

Because of the individual needs of learners in any given classroom, teachers are encouraged to engage learners in small-group instruction. Through effective assessment for learning (observation, conversation, and analyses of products) teachers identify learners' strengths and needs and often group accordingly in order to provide just-right, just-in-time instruction.

Small-group opportunities are appropriate when two or more learners demonstrate similar learning needs. Based on those needs, the teacher and learners together construct small, manageable learning goals. These learning goals are recorded and are often referred to as next steps for the learning process. In brief, support for small group instruction can be achieved when teachers:

- assess their learners to determine their strengths and needs
- confer with learners
 - acknowledge and encourage them on their progress
 - discuss with them one or two challenges and together decide on a manageable learning goal
 - make a record of the learning goal
 - deliver instruction in small needs-based groups
- regularly check in with learners to monitor their progress and frequently remind them to refocus on their goal
 - as learners make progress, acknowledge the progress they are making, and, if appropriate, co-construct a new learning goal
 - if learners are not progressing towards their learning goal, reassess the instructional strategy, resource, or practice opportunity and modify accordingly.

Within these small group and individualized learning opportunities, learners may also receive instruction based on their interest and the undertaking of similar tasks. Some of the details to consider are:

- the organization of learners in the available space
- instructional materials that need to be readily accessible
- assessment materials the teacher will use to record learners' strengths and needs
- the expectations of learners in the small group and how these expectations will be introduced and reinforced

The success of small-group instruction is often established through co-constructed design and consistent routines and procedures.