

Giving clear instructions in the classroom

- Description** Instructions are the way we explain, in detail, how and why students are expected to perform certain tasks.
- Purpose** The purpose of instructions is to communicate to one or more people a task they are expected to complete and in detail how they will achieve that task. Instructions also explain the necessary conditions or resources to complete the given task successfully.
- Preparation** The person who is giving instructions should;
- plan the learning process including the learning objectives that a specific task and activity contribute towards
 - have a clear rationale for the given task,
 - identify the group format students will work in and
 - plan which resources students need to complete the task successfully.
- Step-by-step implementation**
1. State the purpose of the activity. How will students benefit from completing the activity in terms of acquiring the competences stated in the learning objectives?
 2. Describe the desired product or outcome. What do you want students to produce?
 3. Provide step-by-step instructions. How exactly will students complete the activity?
 4. List the materials they need for each step. With what will students do the task?
 5. Set short, but realistic timeframes. How long do they have?
 6. Display the instructions. This makes it easier for everyone to remember the various steps.
- Challenges** Students may feel uncertain how much effort to invest in the task unless they know what will happen with their results. Tell them what you will do with their results. For example, explain if you will display the results for all to see or if they will just remain with the instructor.
- Sometimes students struggle to get started. This could be because they still have unanswered questions. Take the time to check for understanding and clarify any uncertainties by asking “Are all the steps clear enough for you to start?”.
- If they are still not getting started, give them a very clear first instruction such as “stand up and grab some pens.”
- References** Kongsvik, J. (2012). Giving clear instructions. EZine Articles. Retrieved from: http://ezinearticles.com/expert/John_Kongsvik/1468890 Oct. 2015