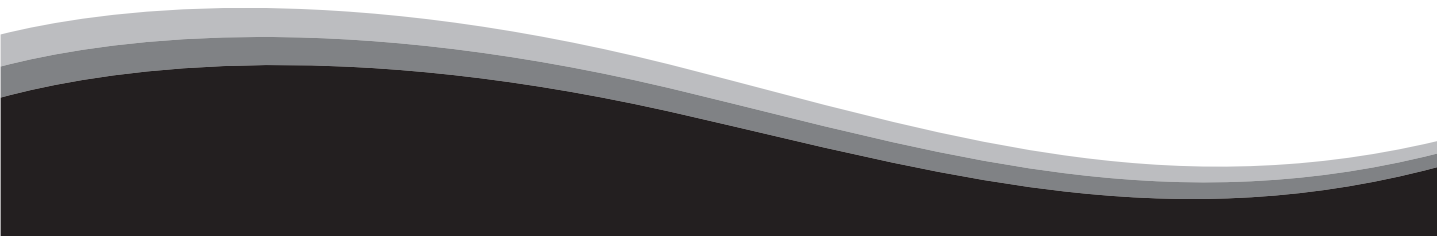

Strategies to support comprehension in the secondary school classroom

Some students find it easier to focus and less stressful if they know exactly what to expect in a lesson so it would be helpful to summarise the lesson before you begin eg, an English lesson may involve: shared reading, written exercise, homework. Maybe have the lesson's timetable displayed and tick off on completion of each section.

- ensure you have the attention of all students before giving instructions
 - make sure that the students can see your face, check that you are not talking to the whiteboard
 - give instructions before an activity rather than during it
 - keep instructions short and clear. Simplify or chunk lengthy instructions and ensure that they are given in logical sequence
 - leave gaps between instructions to give students time to process the information. They will need time to think, plan and give a verbal response. Be prepared to repeat what you have said
 - be aware of your rate of speech as speaking slower can help the student process the information
 - use visual aids to support verbal information wherever possible, eg photos, drawings, key words, symbols, gestures
 - demonstrate what you want the students to do in practical lessons
 - students may interpret your language literally so be aware of using ambiguous or idiomatic language eg, 'Jump to it'
 - be clear about your expectations and tell them exactly what you want them to do. Many students will find inferring or deducing meaning very difficult
 - check that they have understood. It is sometimes useful to ask them to retell what was said
 - explain to the students that it is OK not to have understood and it's a good idea to ask for help
 - encourage the students to indicate when they have not understood and praise them for doing this
 - highlight new and key vocabulary at the start of each topic. Use word lists or display key words on the wall. Give examples of how the words are used in the context of your subject as many words have more than one meaning
 - revise and summarise the information you have given
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- write homework instructions on the board and explain fully what is expected. It is also useful to have the homework already typed on paper to give to pupils who may struggle to write down the homework in the time given at the end of the lesson. Check that they understand what is expected of them
 - students with language difficulties often have literacy difficulties so be aware that this may be reflected in their written work. You may need to be creative in developing ways for them to record their work such as using a voice recorder, video camera and computers. They may also find copying from a board difficult so work sheets may need to be provided

Remember that it is important to consider how we communicate and to adapt our language and methods of delivery in lessons to enable the student with speech, language and communication difficulties to fully participate.

For further information and advice please contact Speech and Language Therapy on 514 2334.

If you would like this information in another format, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net

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