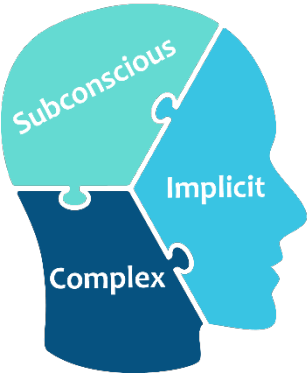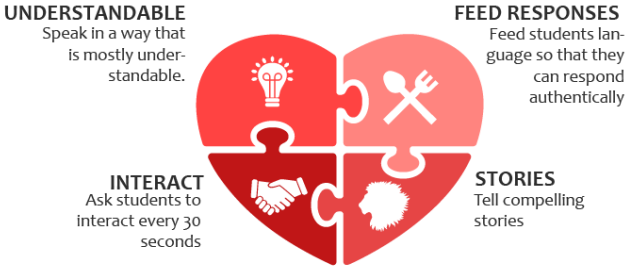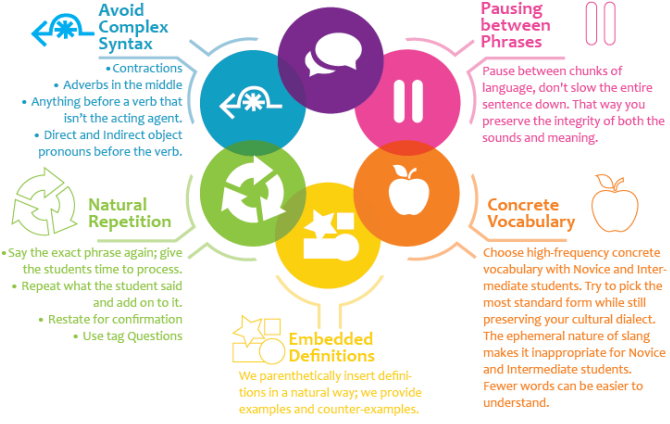# Interactive Understanding – 60,000 Foot View

WAFLT Conference October 12, 2018 – 10:20-11:10

Paris Granville
Central Office Language Leader
Bellevue School District
granvillep@bsd405.org

www.rocketlanguage.org
Resources – Rubrics – Strategies
Second Language Acquisition

Language Is…

Subconscious
Language is stored in the brain by chunks that can't directly be controlled by conscious thought.

Implicit
The structures and chunks of language cannot be easily described it at all, it is intuitive.

Complex
Language is complex in structure, meaning, pronunciation, subtext and nuance.

4 Principles of Interactive Understanding

UNDERSTANDABLE
Speak in a way that is mostly understandable.

FEED RESPONSES
Feed students language so that they can respond authentically

INTERACT
Ask students to interact every 30 seconds

STORIES
Tell compelling stories

Question Ladder

Choices
Teacher offers possible responses; student repeats the phrase that matches their thoughts.

Open-ended
Teacher uses question words like "what", "who", "Where". Student responds as best they can.

04 — WHAT….?

IS IT… OR …?

03

02 — IS IT…

Yes or No
Teacher asks a simple question. Student responds with yes or no in the target language.

01

SHOW ME…

Non-verbal
Teacher asks student to demonstrate understanding with gestures.

SIMPLIFIED LANGUAGE

We can adjust our language, on the spot, to allow students time process the meaning of what we are saying. These techniques are based in second language acquisition research.

Avoid Complex Syntax
• Contractions
• Adverbs in the middle
• Anything before a verb that isn't the acting agent.
• Direct and Indirect object pronouns before the verb.

Pausing between Phrases
Pause between chunks of language, don't slow the entire sentence down. That way you preserve the integrity of both the sounds and meaning.

Natural Repetition
• Say the exact phrase again; give the students time to process.
• Repeat what the student said and add on to it.
• Restate for confirmation
• Use tag Questions

Embedded Definitions
We parenthetically insert definitions in a natural way; we provide examples and counter-examples.

Concrete Vocabulary
Choose high-frequency concrete vocabulary with Novice and Intermediate students. Try to pick the most standard form while still preserving your cultural dialect. The ephemeral nature of slang makes it inappropriate for Novice and Intermediate students. Fewer words can be easier to understand.

Citations – also available at www.rocketlanguage.org

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Card 1

Presenter: _____

Feedback Giver: _____

☐ Mostly Understandable

☐ Interact Every 30 Seconds

☐ Feed Students Language

☐ Compelling Stories

How might you... ?

I noticed that when you......

I felt.....

You have inspired me to...

Card 2

Presenter: _____

Feedback Giver: _____

☐ Mostly Understandable

☐ Interact Every 30 Seconds

☐ Feed Students Language

☐ Compelling Stories

Have I understood correctly that....?

When you....

The learners seemed to...

I used to think...

now I think...

Card 3

Presenter: _____

Feedback Giver: _____

☐ Mostly Understandable

☐ Interact Every 30 Seconds

☐ Feed Students Language

☐ Compelling Stories

How did you decide to... ?

I really liked the way that you did....

particularly...

One thing that was hard for me was...

Card 4

Presenter: _____

Feedback Giver: _____

☐ Mostly Understandable

☐ Interact Every 30 Seconds

☐ Feed Students Language

☐ Compelling Stories

One thing that I am still unclear on is..

I saw that you....

Is that because...?

One connection that I made was...