

Ways of making your small-group teaching more effective

Things you could try	
Start off on the right foot	by getting to know your students' names; encouraging them to learn each other's names; contracting; establishing ground rules; setting objectives and orientating them to the course.
Help students to prepare for discussion	by briefing seminar leaders; helping them to prepare both the content and the process; ensuring they get helpful feedback; encourage them to evaluate their own performance.
Use 'structures' to manage group learning	by arranging the furniture in the room suitably; breaking up the group, breaking up the tasks; using sub-groups (pairs, triads, pyramids, debate etc).
Encourage students to participate	by using structures (e.g. rounds, brainstorming); using students' interests; using students' questions; asking different kinds of questions; managing the vociferous students effectively.
Encourage students to take responsibility	by distributing group roles; encouraging students to work alone or in groups in class; leaving the room; asking students to present their work; establishing and supporting self-help groups; awarding group grades.
Evaluate the work of the group	by encouraging group self-monitoring; having group observers; checking up on group process; tape-recording the session; consulting the group.
Use written material	such as posters; group charts; students' notes; handouts; essay preparation; open-book tutorials.
Help students express their feelings	by dealing with 'what's on top'; self-disclosure; praise and encouragement; managing closure.