

D. Instructions

Written resources containing instructions for students to undertake and complete their own work are often long (multiple pages), and contain multi-part instructions and complex terminology. They may pose major challenges to students with LI, who struggle to ‘unpack’ the information, work out what they are expected to produce, and then undertake independent work. **This may lead to negative situations such as the misinterpretation of the instructions, incomplete work or in some cases, complete avoidance.**

ISSUE	MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES
<p>Purpose and method of the assignment is unclear.</p> <p>Student: <i>‘I don’t know what to do.’</i></p>	<p>Ensure that the instructions and purpose of the assignment/project are explained in direct, accessible language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight/bold/underline the issue to be addressed in relation to the heading, so that students know exactly what it is they are being asked to write about. • Include the main instructions, such as the issue to be written about, early in the text. Students with LI may miss this key information if it is too ‘buried’ in the text. • Talk through the assignment sheet with the class, and ensure that all students understand all parts of the instructions. Be prepared to clarify important sections for students with LI, remembering that these students are often not good at asking for help. • Include the subject’s topic title as a heading. • Use the following headings, and include relevant information under each heading: Topic, Issue, Instructions. (See Appendix, page 117) >> • Include meanings for potentially difficult-to-understand instructional vocabulary.
<p>The assignment is perceived as being too difficult/challenging.</p> <p>Student: <i>‘I don’t know where to start.’</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct students in ways to initiate ideas, plan and outline their work. • Create planning frameworks such as tables and mind maps. • Assist with research plans and key words for researching. • Assist students in making 3-4 bullet points of ideas, with each idea being expanded into a topic sentence, or statement. (See Appendix, page 118, Step 3) >>. This becomes the first sentence of each new paragraph (i.e. each new point/idea).
<p>Students are unfamiliar with, or unclear about, teachers’ expectations of final products.</p> <p>Student: <i>‘I don’t know what 500 words looks like.’</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide models of expected work productions. Use a range of models, not just ‘the best work from last year’s students’ as this may be an unrealistic goal for students with LI. • Clarify terms such as ‘two paragraphs’, ‘a page of writing’. Students with LI are often unsure as to what constitutes a paragraph, and have been known to use very large handwriting to fulfil the length requirement! • Be prepared to repeat and revise work production processes. Some students with LI need many repetitions to fully understand and retain information, and produce work to an expected standard.