Comprehension Continuum

Answering Literal Questions	Retelling	Merging Thinking with Content	Acquiring Knowledge	Actively Using 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	**Teacher Language**	**Teacher Language**	**Teacher Language**	**Teacher Language**
How many…? What is…? Where did…? Who was…? When did…?	What happened in the story? What was it about? What happened first? Next? Last? What did the character do after that? Retell what you read or heard. Try using your own words to explain what happened.	What do you think? What did the text make you think about? What does this remind you of? Has anything like this ever happened to you? What do you wonder? What do you visualize? What can you infer from this? How does it make you feel? Do you have any reactions? Say more about that …	What did you learn that you think is important to remember? What if anything new did you learn? Why does it matter? What do you think the author most wants you to get out of this? What do you think are some of the big ideas here? What do you think is the main issue here? Why? What makes you think that? How did you come up with that?	Why do you want to remember this? What do you want to do about this? Why do you care? How do you think you can help? Is there a way you can get involved? Do you think you can make a difference? What is your plan?