



Comprehension Continuum

Answers Literal Questions

Retells

Merges Thinking with Content

Acquires Knowledge

Actively Uses Knowledge

Answering literal questions shows that learners can skim and scan for answers, pick one out that matches the question, and have short-term recall. Does not demonstrate understanding.

Retelling shows that learners can organize thoughts sequentially and put them into their own words. Shows short-term recall of events in a narrative and bits of information in nonfiction. Does not, in and of itself, demonstrate understanding.

Real understanding takes root when learners merge their thinking with the content by connecting, inferring, questioning, determining importance, synthesizing, and reacting to information. Understanding begins here.

Once learners have merged their thinking with the content, they can begin to acquire knowledge and insight. They can learn, understand, and remember. Shows deeper understanding.

With new insights and understandings, learners can actively use knowledge and apply what they have learned to the experiences, situations, and circumstances in their daily lives to expand understanding and even take action.

Teacher Language

How many...?
What is...?
Where did...?
Who was...?

Teacher Language

Tell me what happened...
Tell me what it was about...
Retell what you read...
What comes first, second, third?
When did...?

Teacher Language

What do you think?
What did you learn?
What does this remind you of?
What do you wonder?
What do you visualize?
What do you infer?
What makes you say that?
How did you come up with that?
What makes you think that?

Teacher Language

What did you learn that you think is important to remember?
Why does it matter?
What do you think are some big ideas here?
What do you think the author most wants you to get out of this?
Say more about that...

Teacher Language

What do you want to do about this?
Why do you want to take action?
Is there a way you can get involved?
How do you think you can help?
What is your plan?