

Approaches

Managing group learning

- Group work is most suitable when the purpose of a session is to develop conceptual understanding or strategies for solving more challenging problems. It has to have a clear purpose and be carefully planned and managed.
- Groups of 2-3 learners are most likely to work best. You may find that having more than three learners in a group will mean that some learners do not contribute to the discussion.
- Think carefully about how you put groups together. If you have learners who you anticipate will struggle with an activity, put them in a group with one or two learners who are somewhat more likely to be able to cope. If you compose groups of the same level, the less able groups will probably give up very quickly. On the other hand, if there is too big a gap between the most and least skilled learners, neither will get the most out of the activity.
- Eavesdrop on the discussions that groups are having. Resist the temptation to intervene whenever you hear something that isn't quite accurate. Instead, ask questions that encourage learners to work things out for themselves.