

Understand Challenges Exercises

Set up stations that allow volunteers to experience the challenges students face.

Challenge 1: Explain a task with limited language.

1. Two people stand back-to-back; they may not look at each other's materials.
2. Person 1 has a picture of random lines and shapes.
3. Person 2 has a pad of paper and a pen.
4. Person 1 uses only words to instruct Person 2 to draw the image.

Discussion: What are the challenges both faced while explaining and understanding instructions?

Challenge 2: Explain something to someone who has difficulty focusing on what you say.

1. One person sits in a chair and tries to pay attention to a story read by another person.
2. Two or three other people distract the person from hearing what is said with items such as noise makers, feathers rubbed against skin, fanning, poking, touching, etc.
3. The reader then asks the listener questions.

Discussion: How could you change environments to limit distractions? What techniques could the reader have used to convey the message?

Challenge 3: Instruct someone with physical challenges to complete a simple task.

1. One person is disabled with items such as an oven mitt or thick gloves, a mask, a blindfold, or earmuffs.
2. Another person describes how to perform tasks such as picking up and sorting objects or making a peanut butter sandwich.
3. The disabled person takes the instructions literally and acts confused, requiring clearer direction.

Discussion: How did you learn to rephrase instructions? How did both handle frustration?