



“ONE INSTRUCTION ONLY” CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY SPECIFICS:

Tool type: Experiential learning activity

Our inspiration: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Format: Indoor activity; small groups or plenary

Time needed: 30 - 50 min

SET-UP

- Paper and pens or simple materials (e.g., LEGO, shapes, printed templates);
- A flipchart/whiteboard (optional);
- Pre-prepared task instructions (intentionally unclear, complex, or incomplete);
- Space for participants to work individually or in small groups.

Number of participants: 8 - 25

Focus (SLD topic)

Language processing difficulties;
Working memory challenges;
Reading comprehension;
Instruction overload (common in dyslexia, ADHD, and other SLDs).

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

“One Instruction Only” Challenge is an experiential activity designed to simulate the confusion and frustration that young people with SLD may face when instructions are unclear, overloaded, or poorly structured. Participants are given a task with intentionally ineffective instructions and are not allowed to ask clarifying questions.



Through reflection, participants explore how communication barriers affect learning and discover strategies to make instructions more inclusive, clear, and accessible.

INSTRUCTIONS / STEPS

1. Introduction

- Explain that participants will complete a task based on given instructions;
- Do not initially mention SLD — let them experience the challenge first;
- Emphasize one key rule:

👉 Participants can only rely on the instructions provided — no questions allowed.



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2. Task Execution (15–20 minutes)

Distribute the task (examples):

- Draw a specific image using vague instructions;
- Build a simple structure;
- Complete a short written or logical task.

Provide intentionally problematic instructions, such as:

- Too many steps at once;
- Long, complex sentences;
- Missing key information;
- No visual support;
- Ambiguous wording.

Observe participants as they attempt the task (confusion, frustration, different interpretations).

3. Optional Twist (5 minutes)

Midway, add pressure:

- Give additional instructions quickly;
- Introduce time limits;
- Change one rule without clear explanation;

(This simulates cognitive overload often experienced by learners with SLD.)

4. Reveal & Debrief (15–20 minutes)

Stop the activity and ask participants:

- How did you feel during the task?
- What made it difficult?
- What strategies did you try?

Now connect to SLD:

- Explain that similar challenges are experienced daily by young people with dyslexia, ADHD, and other SLDs.

Discuss:

- What would have helped?
- How could instructions be improved?

5. Re-design (Optional but Recommended)

Ask participants to rewrite the instructions in a more inclusive way:

- Clear steps; Simple language; Visual aids and Structured layout!