

Small-Group Work that Really Works: 5 Tips for Successful Small-Group Learning

The benefits of small-group learning in education are no small matter. According to research, students taught in ways that incorporate small-group work:

- ✓ achieve higher grades
- ✓ learn at a deeper level
- ✓ retain information longer
- ✓ are less likely to drop out of school
- ✓ acquire greater communication and teamwork skills
- ✓ gain a better understanding of the environment in which they will be working as professionals.

Here are 5 tips that will help educators in different roles across your district or school to support small group instruction.

1. Define a goal

Create a goal that is **specific and achievable**. For instance, an achievable goal is wanting your students to understand how to complete a specific science experiment. Once you have a goal in sight, it's easier to find a way to get there.



2. Identify the right activity

The right activity and group structure will help you reach the goal you set.

For example:

- Study groups to revise and prepare for exams
- Laboratory teams to conduct experiments and share observations for science
- Enactment groups to perform a scene from a play for an ELA lesson



3. Establish clear transitions from whole-group to small-group

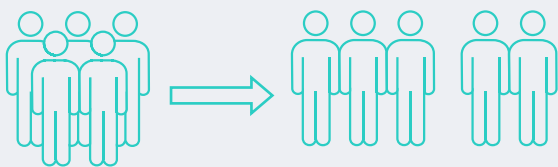
Clear, concise, and consistent transitions will help your students move from whole-group work to small-group work seamlessly.

- As a large group, have all your materials ready, communicate your expectations, and make sure students understand your small-group time frames.
- Try using a “warning signal” to help students understand when it’s time to move from small groups back to the whole group or to their next small group.
- Keep your routine consistent and practice, practice, practice. Learners thrive on repetition.
- Reflect on what worked and what needs improvement. Based on the dynamics of your class or the end goal of your lesson, you may need to make tweaks.

4. Revise, reassess, restructure

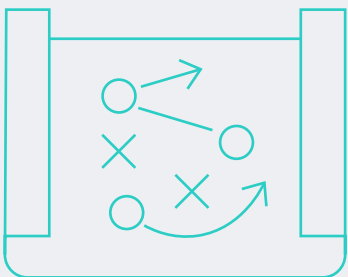
Once your students are comfortable with the small-group structures and arrangements, shake things up.

- Continually revise the learning group structure.
- Pair students with new students.
- Introduce to new activities to find what works best for individual students.



5. Stay connected, but not intrusive

One of the most crucial steps to small group instruction is staying connected with your students while allowing them the freedom to learn. Find the best ways to encourage, correct, motivate, discuss, and coach your students to success. It will likely look different for every classroom, small group, or student.



Lightspeed's Activate System was created for the success of small group learning

The Activate System allows teachers to listen to small group collaboration, revealing critical insights in instruction. With real-time feedback into the learning process, teachers gain the insight needed to activate learning for every student. Teachers are able to monitor each group, reinforce and redirect when needed.

