



Flexible Grouping is a short-term grouping and regrouping practice that responds to student needs in alignment with the instructional objectives. It differs from the more common grouping practice in which students are placed in the same group, or given whole-group instruction for all or most of the school year. In a given week, students may work independently, be in one group for a specific purpose, and then participate in other groups to accomplish different objectives (Kingore, 2004). Students can be grouped by readiness, ability, interest, or learning style, as well as for socialization.

- Define learning outcomes and the best method to meet identified outcomes.
- Create the groups based on ability, similar needs, interests, work habits and/or background knowledge of topic.
- Review grade-level curriculum and determine the specific learning goals and expectations.
- Determine the instructional practices that will support the lowest performers and challenge the highest performers.
- Provide the materials needed to support the tasks for each group.
- Establish the length of time in each group. Don't give students too long on a task. The time provided in each group is dependent on the age and grade level of students.
- Establish group rules and procedures/routines:
  - Rules should be written, posted and understood by all
  - Clear procedures and routines used during group work should be established, modeled and practiced. Some examples of procedures include:
    - Be established, modeled and practiced
    - Distributing, collecting and storing
    - Moving and organizing chairs and/or desks for group work
    - Asking and Requesting help from the teacher
    - Monitoring the noise level in the classroom, and stopping group work to return to a whole class setting.
- Give explicit instructions about the task to each group before they begin working and check for understanding.



## ALERTS

Make sure the data used to form current groups is applicable to the current task/learning objective.



## QUICK TIPS

Grouping is most effective when it targets a specific skill. Teachers should vary instruction according to students' needs, and review groups frequently. It can be helpful for students to have Learning Logs to record what students did on a particular day. When planning for group instruction, teachers can use the acronym TAPS (Total Group, Alone, Partner, Small Group) to consider the variety of ways students can be flexibly grouped.