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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!
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