

# Key terminology

## Supporting Pupils with EAL BICS and CALP

### **BICS—Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills**

This is the language that is required for day to day living. It includes conversations with friends and informal interaction.

BICS occurs

- When language is context embedded
- In face to face situations which are supported by non-verbal communication

It takes an average of 2 years for a pupil to comprehend context embedded social language (BICS).

### **CALP—Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency**

This is the language that is required to understand and discuss curriculum content within the classroom.

CALP occurs

- In context reduced academic situations
- When pupils have the higher order thinking skills necessary to access the curriculum

It takes between 5 and 7 years, on average, for a pupil to become proficient in the language of the classroom (CALP).

### **Cognitively undemanding**

These are tasks that require minimal amount of abstract or critical thinking and are often supported by visual cues or physical gestures.

### **Cognitively demanding**

These are tasks that involve the use of higher order thinking skills, such as making connections, analysing information and drawing conclusions.

### **Context embedded**

Refers to tasks that are supported by cues and signals that help reveal the meaning. These tasks should be set within a context which enables pupils to construct meaning based on their own experiences.

### **Context reduced**

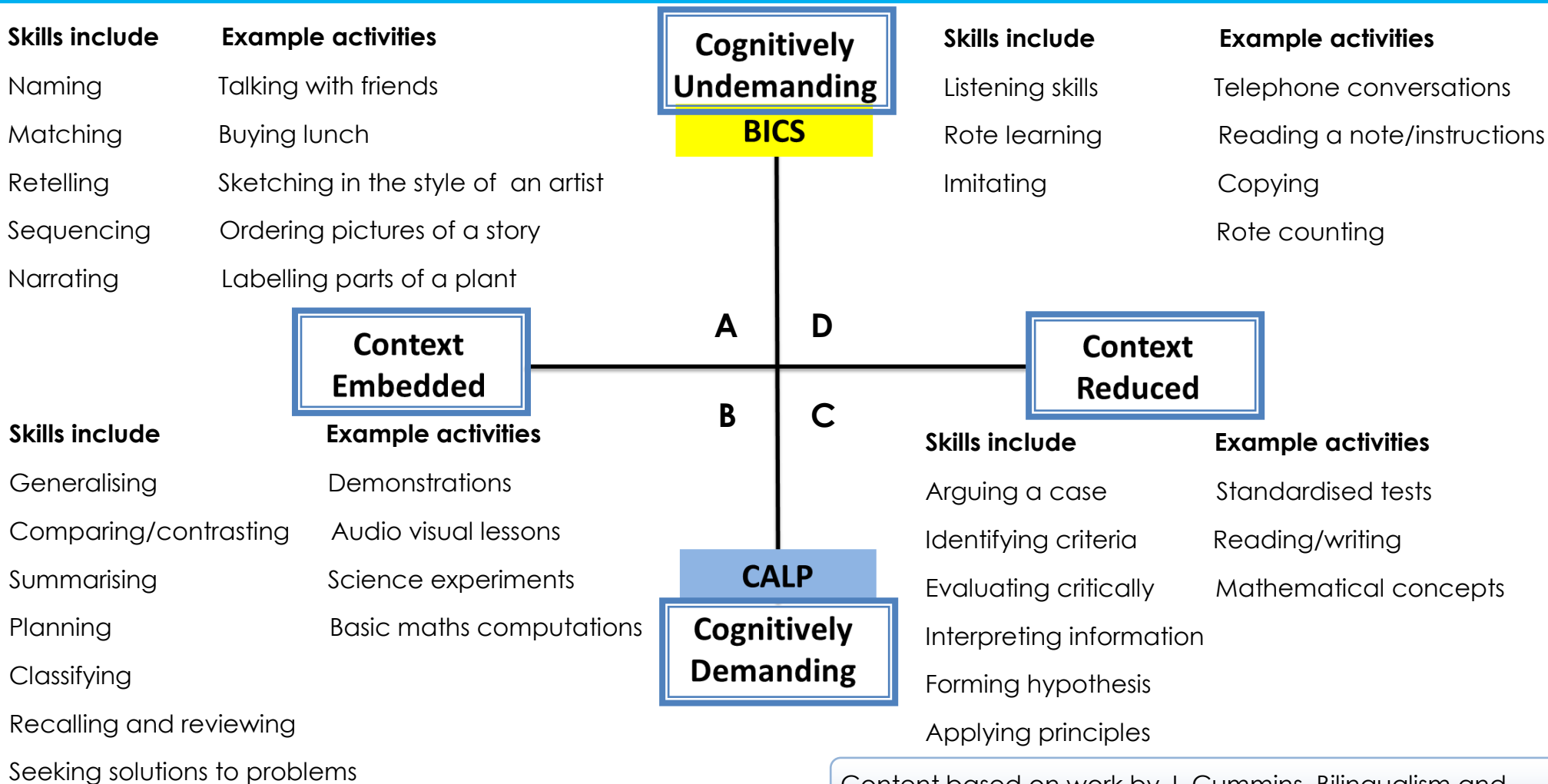
Refers to tasks where there are few cues, except for the words themselves, to support comprehension. The language is likely to be abstract and/or academic.

**Access to Education/PSS:** for further guidance and support:

[accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/index.php/PSS/eal.html](https://accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/index.php/PSS/eal.html)

## Considering BICS and CALP when planning

Jim Cummins (1984) proposed the Quadrant Model below to support teachers in planning activities for children learning English as an additional language. Cummins said that activities should start in quadrant A as a way to begin accessing learning, then progress through quadrants B and C and teachers should be mindful of this when planning. A word of warning - tasks in quadrant D should be avoided.



Content based on work by J. Cummins, Bilingualism and Special Education (1984)