Inclusive Education

Support understanding

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Supporting language and communication skills' from the Guide: Behaviour and learning

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Includes:

Understand receptive language

Check for understanding

Reduce barriers to understanding

Teach non-verbal communication

Understand receptive language

Receptive language is the ability to understand words and language and is needed to communicate successfully.

Learners who have difficulty understanding may find it challenging to:

- understand and follow instructions
- pay attention and listen
- respond appropriately to questions, and requests
- use language through speech, sign or alternative forms of communication to communicate wants, needs, thoughts, and ideas
- form friendships and engage in positive social interactions
- understand body language
- understand what went wrong, especially in high stress situations
- complete tests, exams, and academic tasks in higher level education.

Check for understanding

Source:
Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

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Work with your learners to ensure they have understood and interpreted correctly the message being conveyed.

Reduce barriers to understanding

Suggestions to support understanding.

- Use visuals to give instructions, ask questions or show a routine.
- Check understanding of key concepts and vocabulary.
- Use actual objects and progress from the concrete to the abstract to teach understanding of words and concepts.
- Before initiating conversation, ensure that the learner's attention has been secured.
- Use graphic organisers to support thinking and planning.
- Avoid idioms such as "don't hit the roof" as these can cause confusion.
- Allow for processing time. Learners may require between 15–30 seconds to process an instruction and formulate a response.
- Ensure instructions are in the order they are to happen.
- Provide support to enable learners to share their ideas such as options to draw, write, gesture, or sign.

Inclusive Education
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Guide: Behaviour and learning
Strategy: Supporting language and communication skills
Suggestion: Support understanding
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Link
inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/support-understanding

Teach non-verbal communication

Non-verbal cues can support students' understanding of what others might be thinking or feeling.

- ✔ Help students learn to notice facial expressions and body posture during interactions. Highlight examples in stories, video clips, or use the emotions colour wheel.
- ✔ Role-play in small groups to practise recognising the meaning conveyed in postures and vocal intonations.
- ✔ Cue students to recognise common hand signs that are used in a classroom, such as recognising the palm facing forward to mean stop.
- ✔ Learn about how emojis and memes are used.
- ✔ Provide opportunities for students to watch short video clips with the sound off. Ask students what they think is happening by analysing the postures and the movements of the actors.
- ✔ Play charades or pantomimes and have students guess the message. This helps to draw attention to the meaning in body posturing.

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