Instruction manual

**Summary:** Describing how to perform a task step by step can be really challenging. Even the easiest actions, like washing the dishes or doing laundry can be difficult to explain. This is mainly due to the fact that we do these actions in an automatic way, without thinking about it and so, if we have to tell someone how to do them in a clear and detailed way, we tend to forget some key passages that we give for granted but that, if not carried out, make completing the task almost impossible. Computational thinking helps us develop the ability to break things into smaller parts and learn how to give instructions.

**Key words:** Computational thinking, instructions, step by step, details.

**Aims:** Learning the importance of giving clear and specific instructions; learning to identify the different steps an action consists of; learning how to describe things in a detailed way.

**Participants:** Trainers, teachers and students of all school levels.

**Description:** In order to carry out this activity the participants will be divided into groups of two. Each group will choose two simple tasks or actions, like making a sandwich, brushing one’s teeth, tying one’s shoes and so on. In turn, one of the member of the group will give instructions to the other on how to perform that task. The doer will have to follow one strict rule: he will have to do only what the other person tells him to do. Everytime the speaker realises that he has missed some steps, he will have to repeat the process from the beginning. If he wants, he can write the instructions on a piece of paper to be sure not to forget any step. Once the first task has been completed, the participants will switch the roles. This will make them become aware in a funny and surprising way of how difficult it is to give exact instructions. When all the groups have finished the activity, a circle time session can be carried out to express feedback and opinions.

**Material:** Pens, pieces of sheet.

**Method:** Learning by Doing, Cooperative Learning.

**Advice for Facilitators:** It is highly possible that the participants will have to make several attempts before giving the right instructions to the partners. Keep in mind that the key stage is the process and not the result.

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