

# Overcoming Barriers to Learning

## Cognition and Learning

### ***Understanding***

Use gesture, visual cues or help pupils to read and interpret instructions correctly.

Play devil's advocate by raising questions or problems or pretending not to understand so the teacher can go through the sequence of instructions.

Check for understanding by asking the pupil to explain what they have to do.

Make abstract concepts more concrete by using real objects, signs and symbols, photographs, number lines and threaded beads and computer animations.

Scaffold tasks by providing cloze procedure, writing frames, multiple choice formats.

### ***Memory***

Remind pupils of teaching points. Use pictures and artefacts where possible.

Provide prompt cards using objects, pictures, signs or key words where there are a sequence of steps to follow in a task.

Use a dictaphone to record instructions which pupil can play back.

Model and encourage pupils to use sticky notes, jottings, individual whiteboards to record key words as an *aide-mémoire*.

### ***Literacy Difficulties***

Read questions to the pupil.

Encourage peer support and interaction.

Cue the pupil in to reading task by highlighting or pointing out new vocabulary.

Alternatives to writing include: mind-mapping, oral presentation, sorting and ordering symbol cards, predictive or voice-operated word-processing software, labelling diagrams, dictation to a helper, making 2D or 3D displays.

## **Communication and Interaction**

using visual instructions, e.g. key words or symbols to accompany speech  
using short, precise sentences where the important information is given at the beginning

helping a pupil to rehearse verbal contribution to group or class discussion  
offering forced alternatives, 'was it night or day?'

creating posters with pupils to present key vocabulary which is then available as a reference.

## **Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development**

The first and most important way is by giving pupils recognition and acceptance. This can be achieved by showing an interest in their hobbies, using their interests in teaching activities and by offering unobtrusive assistance in the classroom.

For pupils who for a variety of reasons do not receive the attention and nurturing they need, meeting and greeting them in the morning can get the day off to a positive start.

Sitting alongside a pupil with concentration difficulties can help them settle and get involved in the lesson.

Focusing the attention of inattentive pupils on the teacher by directing them to look and answer questions.

Providing positive feedback to encourage learning and build self-esteem. It is important to set short-term, easily achievable goals and gradually increase expectations to avoid increasing stress.

Providing take-up time to enable the pupil to engage with a task is important.

The language that you use rather than any specific programmes or methods can help to create a secure learning environment.

## **Sensory and Physical**

appropriate furniture to enable pupils to participate with their peers in all parts of the curriculum

good lighting

alternative or augmentative forms of communication

appropriate acoustics and access to amplification systems

access to low-vision aids

tactile and kinaesthetic materials

access to specialist support, e.g. physiotherapists.