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| **Tips For Communicating With Mentees**  *Adapted From: Teaching Techniques: Tips on Communicating by Judie Haynes*  **Provide clues to meaning**   * Use drawings, dramatic gestures, actions, emotions, voice, mime, chalkboard sketches, photographs and visual materials to provide clues to meaning. * If necessary, repeat your actions using the same simple structures and actions. * Simplify your message as much as possible breaking them into smaller, manageable parts. * Make sure their attention is focused. * Don't insist, however, that they make eye contact with you when you are speaking to them. This is considered rude in many cultures.   **Modify your speech**   * Talk at a slow-to-normal pace, in short sentences. * Use a pleasant tone * Use simple sentence structure (subject-verb-object) and high-frequency words * Use names of people rather than pronouns. * Pause after phrases or short sentences, not after each word. You do not want to distort the rhythm of the language. * Avoid using the passive voice and complex sentences. * Ask simple yes/no questions so that new speakers have an opportunity to respond. * Accept one-word answers or gestures.   **Be an active listener**   * Give full attention to them and make every effort to understand his/her attempts to communicate * Smile * Talk in a calm, quiet manner. Raising your voice does not help comprehension * Demonstrate your patience through your facial expressions and body language. * Provide time to respond. * Encourage new learners of English to act out or to draw pictures to get their meaning across. * Don't jump in immediately to supply the words for the student. * If the student response is heavily accented, correct by repeating the words correctly. Do not ask the student to repeat the correction. This can be very embarrassing. * Resist the urge to over correct. This will inhibit newcomers so that they will be less willing to speak. Allow students to use a bilingual dictionary for words that can not be acted out.   **Check comprehension frequently**   * Don't ask "Do you understand?" unless you have taught it. This is not a reliable check since many students will nod "yes" when they don't really understand. * When students can't understand you, speak slower and enunciate; do not speak louder. * Body language is important; use it to your advantage to help convey meaning. * Be aware that not all body language is universal (ex: pointing -- seems like a good idea, but it is often offensive) * Use diagrams and pictures to help explain vocab * Ask your students to explain what you just said. * Be aware that some words do not exist in your students' languages (ex: crib, awkward) * If you think it will help, explain to your students that learning English takes a long time (1 to 7 years, depending on learning ability, age, motivation, and level of fluency the student wishes to achieve) * Try not to make your student feel pressured to speak quickly; this societal pressure often discourages non-native speakers from participating in conversations.   Source: <http://everythingesl.net/inservices/tipsoncommunicating.php?ty=print>    **Things Teachers Can Do to Improve Their Students' English:**   * Remember that adults think like adults, even if they speak like children. * Remember that reading/writing skills could be superior to speaking/listening skills, or vice versa. * Simplify your words but don't use baby talk -- leaving out articles does not help the student! "I Go School" is not a useful phrase to know. * Don't be afraid to use conjunctions -- they are used in everyday speech. Conversely, limit idiom use. * Speak clearly but naturally. * Pause between words. * Be careful if you use children's books; some students may be insulted. * Learn a few words (hello, goodbye) in your student's language. * Flash cards! * Teach your students how to use the library. Encourage them to borrow books and movies so they can practice. * The Pine Hills Library in Albany has a great ESL section, check it out! |