**Learning Plan 3: Instructional Writing Skills**

**Competency**

**3. Develop instructional writing skills.**  
Knowledge and skills leading to mastery of this competency:   
a. Identify how instructions and procedures are used in the workplace.   
b. Explore the various formats of instructions and procedures.   
c. Distinguish elements of effective instructions.   
d. Compose a set of instructions.

**Overview**

This learning plan reviews the importance of writing clear and concise instructions whether for the business industry or for the consumer. Inadequate instructions can potentially harm the reader as well as result in legal liabilities. Instructions take the user through a sequence of steps to the final product. Anticipation of mistakes is crucial to ensure the reader follows the instructions correctly. As you go through this learning plan, keep in mind the importance of understanding the audience you are writing instructions for (novice, expert, gender, age, etc.).

**Learning Activities**

1. THINK of an item you have recently assembled by means of instructions. Were the instructions clear and easy to follow or did the instructions mislead you? Reflect on what made the instructions either “user-friendly” or difficult to follow. Did the instructions put you in harm's way? Were there pictures, diagrams, easy to follow language, etc.? How would you have changed the instructions so they were more “user-friendly?”
2. REVIEW the following PowerPoint presentations: [Chapter 15](https://online.national.edu/d2l/lor/viewer/viewFile.d2lfile/55777/212731/EN3050%20updated%20PPTs/Ch15%20-%2014th%20edition.ppt), [Chapter 19](https://online.national.edu/d2l/lor/viewer/viewFile.d2lfile/55777/212731/EN3050%20updated%20PPTs/0134119207_ch19.ppt).
3. READ Chapters 15 and 19 in your textbook.
4. THINK ABOUT: Inadequate instructions and procedural manuals can have catastrophic implications if poorly written, such as with the unfortunate event that occurred on March 28, 1979 at the Three Mile Island Unit 2 nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania.  
     
   GO to the [Online Ethics Center for Science and Engineering](http://www.onlineethics.org/) website and click on the "Cases and Scenarios" link (top center of the page). Then search for the link to the Three Mile Island Nuclear Accident (NOTE: This is Case #151; you will need to click to page 8 on the "Cases and Scenarios" site). Read the sample case and follow all the links. What lessons did we learn from this event relating to writing effective procedural manuals?
5. ANALYZE: Instructions that accompany products we buy, especially those that require assembly, are notorious for confusing the purchasers. Select any set of instructions accompanying a product that you bought. Analyze these instructions in light of what you have learned in this chapter and take notes detailing the strengths and weaknesses you find.
6. REFLECT on the language that you use within your own area of expertise (or program of study). Make a list of specific terms used within your content area (such as jargon, acronyms, abbreviations, etc.) Suggest alternative terminology for these terms that would help another audience better understand them.
7. PARTICIPATE in Discussion 3: Research Questions.

**Assignments**

1. COMPLETE the [LP3 Assignment: Instructional Guide](https://online.national.edu/d2l/lor/viewer/resource.d2l?ou=55777&type=content&loId=212732).