



SILENT INSTRUCTIONS ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY SPECIFICS:

Tool type: Simulation exercise

Our inspiration: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Format: Indoor activity; group-based

Time needed: 30 - 45 min

SET-UP

Number of participants: 8 - 25

- Printed visual instructions or slides with symbols/images only (no text);
- Materials for a simple task (e.g., drawing, building with blocks, arranging objects);
- Screen/projector (optional but recommended);
- Workspace for participants (individual or small groups).

Focus (SLD topic)

Language processing difficulties;
Reading comprehension challenges;
Multimodal learning (visual vs. verbal instruction);
Accessibility and inclusive communication.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Silent Instructions Activity is a simulation-based exercise where participants must complete a task using only visual instructions, without any written or spoken explanation. The activity highlights both the potential benefits and challenges of non-verbal communication, particularly for learners with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD).

Participants experience how alternative formats (visual supports) can improve understanding for some learners, while also recognizing that one method does not fit all, reinforcing the importance of flexible and inclusive teaching approaches.

INSTRUCTIONS / STEPS

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Explain that participants will complete a task using only visual guidance. Clarify the rules:

- No speaking! - No written instructions! - No asking questions!





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2. Task Execution (15–20 minutes)

Provide participants with a task (examples):

- Recreate a drawing;
- Build a structure;
- Arrange items in a specific order;
- Display or distribute visual-only instructions (symbols, icons, diagrams).

Observe how participants interpret the visuals and complete the task.

3. Optional Variation

- Give different groups slightly different visual instructions to compare outcomes;
- Introduce more complex or abstract visuals to increase challenge.

4. Reveal & Comparison (5 minutes)

- Show the intended outcome of the task;
- Allow participants to compare their results with the expected version.

5. Debrief & Reflection (10–20 minutes)

Facilitate discussion with questions such as:

- What was easy or difficult about using only visuals?
- Did the visuals help or confuse you? Why?
- How might this experience relate to learners with dyslexia or other SLDs?
- What does this tell us about using different types of instructions?

6. Key Takeaway

Emphasize that diversity in instruction methods (visual, verbal, written) is essential for inclusion.

- Highlight that combining formats often leads to better understanding for all learners.

