

# Support participation and confidence

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Helpful classroom strategies years 1-8' from the Guide: [Speech, Language and Communication](#)

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- Includes:**
- Design the day to maximise participation
  - Give students time
  - Respond to communication needs
  - Use chat stations
  - Use a variety of discussion strategies
  - Foster collaboration and group work

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From

Guide: [Speech, Language and Communication](#)

Strategy: [Helpful classroom strategies years 1-8](#)

Suggestion: [Support participation and confidence](#)

Date

25 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/speech-language-and-communication/1-8-support-participation-and-confidence](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/speech-language-and-communication/1-8-support-participation-and-confidence)

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## Design the day to maximise participation

Discuss with students what will support their participation and motivation.

Build these suggestions into your teaching practice.

- ✓ Check in with the student regularly.
- ✓ Connect learning to the student's interests.
- ✓ Establish clear classroom routines, expectations and rules.
- ✓ Provide task and lesson outlines.
- ✓ Break work into short manageable chunks.
- ✓ Schedule brain and movement breaks.
- ✓ Offer leadership opportunities and group roles based on the student's expertise and interests.
- ✓ Foster tuakana-teina relationships where students support each other.
- ✓ Provide easy access to quiet spaces for working or winding down.
- ✓ Develop and teach strategies to help students when they get stuck.
- ✓ Notice task avoidance or increasing anxiety. Implement supports quickly.

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## Give students time



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# Respond to communication needs

Ākonga will have unique communication needs.

Work with them to understand their preferences and challenges. For example, some ākonga will enjoy speaking in large groups and others will not.

- ✓ Give ākonga time to think and talk.
- ✓ Listen without interruption.
- ✓ Provide ample opportunities for students to make their feelings, thoughts and needs known.
- ✓ Give students a heads up, when possible, so they can prepare their response.
- ✓ Model communication using the student's means of communication, for example, using point to select, using the student's communication device, or using NZSL.

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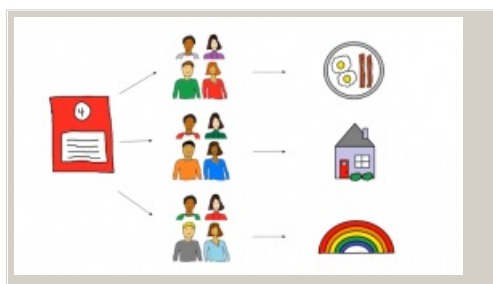
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## Use chat stations

Encourage participation by using a variety of approaches. In this video, Cult of Pedagogy's Jennifer Gonzalez explains chat stations, a discussion strategy to get students more active and engaged.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/eFUL4yPovqo>

Closed Captions

### Source:

Cult of Pedagogy

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFUL4yPovqo)

[v=eFUL4yPovqo&list=PLh8j72So6cvzeEZs06m4oWtIKypfAEI9-&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFUL4yPovqo&list=PLh8j72So6cvzeEZs06m4oWtIKypfAEI9-&index=11)

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## Use a variety of discussion strategies

Using a variety of strategies can make class discussions more equitable and ensure each student has an opportunity to contribute without the pressure of speaking to a large group.

Adapted from:

[The big list of class discussion strategies](#) – Cult of Pedagogy

[12 powerful discussion strategies to engage students](#) – Reading and Writing Haven

- ✓ Think, Pair, Share – give students time individually, in pairs and then in the group.
- ✓ Framed discussions – share sentence starters or explicit frameworks to scaffold responses.
- ✓ Gallery walk or chat stations – students respond to prompts or questions placed around the room.
- ✓ Cafe style conversations – cafe style stations for ākonga to explore and share ideas and expertise. A “host” stays at each cafe table.
- ✓ Asynchronous techniques – for example use video response tools like Flip to record responses when students are ready.
- ✓ Backchannel chats – add discussion question sheets, voting options or digital platforms for students to use when they are ready to respond or as an alternative to speaking in class discussions.

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## Foster collaboration and group work

Celebrate diversity by providing opportunities for ākonga to work with others using their strengths. Carefully design group or pair activities to suit learners and maximise productive interactions.

Use your understanding of **social norms, diversity and masking** to inform classroom design.

- Encourage tuakana-teina relationships and create a culture where students provide support for each other.
- Develop cross-cultural communication skills, learning about how conventions for conversation vary across cultures and contexts.
- Teach specific speaking and conversation skills. For example, rehearse ways to start and close a conversation, keep the conversation flowing, and use eye contact.
- Practise conversation skills where appropriate for the students, such as maintaining personal space between people, facial expressions and taking turns.
- Assign group roles such as speaker, listener, and note-taker to the group members.
- Provide strategies to help students to listen actively to each other, share ideas, and recognise different points of view. For example, use thinking tools such as De Bono's thinking hats.
- Create social stories that break down a task or social situation into small and easy-to-understand steps, accompanied by descriptive pictures.
- Monitor the discussions to ensure that all students understand the task and have opportunities to participate.

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