



Building Meaningful Small Groups

Course Syllabus

Course Description

The purpose of this professional development course is to study the effective implementation of small groups within a classroom. Using research behind building small groups and how to implement them effectively, you will leave this course with a plan for building and implementing effective small group instruction within your classroom. This course equips educators with the knowledge, strategies, and tools to design and implement effective small group instruction that enhances student learning and engagement across diverse classroom settings. Participants will explore research-based practices for forming, managing, and assessing small groups that meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of all learners. Emphasis will be placed on differentiated instruction, data-driven grouping, and inclusive practices that promote equity and collaboration.

This course enhances classroom teaching effectiveness and supports improved student outcomes by introducing new knowledge in research-based strategies for designing, implementing, and evaluating effective small group instruction, including differentiated instruction, data-driven grouping, behavioral expectations, and inclusive practices that support diverse learner needs.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Explain how small group and differentiated instruction impact student learning by identifying two specific benefits.
2. Understand effective strategies for grouping students by listing three research-based methods.
3. Describe effective small group work by summarizing key components in writing and identifying three characteristics.
4. Set behavioral expectations for small group work by developing a set of group norms and scripting a conversation to introduce them to students.
5. Build a plan for implementing small groups by creating a weekly lesson schedule and a step-by-step guide outlining roles, materials, and timing.
6. Evaluate small group instruction by using a rubric to assess a lesson and writing a reflection that includes two strengths and two areas for growth.



Modules

- Module 1: Small Group Instruction and the Impact on Student Learning, Quiz 1
- Module 2: Effective Grouping of Students, Quiz 2
- Module 3: Effective Small Group Work, Quiz 3
- Module 4: Behavioral Expectations, Quiz 4
- Module 5: Planning Small Groups, Quiz 5
- Module 6: Evaluating Small Groups, Quiz 6

Grading:

Each quiz must be passed at an 80% or higher (three attempts allowed).

Format

This is a self-paced, asynchronous (no required live meetings) course. Throughout the PD course, you will find it helpful to take notes along the way to assist with the quizzes. Within each module, you will find reflection assessments that are not graded but will help in your journey through the course. There is an interactive forum in the course to help you connect with peers and instructors, share ideas, and collaborate on best practices throughout your learning journey.