

Tapescripts

These materials have been designed to complement *Teaching Communication, Skills and Competencies for the International Workplace*, [Routledge](#).

Introductory Unit

Extension Task E-IU.3 = Vygotsky's social constructivism

Vygotsky's learning theory focuses on the role that social and cultural interactions play in learning.

In his view, learning is co-constructed as people learn from socialising with one another, and when they are actively engaged and heavily invested in the learning process.

A key principle in his theory is the **zone of proximal development** which refers to learning that happens when a more skilled learner or adult assists a less skilled learner or child to do something they find difficult.

A second central principle in his theory is **scaffolding**. Vygotsky defined scaffolding as providing support structures to help learners to get to the next stage or level.

A third key tenet in his theory is the role of language in cognitive development or **inner speech** as he called it. This happens when learners talk to themselves while engaged in a cognitive task.

In pedagogy, Vygotsky's principles have translated into working in pairs and small groups where students, usually with different skills and capabilities, work together to solve a problem and thus learn from one another.