Making Content Comprehensible—
5. Interaction

Opportunities for Interaction:

☺ Learning is more effective when students have an opportunity to participate fully—discussing ideas and information

☺ Effective teachers strive to provide a more balanced linguistic exchange between themselves and their students—ELL students need the practice in speaking!

☺ Interaction accesses the thought processes of another and solidifies one's own thinking

☺ Talking with others, either in pairs or small groups allows for **oral rehearsal** of learning

▪ Encouraging more elaborate responses:

--going beyond "yes" and "no" answers—
"Tell me more about that"
"What do you mean by…"
"What else…"
"How do you know?"
"Why is that important?"
"What does that remind you of?"
 or teacher restates student's answer—
"In other words…. Is that accurate?"
 or teacher allows **wait time** for student to formulate answer
or teacher calls on another student to extend classmate's response

▪ Fostering student-student interaction:

--Putting students in pairs, triads or small groups
--Types of activities that encourage "table talk":
 Literature circles, think-pair-share, jigsaw readings debates, science or math experiments

Grouping Configurations:

☺ All students, including English Language Learners, benefit from instruction that frequently includes a variety of grouping configurations

☺ It is recommended that **at least 2 different grouping structures be used during a lesson**

▪ Variety:

⊕ **Whole class—**
To develop classroom community
To provide a shared experience for everyone

⊕ **Flexible small groups—**
To promote multiple perspectives
To encourage collaboration

⊕ **Partnering—**
To provide practice opportunities
To scaffold instruction
To give assistance before independent practice

▪ Homogenous or Heterogeneous grouping

⊕ By gender, language proficiency, language background, and/or ability

⊕ Variety maintains students' interest

⊕ Movement from whole class, to partners, to small group increases student involvement

⊕ Varying group structures increases the preferred mode of instruction for students

▪ Cooperative Learning Activities:

Information gap activities—Each student in a group has only one or two pieces of information needed to solve the puzzle or problem. Students must work together, sharing information while practicing their language, and using critical thinking skills.

Jigsaw—Jigsaw reading task by chunking text into manageable parts (1-2 pages). Number students in each group (1-4 or 5). All #1s read the first 2 pages, #2s read the second 2 pages, etc. These expert groups then discuss their reading and share ideas. The original groups reconvene, discuss the whole text and share their expertise. Students pool their information.

Numbered heads together—Similar to *Jigsaw* without forming expert groups. Each student works on one portion of assignment and then students share.

Four corners—Great activity to introduce a topic or chapter of study. Write one question or idea on each chart paper. Divide class into 4 groups, each group has a different color marker—students move to one corner chart paper and designated student begins writing their ideas on chart. Time activity 2-4 minutes. Students move clockwise to next corner, read responses and add their comments.

Roundtable—Use with open-ended questions, grammar practice. 4-5 students are grouped at tables, one sheet of paper, one pencil. Question or grammar point is given by teacher, students pass paper around table, each writing their own response. Teacher circulates room.

3 Step Interview—Students are paired. Each student listens to the other as they respond to a topic question. At the end of 3 minutes, each pair joins another pair of students and shares what their partners said. Good way to practice language.

Writing Headlines—Good way to practice summarizing an activity, story or project. Provide models of Headlines. Students work in pairs writing a headline for an activity. Pairs share out their headlines and class votes on most effective headline.

Send a Problem—One table team sends a question or problem to another table. Each table team solves or answers question and passes it back to original table. This is a good way to review for a test.

Wait Time:

▪ Wait time varies by culture: The average length
of wait time in US classrooms is clearly not sufficient
--Effective teachers allow students to express their thoughts fully without interruption

<u>TIP</u>: Allow students to practice their answer with a partner before calling on them to speak out before the whole class.

<u>TIP</u>: Have more advanced students write down their responses while waiting, and then check their answers against the final answer.

Clarify Key Concepts in L_1:

▪ Best practice indicates that ELLs benefit from opportunities to clarify concepts in their native language L_1.
--Use bilingual paraprofessionals, teachers, peers as clarifiers for vocabulary, concepts, or procedures
--Use native language texts, dictionaries as tools to illuminate or illustrate topic