispanic students. The three biggest concerns I have are, uh, it's hard to narrow it down to three, its most just one…it's the learned...I don't know…it's just this complacency; this attitude of no desire in the students that are ELL. None of the strategies that I use for my other classes to increase motivation seems to work on the ELL students.

KL: What are those strategies?

T6: Mostly strategies to increase participation. I might have a journal that they have to write and I tell the students before they start, I am going to pick randomly. I have dice and if their number is rolled they have to share what they wrote. For most students, that creates anticipation. 'Oh no, I might have to read my paper, I am going to try and make it good, so I'm not ashamed to share.' I will do that with anything, not just with journal writing. I'll ask a question and I'll say, 'Okay everyone has to come up with an answer and share it. You have 30 seconds to think of your answer' and it just seems, no matter what, if I roll randomly one of my ELL students there is just this awkward moment of them not wanting to participate and it feels like I have to force it out of them. I will say things to try and encourage them, like, 'It is ok to be wrong, but it's not okay to just sit there.' And eventually, they will say something just to the focus away from them. So, learning doesn't take place. But because it works so well for the rest of my students, I like to keep using that strategy. My biggest concern is that the strategies that work for the majority, do not work very well for my ELL students. So it doesn't seem fair if I roll their number randomly, that I should say, since you are an ELL student, I am going to discriminate and say that you don't have to answer. It just doesn't seem fair. It's a struggle. It's a struggle.

KL: Have you talked about this problem with other teachers?

T6: Yeah. I'm taking an ELL course right now, an ESL endorsement class and these are the issues that we are addressing in our reading and discussion groups. And I have heard other strategies where you get the students to pair share. You get the ELL students talking to other students beforehand and then if they are called upon it is little less of an anxiety thing for them. They talk with someone in a small group and it's…but still I don't know if any learning is taking place. I see in pair and share, the student who already speaks English is going to be doing most of the learning. The kid that doesn't is still going to be passive. It is that passivity that I don't know how to overcome. So yeah…

KL: In your opinion, do you think it is the problem that they don't know the language or is it a cultural problem?

T6: I think it is more of a cultural problem. They understand what I am asking them, from what I perceive, but culturally, it's, I don't know, it causes anxiety to be put on the spot like that, maybe they don't know the answer so they've gotten use to teachers glazing over and saying let's move onto someone else? And kind of failing them out? And their not use to being put on the spot for an extended amount of time? So, I don't know. I think they've got use to not being demanded of an answer.

KL: One of the things I am studying with this project is the difference between BICS and CALP. BICS is just your basic home conversations and CALP is sort of this cognitive academic language. Another thing they talk about is home culture versus school culture. Sometimes there is this disconnect. A fluid

conversation in one setting and like you were saying, that blank stare. Have you noticed some of those differences between home and school?

T6: Yeah. Some of my ELL students they chum along just fine with some of the other students in the class. And they can talk and participate in groups, but there is the blank stare. There is the quiet, uncomfortable pause when I present them with an opportunity to participate academically. I see that the CALP might be the shortcoming. The cognitive academic language could be something that a lot of my ELL students are not proficient in.

KL: Looking at questions 3,4, and 5 on the survey, can you just give a quick answer on how often you think about this when planning, or how can you talk to other teachers, or how often do you seek after other professional sources?

T6: It's tough right now when you talk about planning, because as a fourth year teacher I lean a lot on the plans I created my first two years. I am so busy right now with debate and other things, I don't dedicate a lot of time to actually plan lessons. I do a lot of recycling. I would love to have the time to polish off my lessons and include that but that is a whole different discussion of teacher compensation and whether prepare time, so right now I do not spend a lot of time planning and when it comes to the amount of consideration I put into ELL students. When I originally planned for my lessons, 2 or 3 years ago, I would say, rarely just because I was thinking toward the needs of the majority. It just seemed like the thing to do. Now, that is one of the things I would like to do, is to re-plan different strategies, specific things I can do in my lesson to help my ELL students.

KL: Well and you have been in different areas and different situations. Just since you have been here in _____, have you seen different changes in the demographics or the approach that the school district is going to be taking in teaching literacy language construction?

T6: There is an emphasis on diversified education. There is not a whole lot of instruction on how to specifically do that. I have talked to a couple of the administrators and he hired someone that kind of specializes in that. He is going to start some training to the entire faculty, so that's good. As far as the demographics go, yeah, there has been an increase, I would say, of minority and ELL students. Statistically, I think I started around 4 years ago, around 30% and I would say we are at 55%. That is just a guess.

KL: So do you think that the learning needs differ, you talked a little bit about that, maybe you could explain a little bit more, than those of native speakers?

T6: Yeah, I have learned a different language and so I know the challenge of that and I know that. And I speak Spanish. And I know that I am not as proficient in Spanish as I am in English and fluent. I understand Spanish. I still struggle speaking it and reading it sometimes, so I can understand while I might appear quite fluent and quite intelligent to Spanish speakers, when I speak Spanish to them. They always talk to me about how well I speak Spanish. I do not feel comfortable learning in Spanish. I took a course in Spanish, Spanish literature, in college and it was an absolute struggle. It was one of the worse classes I have ever taken. I had to read literature in Spanish and I didn't understand most of it. So I can see in my English class, we are in Shakespeare right now. It's hard enough for our native speakers to understand Shakespeare and the ELL students, there is no way they are going to understand the majority

of it, so it makes me wonder, should I be teaching Shakespeare to ELL students? I don't know. Those are good questions I am still struggling with.

KL: So it makes you reconsider the content?

T6: It totally does.

KL: So you think that the distinction between the BICS and the CALP, usually it takes two to five years to be considered proficient in academic language. Do you think that is a valid distinction?

T6. Oh yeah, totally.

KL: You kind of described few of your strategies with lesson planning and motivation. Is there anything else, that has helped, that is relevant in your teaching practices?

T6: Umm, yeah, being aware of CALP or being aware of increasing proficiency?

KL: Yeah, anything you do to try to, you mentioned motivation, but do you have any sort of worksheets or visuals, or you talked about the pair share or any homework assignments that are specifically designed with a particular concept in mind?

T6: In an ideal world to improve CALP, I think it would be one-on-one, teacher to student, doing a lot of specific teacher evaluations and assessments. But with 32 students and five different classes, that's more than 150 students, and so I don't have the time or the means to pay that attention. My strategy for doing more one-on-one stuff is doing as much peer evaluation as I can, direct, specific, structured peer evaluation in writing, sometimes peer editing, peer evaluating, peer response. I do a lot of reading groups and let them discuss in groups. These are the things that I have read that are effective for a lot of minority cultures. Putting them into practice, I have had to tweak a few things to make them effective. Overall, I'd say that increasing discussion in class, increasing peer evaluation, peer group work has been more successful than the traditional approach of me lecturing.

KL: And you teach them how to give each other that feedback?

T6: Yeah. I teach them how to discuss and how to make good questions and how to respond, in an arguing fashion but also in a respectful fashion. These are the strategies that I teach.

KL: That seems like it would be an effective thing.

T6: It is as effective as I've seen but at the same time, it is not as effective as I want it to be.

KL: Yeah, but that's teaching.

T6: Yeah, that's true.

KL: What advice would you give to beginning teachers regarding students learning needs or literacy construction?

T6: The advice I would give, boy that's a tough question because a lot of the success I have had is from trial and error which I don't think that it needs to be that way. I wish that I had learned, you have heard

best practices is becoming a buzz word. I really strive for the concept of best practices. You learn and implement strategies that work. And that's the kind of thing that we have stressed as a group in my ESL endorsement class is that all the strategies we are learning for the ESL kids are just good strategies. They are good for all students so the idea of differentiating education, I am still trying to figure that out where I can go and treat the needs of the one group, while this other group is doing something else. And also having a whole classroom setting where I'm giving a strategy where I am differentiating kids. It's difficult to do. The advice that I would give is learn best practices and implement them until they really are the best practices. A lot of times you will hear a strategy that is a best practice, try it out in your class and you will say, that didn't work, so sometimes student teachers will trash it. Usually it would work if they did a couple of small things like quiet the classroom down a little bit before they start to give instructions or give the instructions more explicitly. These are just little teacher tricks that you learn, so, learn best practices and believe in them. It is good for all students.

KL: When you referred to differentiating instruction, that's like different levels of interventions, right?

T6: Yeah and my concept of differentiating is you teach a concept and/or skill in different ways repeatedly and on different levels. You give the assessment and 80% of the class got it, 20% did not. For example, we have been working on identifying and explaining figurative language today in class. Some of the kids don't get it and so to differentiate I've said, 'Alright you have 15 minutes of quiet time to work on this. I want you to identify a metaphor and a simile and then be able to explain it and if you don't get it, come and talk to me.' There will be kids that don't get it and talk to me and there are going to be kids that don't get it and don't talk to me. And I will see that they don't after I assess their work. It is a short assignment so that I don't have to grade all day, but then once that I see that they don't get it then I differentiate again, give them some additional instruction. On Fridays, I will put up the book that we are reading, the kids that don't get it, I will pull them aside or I will bring in a tutor to help them. So those are some of the strategies that have created to differentiate instruction and assessment to some extent.

KL: In your ESL endorsement classes have you talked about sheltered instruction or whole language, or any other literacy models?

T6: Yeah we've looked at, we've been reading about the different strategies for the instruction and kind of the progress of how it has gone from the sink or swim model, whenever at was, 60's or 70's, to now a lot of the bilingual education. I think the bilingual education is fascinating. I think it is a great idea, school-wide, nationwide, I don't know if it is realistic. In small groups, to people that are interested, I think it is an option and should be encouraged. Teachers should be trained for it. But as far as school wide goes, I think, from what I understand, the model that we use in our classrooms right now is sheltered but it is also the model where we take the students out of the class and have them in their own ESL class all day, which has been proven to not be very effective. So, I think that we are a little behind the times. I talked to a parent just two days ago, at parent teacher conference on Friday. She is a Latina, single mother. I taught all three of her boys, she is very active in the Latinas In Action program that we have here at the school and she just up in arms about the poor strategies that we have at the school for ELL programs.

KL: So, is she angry about the pull out programs.

T6: Yeah, mostly the pull out programs and she saying, she told me that we are 20 years behind all of the research that has been done and I can see that as well. From what I have read in the ESL endorsement class, yeah, we are behind. It's quite sad because our demographics are changing. We are increasing our ELL students and I don't see us equip as a faculty to address those needs, which is sad.

KL: What is the Latinas action program?

T6: Great program where students of Hispanic and Latino origins or whatever. They get together. It is actually a class they take 3rd period. They are a group that is dedicated to excellence in academics for themselves and any one that is a part has to have a certain GPA and commit to graduate from high school and go on to college, but also to increase activity in the community. So they go out and tutor elementary students in reading and English and speak them in both languages to increase the expectations. I think it is a great program. It helps with a feeling of empowerment and I think that this is something that they have lacked. They have felt like they are a guest, when they should feel like, hey, this is their country too and go out there and get an education and that is what this program is teaching, to inspire them. And I think they are successful. I have seen a difference in the students that have joined the club, their attitude toward education, so it has been quite nice.

KL: Do you think that most of your colleagues here at _____ High are aware of some of these other models of ESL instruction or aware of some of the deficiencies?

T6: I don't think so and I wasn't really aware of the different models of instruction until I took this ESL endorsement class. It's from department meeting, in the English department, that we have talked about how to meet the needs of minority and ELL students. None of us have the answers, so we share ideas but none of us have screaming success in this area.

KL: Well at least you are talking about it.

T6: Yeah, but again, I don't think that all of us are trained very well or even aware. Sadly, there are some teachers that are kind of burned out and they are there to stay and they don't really want to change much or learn much.

KL: And I think that the incoming teachers are a little bit more aware these issues. It is more of a mainstream issue and so I think that they are more excited to get their ESL endorsement or at least some classes. That is kind of the goal of this project to look at what is actually written in the literature and look at what is actually happening in the high schools with the teachers and then making connections and saying, 'okay what are we doing right, what do we need to change, what would be useful but practical in the classroom?" So hopefully we can generate some interest together.

T6: That's the positive I get from this is that there is positive, interested dialogue from a lot of us educators that want to address the needs of these kids. It just breaks my heart every year when I look at the F's that I give. I try and be a teacher of integrity and hold all kids accountable to the same level of excellence and I do give F's if they have earned them and a lot of times they are the cultural minority students and it just breaks my heart that I don't have the tools to instruct them the way that they need to be instructed. It's a positive thing that a lot of us are interested in becoming better educators for the students.

Teacher 7

KL: Teacher seven. And that's just the code that we'll use in the whole thesis. So just looking over this survey, it's says you've kind of taught in a lot of different settings, can you briefly summarize where you've been and what you've done?

T7: I taught my first year at the _____, it's an alternate high school, so for the students who are not doing very well at the high school they go there for their credit. It's a little more challenging, so first year out of college it was a little challenging to teach those types of students.

KL: Uh huh.

T7: And then I spent four years at the high school. And I taught, well for my first year I taught ninth through tenth, ninth through twelfth grades, and in the high school I taught mostly tenth and twelfth grade. And then after the high school, I've been here at the middle school for the last three years.

KL: Okay. And just thinking about the needs of your ELL students, you said that grammar, reading fluency, and not spending time checking over work, those were your top three concerns? Can you describe those a little bit more?

T7: Um the, grammatically speaking, they, and this is students in general, it's not just the ELL learners, I think it's a little harder for them to grasp it, but most students have a hard time with grammar and parts of speech, and trying the subject verb agreement and things like that. So that's why I put grammar and that's not just for the ELL students but it's kind of for most students. The other ones, what was the next one, I'm sorry,

KL: Um reading fluency and…

T7: Reading fluency, it's a little harder for them to read, like when I read out loud; they're not always quick to understand. And I'm going from the high school situation because we don't really have a hard time here at the middle school. Like our classes aren't that diverse, and so students at the high school and the older students that I taught had a hard time with what I read out loud to them and understand or they were reading quietly just had a hard time understanding the words on the page sometimes. So that's why I put that.

KL: Okay, and not spending time checking work or finding confidence to ask for help? Is that a particular problem for the ELL students? Or is that in students in general?

T7: This could be applied to any student, I mean you've always got the same—what's hard is when you've got the same situations for all students in general, like you'll always have the students who are wonderful students who check over their work, and who do their assignments, but then you'll always have the students who do not check over their work. The students though who don't check over their work have a harder time staying up with the class, and the ELL

students, I think have, a harder time coming for help 'cause I don't know if their grammar's good enough or if they can't portray what their trying to do very well, like finding the right words to say their frustrations or confusions, so in the ELL population in general I think that they have the lacking of the confidence to come and ask for help. All students need help… because it's not being done very much. But for the students that don't speak English very well, I think that they have a harder time finding the confidence and doing so.

KL: Okay. And then can you just, and you've described here some of the strategies, that you don't have many choices for grammar, that you have students follow along while you read, and that you try to approach to clarify assignments to individual students.

T7: Right, for the different strategies on grammar, grammar's very hard to teach because it's hard to find a fun way to actually teach grammar. I've had it, like I've been teaching it for eight years, this is my eighth year teaching, and grammar's always really hard to teach it, because there's not really a fun, effective way to teach it, and you get worksheets, and you can do in groups and partners, and things like that, but it's still grammar, and grammar's pretty hard to teach in a fun way. So that's why I put that. Strategy wise, I don't have the tools to know what else is out there. What was the next thing?

KL: You were saying having students follow along while you read.

T7: Right, sometimes if I read out loud, rather than doing a private reading, were they are responsible for reading the novel, with students that have a hard time reading and interpreting and interpretation skills, I find it easier if they listen to it verbally, if they're following along, so they understand what the words are on the page. And sometimes that helps their understanding of the book. So, and that's not just the ELL but that can be the low level learners that you have, regardless, like who have a hard time, decoding and things like that, with words.

KL: What's the popcorn read?

T7: Popcorn reading is when I start reading and then I say next and someone jumps in and starts reading until they feel like they're done. And then they said next and another student jumps in. And so it's not like I'm assigning, and it's not like I'm calling students to read for the class, because some students are very shy and don't like to read out loud. So it's if you feel like reading you can jump in, when the next person says next, and read for as long as you want to.

KL: So do you do a lot of reading in your classroom?

T7: We do a lot of oral reading, yes.

KL: And do you mostly do short stories, or novels?

T7: (inaudible)

KL: How many novels do you do in a year?

T7: Probably five or six. And there's always an extra novel outside of class that's read quietly to themselves and we give them a genre, and they read the novel outside of class every month. So they read an extra novel every month, and we just give them the topic. This month's topic is outdoor adventure stories, so they're all reading one outside of class and then they're going to report on it on Tuesday.

KL: So every month they have an outside novel that they're reading?

T7: Every month they have an outside novel that they have to read. And I—a lot, that has as many pages as I feel is challenging and good enough for that grade. It's different genre's though. They'll read a sci-fi, they'll read a fantasy, they'll read an autobiography, or a biography. They'll read certain genres so they're not always stuck in the same genre. So in class we only cover five or six novels, for outside of class they're also getting other novels and genres.

KL: Uh huh, and then you talk about trying to approach the individual student.

T7: Right.

KL: Is that when you are doing seat work or writing projects or?

T7: Um, it can, one, every once in a while, like once a week, or once every two weeks, we'll have kind of a quiet day in class were they can do catch up work or they can read to themselves, and I'll pull students out into the hall and chat with them. See how they're doing one-on-one. I don't like to do it in front of other students because I don't want them to know everything that's being said. So I pull them out into the hall or into my office and communicate with them if they have any problems. If they're having a hard time with the novel, if they're having a hard time understanding things. But it's there that the opportunity is given but yet some students, regardless of their learning curves, it's the confidence that they need to find to actually tell me if they are having a hard time or not. And sometimes it's not being said, that, so.

KL: Okay. You said that some of the challenges you face are not enough instruction, patience with students, more strategies to help? What kinds of strategies, when you say more strategies?

T7: Just different strategies, once you come out of school, like once I graduated from _____, it's kind of a cut-off point of what I've learned in the strategies and in college, and how to apply them in the classroom. And so I've been applying the different things that I've learned in college, but college is still coming up with different strategies every year. I've missed out on the last eight years of different strategies and trying to reach students and we don't have workshops. I mean workshops are getting very few and far between because of the economy. And so we don't have the workshops available. We used to have and awesome workshop at _____ that young writers, um it was English workshop for the last, the strongest to do it.

KL: Uh huh.

T7: Um, anyways it's gone, and it's like, it was a big workshop that gave us different strategies. And I use those in my classes. If we were able to have more workshops and things that teachers

can go to and attend, that would be wonderful, but I haven't been to a workshop in the last five years. I haven't been to a single workshop. So, that's where it's like I miss out on the different strategies that are available to other teachers, and that other teachers are sharing. I don't get that. And so I feel kind of isolated because I don't have those abilities, and I can teach with what I know, but sometimes they are different strategies out there that may work better.

KL: Tell me a little bit about the charter school because this is kind of a unique situation. Do you feel like you have colleagues here that you can kind of collaborate with?

T7: I'm the only English teacher here.

KL: Oh really? You're the only English teacher?

T7: So therefore, I'm also isolated. So, I actually have close friends still in the high school, so I'll go to the high school and chat with them about different strategies, but I'm here, by myself for the middle school.

KL: And just give me an idea some sort of basics about how this school works, like which grades and…

T7: It's preschool through eighth.

KL: Preschool through eighth?

T7: Mm-hmm, and I'm in the middle school, because I'm secondary ed. So I just teach middle school English. It's not different from any other school that I can see. We kind of do the same things that you do at other schools, same core curriculums, and things like that. I don't know how it's that much different.

KL: Okay, you said that the top challenges for students are being bored, frustrations, giving up, so it seems like motivation is a big issue for you.

T7: Well if they, it' the student's not verbalizing if they're doing well in class, or if they're struggling in class, and they don't have the ability to come and chat with me about some difficulties that they have, then they become bored in class, and they're not going to do their assignment. They start failing in class, and they begin to give up because they start drowning. And, again this can be applied to all students out there that have a hard time.

KL: Um-hmm.

T7: But that's why I wrote down those things is, and it's not just boring for the student who doesn't understand it, like for the ELL students, it's also boring for the really high achieving students, because I have huge spectrums to teach in my class. I have students who should be in, I mean they are high school writers, like I have the students who can cope with this, and this attempt, and this great writing ability and then I have a student who is still in fourth grade. Not just in their comprehension skills, but they write like my nephew who is eight. And so I have

such diverse and their learning, that both ends are getting bored because I can't teach to both. So that's the biggest one in all schools, across the nation, is that we have a conglomerate of these students who are in one room and their abilities are not the same. And it's hard because you can't teach and help all of them.

KL: How many students do you usually have in a class?

T7: Twenty.

KL: Twenty students in a class, and how many classes do you have?

T7: I have four, four classes.

KL: I wanted to back to, you mentioned that there were some things that you talked about in your education, like ideas that you've applied to your classroom. Can you tell me a little more about those ideas?

T7: We did an analysis by um, in tenth, this was when I was in the high schools, teaching tenth grade, and we when to the writers workshop that they were still offering, and it was down in _____. One of the workshop classes they did, we start doing a critical analysis in tenth grade when they critically look at a text and pull out little details, and analyze it. And so, instead of doing it as a text, at the workshop they did it with a picture. They put any picture up, and they said write down the details that you see, and try to interpret what's going in this picture. And so we were able to analyze the picture and put it in words of what could be happening in this scene. And then we applied it to how you can do that to a critical analysis. And I did that in my class and my class just absolutely loved it. And they understood what a critical analysis was. It's like your interpretation of something, so how you see the picture is different from how I see the picture, but if you can support it with details in the picture, then it's-who's to argue if it's right or wrong? So, just things like that that I'm able to gain, that strategy, and try something new, which is a great one for my low level learners because it's a visual, and so they are able to do something visually, where other people might not be able to catch on very quickly just with written stuff. So, I liked that and I used it a lot. But it's been six, seven years since I went to a workshop like that, that was the last time I went.

KL: Has that helped you sort of generate new ideas because you said that the visual component really helps?

T7: Well I work with that, there's, it's hard for me to think of different things that are similar to that. Like I can pick a different picture and analyze it, and lead into way an analysis is, but it's hard for me to know where to go from, like doing something else. Like that, I don't have the creativity I guess. And it's hard, because teaching is a full-time job, you don't have the ways to actually start just thinking of things. So it's really hard.

KL: Because you got a lot of other things going on?

T7: Well, right. I mean you've got to teach, and you have to make lesson plans, and apply them to the core, and make sure that they do the standards that you are supposed to be doing, and when you just, you have a lot of things that are going on, and so it's hard to actually think of those strategies yourself. That's why I said those workshops are so wonderful because you have them given to you. And it's nice to have that.

KL: I don't know if you had a chance to look over the definitions, but one of the things that I want to study in this project is this CALP, um BICS versus CALP, the basic interpersonal conversation skills versus cognitive academic language proficiency, and it's kind of a mouthful, but the basic idea is that it takes a while, you know students who speak two languages, it takes a while for them to be fluent. And sort of this cognitive academic, this higher order of thinking and speaking and communicating, have you noticed that in your classroom, do you think it's relevant to the way you teach?

T7: To be honest, we don't have that here. Like, we don't have students who have a hard time with their language. So that's why it's hard to, it's been four years since I taught at the high school and there were probably some students there that had a hard time, but most of the students that we have here actually are fluent in English.

KL: Okay

T7: So it's hard for me to answer that for you. It, the high school, it's just been a long time since I was at the high school, to remember. And I'm sure that it was, like there was a delay in their education, but until they understood the language fully, but again, I didn't know the students well enough. You get them for three months, and I don't know them well enough to understand their, where they are.

KL: So thinking about that, since you don't really have this type of problem in your classroom, do you think that this idea of cognitive academic language or language or literacy, 'cause we're always teaching no matter, you know, what level of proficiency our students have, um we're always teaching about language, do think this is relative and how do you think this distinction could apply to a non-ELL student, for example?

T7: Okay, so a person who's learning a second language versus a person who isn't learning a second language? I don't understand what you're trying to get at.

KL: Well, let me see if I could rephrase this a little better.

T7: Okay. Because ELL is an English Language Learner, right? So it could be from anywhere in the world, and they come and try to speak English, is that right?

KL: Yes.

T7: Because they're learning English.

KL: Yeah.

T7: Okay, and the C.A.L.P. is a person who has another language and they're trying to learn English, and I don't understand the difference, I guess, what you're asking.

KL: Well, in one way that I've thought about this, is that we also talk about school language and home language.

T7: Well right because at home they need so they'll be speaking their native tongue right?

KL: Yeah, but, if, to applying that in a non-ELL setting, I think there's also a certain language that students have just in their own family culture.

T7: Oh right, well they have a different language with their friends too. I mean the way you write is not the way you speak, because the way you right should be proper grammar, but the way you speak is very rarely proper grammar. Their use of pronouns, subject-pronouns, are always misplaced by the wrong pronoun—you know what I mean? So even people who are not ELL or CALP students they still speak differently than how they write.

KL: Yeah, so is there anything in your classes that you do, any activities that you do, or do you talk about those types of things?

T7: Oh definitely. I say for instance, we do subject-verb agreement, or we do the pronoun usage, and the word I should always be in the subject, instead of in the predicate part of the sentence, and so I tell them that this is how it's written and you need to correctly identify that this is written, but how you say it it's usually not this way. For instance, a lot of people like to say me in the subject part of a sentence. And 'me and so-and-so went out the other day.' And I tell them, you know, how you speak is very different than how you should be writing it down. So we've definitely discussed that. We're actually discussing it currently.

KL: Oh yeah?

T7: We're doing quote analysis too, how to analyze, and we're doing parts of speech and how to use proper pronouns.

KL: And we you do that do the students seem to grasp that, 'Oh that makes sense' or?

T7: I don't, you know I try to, I think they do because we do talk about it, and I let them know that the written language is very different from spoken language, and how you speak to your parents is different than how you speak to your friends is different from how you speak at work, I mean we have all these different types of language. And how you speak is not always how you write. So I'm hoping that the kids are grasping it, but I don't know.

KL: Okay. You've been teaching for eight years so you've probably seen, well I don't know, but I was wondering if you have seen any changes? Or trends in literacy instruction or the way that they like you to teach reading and writing?

T7: I haven't and that's probably due to the lack of workshops and things that are out there, to learn new different things. So, personally I haven't. What was happening at the high school was that they would change their thing, every two years they would switch to something different. Like they would start with across the curriculum mapping, so they would want the history teacher to work with the writing teacher, and to work with, and so they did that for a year and then they started with something else, because they keep changing things, in the high school setting it's like you can't really see if it's making a difference in the project that was laid down. I don't know if that's still happening, but when I was there it was and they are still trying to implement new things, but they're not giving them a long enough chance to take hold. Here though I haven't, because I'm the only English teacher.

KL: Yeah

T7: So it's kind of up to me to get those different strategies-and that's how come I do feel kind of isolated because I'm not inspired anymore. Like, I still have to try to figure out my own strategies because I don't have those abilities to go to workshops.

KL: Have you seen any differences in the students? Either their motivation, or their…

T7: They're getting worse. Honestly. I feel that students are socially retarded. Like, they're socially slow because they don't interact with people enough. I think that they have become technologically driven. And they, in their written language, they text all the time within written language. So they put the, do you know what I mean, like their texting words or the lower case "I" and it's become worse because of their technology, I think.

KL: And so do you think that their different ways of interacting affects how they learn?

T7: Well, socially yeah. They don't know how to treat each other properly any more. And they don't know, or they're shier and withdrawn because they don't get out and meet people. I think they're, definitely their written stuff is getting worse because they do text too much. I'll, well, I don't care whether they text, it's just that they're mixing that language, again, different language, they're mixing that with what's supposed to be proper grammar in they're not doing it right.

KL: Makes sense.

T7: Yeah, so it that way, it's getting worse; however, you always have the students who will always achieve, and be amazing students. Those students will always succeed, and they'll always separate the text and the language and how you speak and then how you write. You'll always have the students who can do that, but you'll always have the students who get it all mixed up too.

KL: And overall you've seen a decline?

T7: A little bit, yeah. Especially, well and cell phones have really exploded in the last ten years. You know what I mean?

KL: Yeah

T7: And so you have these little kids who have them now, and they're texting. I mean, there's little fourth graders who are texting. And so they're texting and they're doing the 'lol' and they're doing the lower case 'I' and they're doing all this stuff, it becomes a part of their fluency, which is going away from what's going to be on a standardized test. You know? And what's going to be on the ACT when they get older. So they've got to know the English skills, and they've got to learn how to separate the two, and it's getting harder, because they're so strong in the texting world and they're so strong in their technology world.

KL: Yeah

T7: And they don't know how to type either. Like they're no longer like home row. Like they're not learning how to type properly. So they pick, and I think that it's always kind of been that way, but that's declining. Like more and more students are.

KL: So does it take them longer to get their assignments done then?

T7: Well yeah, because if I ask them to type an assignment. If I ask them to write it, it doesn't matter, it's just worse grammar. And if, then if they're typing it though, it gets…some people have a really slow, slow typing speed.

KL: Is there anything else that you would like beginning teachers, you think they should know, any advice you would give them or anything else you think I should know about this topic?

T7: I think that the more strategies that you can remember from college, and writing them down, and just stacking them away somewhere will help them because they may be in my situation where they're the only English teacher in the school and at that level and they may need to dust those off and try to do that. Because it's hard.

KL: So save your homework?

T7: Right, I did. I saved all old papers, I saved Dr. S.'s paper, I mean everything that I did I saved so that I can refer back to them. I can look at my old five-paragraph essays I used to write in high school. Just save your curriculums that you created for students.

KL: Makes sense; saves a lot of work in the long run.

T7: Right, another thing is try to get out there as much as possible and attend every workshop you have the ability to attend. And I'm just sad that they don't have them anymore.

KL: Yeah. Well hopefully that can be something that they can bring back. I mean, it is tough with limited resources…

T7: Right.

KL: Hopefully they can find some way to…

T7: They did one, I think it was called like the writing workshop or something like that, but it was so strong up there. Lynn Meeks was a part of it too and it's just, it's not there.

KL: Well hopefully we can get it back.

T7: I know, and just to have the ability for teachers to know where to go for workshops, like how do I know to go to a workshop, there could be a workshop next weekend and I could have no idea. You know?

KL: Yeah

T7: And so..

KL: Well and one thing, I mean, that we've looked into is like social networking sites for teachers, specifically for English teachers, I don't know if you know this but…

T7: Well and it's hard to do stuff online, because you can't really grasp the sense of it. Like I've looked for stuff online, I've looked for like lesson plans online, I've looked for other curriculum activities and ideas and it's hard to interpret what they were creating in their classroom, because I read it and I still don't quite get it, and so it's hard because you lose on that communication. I think a little bit. Where physically working with someone, and looking at them, and talking together like you do in workshops you can always ask and clarify, where online it's hard to…

KL: It's hard to see the method behind everything.

T7: It is. It's hard to know in what context, or in what were they thinking.

KL: Well thank you for meeting with me.

T7: You bet.

Teacher 8

KL: Teacher eight, that's just the code that we'll use for the project. Um, looking at the survey, you said that some of the top three things that you are concerned about are understanding the assignment, um, background knowledge, and reading comprehension. Could you talk a little more about those three concerns?

T8: Well, when I talk to a student sometimes I don't know where they are coming from, so it's hard for me to make a connection between what we're talking about and where they are. And so I really don't know if the understanding is there. So, that background knowledge makes a big difference, because I don't know what it is and sometimes they have no background knowledge. Sometimes they have no connection between what we're doing and so that really cuts in on their

comprehension especially it's a book or something like that that we're reading. So the reading comprehension is a lot lower because they have no ability to make the connections.

KL: So those are particular needs that you see in your ELL students?

T8: Yes, very definitely.

KL: Um...just talking about, thinking about all your classes, can you describe some of the demographics. How many ELL students you have per class on average?

T8: On average, I would say, about a third of the class.

KL: About a third of the class. Has that changed since you started teaching, or has it pretty much been the same?

T8: It has changed a great deal since I started teaching. I'm teaching the um, Well, like my first year of teaching, we had maybe one or two ELL students in the regular classes and now we can count on having at least five in a class, who may have been in the country for a while but are still learning the language…those kinds of things.

KL: Some of the strategies you listed including pre reading activities, delayed reading, and modeling. Can you kind of describe those three strategies?

T8: What did I say again, I'm sorry.

KL: Just, I'm looking right here where it says pre-reading activities, related reading that connects to the world community and modeling.

T8: On the pre-readings activities I always try to make sure that the students are coming from the same places as all of the other students, so that they have background. So if there is an allusion made to that background and all of those kinds of things that they have that, that they can make that connection. And so I always try to do some kind of activity that will make, that will build that background, even if they have never heard of it before, or if they hadn't been able to, um, visit any place like that, they're new to the country, something that hadn't been built, like in grade school, those kinds of things. So, I always try and do some kind of activity that will help that. Um. We might do some related reading, some short little snip it, news clips, those kinds of things that will also help them make those connections between what we are reading and the world. And then before the actual activity, I also try to do with them, show them, exactly what it is I expect them to do. Um, for example, when I'm reading, and I make a mental connection. I say ok, in my head this is what's going on. And so, then I try and get them to do those same kind of things.

KL: To think about what their thinking about.

T8: Exactly.

KL: How often do you use reading in your classroom. Do you read a lot of novels or short stories?

T8: Yeah, so it is an English class, so we are always reading. We are constantly reading. Um. If we are not reading a novel than well, we are doing short stories, or um, essays, those kinds of things. So, we are constantly reading and writing.

KL: Just different genres?

T8: yeah

KL: So, in a typical year, like how many books would you read?

T8: Together as a class we do, um, three novels, a play, and, um, a short story and that would comprise at least a full novel.

KL: Okay. I'm looking at #6, some of the challenges that merit more of your attention than CALP. You said special education students and behavioral students. Can you explain a little bit more what you mean by that?

T8: In my classes right now, I have more of the special ed. student, than the lower level English Language Learners. The English Language Learners that I have in my classes right now are at the higher levels and so while I do need to worry about the background and things I'm not as concerned about them understanding what I'm saying. With the special ed. students, I have to make sure they understand what it is that I am talking to them about. Making sure that they are able to do the work that I am giving them. And it's just the demographics of my classroom itself. There are other classes that have more of the English Language Learners in them. So just this year, in my classes, the special ed. students are probably a higher priority.

KL: So that changes from year to year?

T8: And it does change from year to year.

KL: What are some of the challenges that you have seen in other years that have taken precedence over this cognitive active language?

T8: Probably the behavior stuff , because in the classroom, if somebody is throwing things or hitting people, or those kinds of things, that's going to be a greater issue, a safety issue, those kinds of things than the language.

KL: Okay. I have a few other questions. Um, more related to CALP, we've kind of already talked about this, but how do you think the learning needs of ELL students differ from those of native speakers? You talked about background knowledge, is there anything else that you think is different from the things that the ELL students need?

T8: Um, I think I mentioned this on there, sometimes I think that it's a real problem in that they don't know how to ask for help. They don't know what questions to ask in order to gain the knowledge that they need, and I think that a teacher really needs to think about, okay, what could possibly be a problem here? What are the potential problems with this assignment? What might they not understand in this particular situation?

KL: So to anticipate that when you are doing your lesson plans.

T8: Yes. And I think that's important because kids really don't always know what to ask. I think that that is a big problem that they face because when I look at them and they're sitting there and they are doing nothing, I go up to them and I ask them, Ok, what's the problem? They really don't know. They don't know what the problem is, but they really don't know what to do, so it's that cognitive ability to comprehend what's being asked of them.

KL: What's going on?

T8: Yeah.

KL: So you said you do sort of an informal assessment to see whether or not they seem like they're getting it, you know going around checking on students …Um, is there anything else, you mentioned, thinking out loud, this is what's going on in my head. Is there anything else in your teaching practices that you try to do to encourage that, that higher thinking level?

T8: We spend a lot of time on talking about what good readers do, and the metacognition about reading and comprehension, those kinds of things. Um, I do that for everybody. I know that it is essential for English Language Learners because they really, those higher level thinking skills probably, just, and it's not that they can't do them, it's that they're not understanding what we are saying to them.

KL: Yeah.

T8: Because they're doing them, they're just not understanding our language with them, the words that we have, the vocabulary. And so we do spend time talking about the vocabulary too and teaching the vocabulary of school. Just so they understand what it is we are asking them to do. So I spend a lot of time doing that. Again, that the same thing, it's essential for them, but it is really good for everybody else as well because you don't know the background knowledge of any of the students in the room, let alone, you know, the one's that have a whole cultural difference. We also talk about culture. And I think that that's really important. What are the values in your culture as compared to the values in this culture? And me understanding those cultural values really helps me to connect with them. I know how to, you know it's like I tell my kids, what's important to me needs to become important to you, and if I can connect it to something that I know is important to you, then you're going to do better with it. And that's kind of where I go when I'm trying to learn about their cultural values and those kinds of things because I need to know how to make it important to them.

KL: Yeah. When you are talking about culture, do you just have class discussions or homework projects or?

T8: Sometimes they're homework projects or sometimes they're just discussions, sometimes it's just one-on-one, because if I can connect to them personally, then they are more willing to work for me. I know that doesn't help my teacher next door, but it helps me and my classroom. And so if we can carry on a one-on-one conversation, that helps me and it helps them because they know that I care about them enough to talk to them about that. So sometimes it's just a one-on-one discussion, and as I'm walking by or catching them as they walk in the door, those kinds of things, just so that I can let them know that I think they're important.

KL: Yeah, when I talked to T6 she mentioned that school has made a really concerted effort to connect with the parents of ELL students. Have you noticed that as you've taught here?

T8: I have. Especially probably in the last five years. It's been a much stronger effort to make sure that the parents are connected and they understand what's going on in the classroom. If we can connect with the parents, and school can connect with the parents, then the kids, again, those cultural differences can be bridged.

KL: What are the significant trends or changes that you've seen in literacy instruction or student learning needs, over, you said you've taught for 21 years? So you've been around for a while, have you seen any changes or trends?

T8: It's kind of funny, um, once you've taught for a long time you see old trends renew themselves. It's kind of circular. And so, I think that what's important in teaching gets a new label, it gets a new, um it surfaces and resurfaces, and then it will go circular. But I think that as we push different things… I'm not saying that…. So twenty one years, that means that probably two full rounds of kids have gone all the way through and graduated. And I think that in that time I've seen the same trends that has come back to the top about three times. And I really do feel like in education they get a new label, they get a new um, advocacy, and that it's the same ideas. Over and over again.

KL: So could you give me an example of some of those ideas that have resurfaced?

T8: Probably things like content area, I'm trying to think of the right words, the new labels that have gone with them, student-centered learning. Where we do, like group work, those kinds of things. Um, when I very first started teaching that was really, really popular. Kagan and all of that was really pushed. They had the community-learning communities and a lot of that stuff. And then it just kind of faded out for about three years, and then last year they started pushing and pushing and pushing it again. And you know, learning communities are good, they're excellent, but I think they're more important with certain groups of kids then they are with other kids.

KL: So what kinds of kids work well in learning communities do you think?

T8: Um, kids that are really people-oriented, those that learn better when they get a lot of input from others, the cultures that are very social, and that social orientation is really important to them. Knowing if their thinking is in line with everyone else's thinking, those kinds of kids learn really well in groups. Kids who feel like they can do it on their own, the ones that are very independent, and groups hold them back because they feel like they're doing all of the work, and it makes them angry, and they don't want to work as part of the group. And I think, as a teacher, you need to see both of those kinds of things going on in your room, and give them, give options. Allow kids that work better in a group to work in a group, and allow the kids that don't do not.

KL: It sounds like you kind of take a differentiated approach, taking a little bit from here, a little bit from there and not necessarily subscribing to one program or one method.

T8: Right, because kids aren't all the same. They can't just subscribe to one, that's just the way that I feel about the kids that I teach.

KL: So thinking about this idea of BICS and CALP, you know the basic interpersonal conversation skills moving progressively towards the cognitive academic language proficiency, do you think that relevant or do you think that only applies to certain groups of ELL students.

T8: Oh no, I think it's relative to all of them because they do, even if they are really good at group learning, and those kinds of things, they still need to understand this academic part, the whole thing they need to know what it means to go beyond just the basic conversational skills. That's, I mean, in order to be successful at school you have to get to the CALP.

KL: Yeah. Have you noticed that standardized testing has changed at all in your career or has affected instruction at all?

T8: Oh it has affected instruction a great deal. Everything's about the test, and I think it's really sad that a lot of that background knowledge, the hands-on kind of thing, is being lost because everything is being centered around that test. And I think way too often the only thing that anybody's worried about is those test score, that test score. And people are teaching to the test and it's really, it's ruining the fun in education. And I think that kids don't want to be in school and so the learning is getting much more difficult for them because it's not fun anymore.

KL: So you think it limits your options?

T8: I do.

KL: What advice would you give to beginning teachers regarding students' learning needs, literacy or language instruction? Or just in general? That's kind of a big question.

T8: I think one of the things I always tell my student teachers is that regardless of what you do in education, you've got to love the kids. And if you love the kids, then you'll watch them, and you'll pay attention to what they're doing and then you can establish those relationships with those kids, and then they'll work for you in your classroom. If you don't establish the relationship with the kid, then you're going to have a really difficult time. Even if it's a student

that, who will fail all the way through your class, and you will have those, if you can walk away still liking that kid, even if they have failed every single thing that you've ever done in your class, they'll remember that class. And they will remember the things that they have learned in there. They may not be a good student, you know, you can't always fix that, but if you've made a connection with them, you have taught them something. Someday in their life that will make a difference. And if you can remember that, it will help you to not lose your love of teaching. And most people who go into teaching, it is because they have a desire to help kids to succeed in life.

KL: You mentioned just talking to students one on one, is there any other ways that you try to connect to the students, find out what their personal interests are? Do you have any assignments or projects or is it just sort of a thing you're conscious of in the back of your mind?

T8: I think it's always there. I think it's always there. If you see them coming in their game jerseys, you know that they play, whatever sport it is that they're playing, so you notice those kinds of things. In their writing, I always have them do a personal writing thing right at the very beginning of the year, and reading through that. Some of them just talk about their likes and dislikes, and some of them actually write about things that are really important to them: family, I think, friends that kind of stuff and those kinds of connections always really help. If you can remember just one thing that they wrote, and mention it them, 'you said in your paper that' one line where on their writing, if there is something that you read in their writing that makes you smile or connects with something in your life, you can just write a little note to them, on, in their writing. And so all of that helps to build that relationship,

KL: Yeah I know one of the things that earlier that I learned when I was talking to a teacher at _____ was that she was telling me this story about this ELL student had a few years ago that would go through school every day and he said to her 'You are the only teacher that notices me.' And she thought that that was so sad that he just feels like he, wasn't noticed or appreciated and so that's why he kept coming to her class and he kept trying to try in her class. And so, and she, from there she was able to talk to some of the other teachers and figure out what was going on but I just thought that's kind of sad, you know, to just be noticed by one person.

T8: Yeah, and you don't ever want that to be a student in your class. You don't ever want one of those students to think you don't ever notice them.

KL: Yeah. Alright, well thanks for meeting with me.

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