


Flexible Grouping As a Teaching Strategy

Description	Rationale for Use	Guidelines for Use
<p>Students are part of many different groups - and also work alone - based on the match of the task to student readiness, interest, or learning profile. Teachers may create skills-based or interest-based groups that are heterogeneous or homogeneous in readiness level. Sometimes student groups assignments are purposeful and sometimes random.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows both for quick mastery of information and ideas and the need for additional exploration by students needing more time for mastery • Allows both collaborative and independent work • Gives students and teachers a voice in work arrangements • Allows students to work with a wide variety of peers • Encourages teachers to "try out" students in a variety of work settings • Keeps students from being "pegged" as advanced or struggling • Keeps students from being cast as those in need of help and those who are helpers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all students have opportunities to work both with students most like themselves in readiness or interest, and with students dissimilar from themselves in readiness or interest • Teacher assigns work groups when task is designed to match individual readiness or interest based on pre-assessment or teacher knowledge • Teacher assigns work groups when desirable to ensure that students work with a variety of classmates • Students select groups when task is well-suited for peer selection • Alternate purposeful assignment to groups with random teacher or student selection • Ensure that all students learn to work cooperatively, collaboratively, and independently • Be sure there are clear guidelines for group functioning that are taught in advance of group work and consistently reinforced