

Setting Up & Monitoring Learning Groups

Instructions - are a vital part of setting up any activity. Good instructions are:

- **Explicit:** What learners are to do, in what order (step-by-step), for how long, using what materials, etc.
- **Visible:** If instructions are initially delivered verbally, a slide, handout, or flipchart can help. Activities can be derailed by learners constantly asking “Now, what is it we’re supposed to do?”
- **Clear, explaining the purpose of the activity:** Learners who know the purpose of an activity will be more willing to participate and to do so advantageously
- **Easy to read:** Bullet points, heads and subheads help clarify the instructions. Some learners “freeze” if they don’t have instructions. Some others become embarrassed if they don’t do the activity “right,” even if it’s because of unclear instructions.

Monitoring - When learners work on their own, the instructor acts as a facilitator. Facilitators should be available for answering questions, walking around the room to make sure that groups are working effectively. These are some typical items that facilitators attend to:

- **Reiterating or re-explaining instructions:** Even with clear instructions, facilitators might be asked to clarify.
- **Providing assistance if members are stuck:** If a group is truly stuck, facilitators can help by asking targeted questions to get them on the right track.
- **Assessing whether they need more or less time to complete the task:** If learners seem to be working hard and the original time limit is up, facilitators can give extra time (announced or not). If one group finishes early and is sidetracking, you can add an additional task, taking those learners into more depth or addressing the application to the job.
- **Listening to discussions:** will help find out the learners’ “hot topics” in their work together. When facilitators conduct debriefing, they can speak the learners’ language.
- **Providing “time warnings”** so they finish their discussions and not feel interrupted.

Source: