Flexible Grouping: The How, the Why & the What (Gr. K-3)

Melissa Dickson
Flexible Grouping...

- Occurs when there is a whole group assessment or instruction initially; and then the students are divided by their need for review, re-teaching, practice, or enrichment.

- Such grouping could be a single lesson or objective, a set of skills, a unit of study, or a major concept or theme.

- Flexible grouping creates temporary groups for an hour, a day, a week, or a month or so.

- It does **NOT** create permanent groups.

Flexible Grouping is...

- The key to differentiating instruction
- Short-term
- Set in JELL-O
- Based on student learning needs
- Based on lesson objectives
- FAIR
**Flexible Grouping Reflection**

- What activities would you do with each of the following groups?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each for the student? For the teacher?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small-Group (Heterogeneous)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small-Group (Homogeneous)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small-group (Random)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Using Flexible Groups for Increased Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Academic Success and Social Skill Growth | • Cooperative Learning (Heterogeneously)  
                                    |   • All Student Information Available                                  |
|                                          | • Learning / Multiple Intelligences Profiles (Homogeneously by Profiles)  
                                    |   • Inventories, Observations, Checklists                                |
| For Efficient Learning                   | • Interests (Homogeneously by Interests)                                
                                    |   • Inventories, Conferences, Interviews                               |
| For Growth and Achievement               | • Readiness (Homogeneously by Assessment Needs)                         
                                    |   • Pre-Tests, Diagnostic Tests                                        |
| For Social Skills and Acceptance         | • Random (Short-Term)                                                   
                                    |   • Number off, Clock Partners, Pick a Card                            |

Flexible Grouping in the Differentiated Classroom
Informal Rating Scale to Discover Intelligences

For each of the following statements, check the characteristics that best describe the student. Note the areas in which the student scores the highest number of checks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Linguistic</th>
<th>Logical Mathematical</th>
<th>Visual Spatial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ is highly verbal</td>
<td>□ likes math</td>
<td>□ likes art class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ has a good memory</td>
<td>□ enjoys logic puzzles</td>
<td>□ good at drawing</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ writes better than average for age</td>
<td>□ likes computers</td>
<td>□ can visualize things</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ likes to read and do research</td>
<td>□ is organized</td>
<td>□ can read a map well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ uses accurate spelling</td>
<td>□ can think critically</td>
<td>□ likes working with models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ has a good vocabulary for age</td>
<td>□ likes to analyze things</td>
<td>□ is good at matching models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ enjoys word games</td>
<td>□ is good at mental math</td>
<td>□ thinks in pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ enjoys listening and speaking</td>
<td>□ likes strategy games</td>
<td>□ can find way in the unfamiliar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical Rhythmic</th>
<th>Bodily Kinesthetic</th>
<th>Naturalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ likes music class</td>
<td>□ good at sports</td>
<td>□ likes to be outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ hums occasionally during class</td>
<td>□ prefers to do things and not just watch</td>
<td>□ collects natural objects such as rocks</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ likes to listen to music</td>
<td>□ uses hands when speaking</td>
<td>□ likes to classify things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ has a good sense of rhythm</td>
<td>□ likes working with hands</td>
<td>□ often knows names of plants / animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ can tap out a beat</td>
<td>□ is well coordinated</td>
<td>□ flexible</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ makes up tunes</td>
<td>□ gets restless if sits too long</td>
<td>□ enjoys crafts involving nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ interested in musical instruments</td>
<td>□ catches on quickly to physical skills</td>
<td>□ keen sense of nature exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ can remember songs</td>
<td>□ looks forward to P.E.</td>
<td>□ likes outdoor recreation such as camping</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Intrapersonal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ likes working with a group</td>
<td>□ likes to be alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ likes to be the center of attention</td>
<td>□ reflective</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ has many friends</td>
<td>□ doesn’t give in to peer pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ likes to organize</td>
<td>□ likes to ponder and asks questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ good leadership skills</td>
<td>□ can be shy</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ a good motivator</td>
<td>□ has sense of right and wrong</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ wins confidence of others</td>
<td>□ interested in personal goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ is sensitive to others’ feelings</td>
<td>□ has an internal locus of control</td>
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</table>

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__________’s Interest Inventory

1. What I like most about school is ________________________.
2. What I like least about school is ________________________.
3. In the classroom I wish I could sit ________________________.
4. My behavior is ________________________________ because ____________________________________________________.
5. With my friends, I like to _____________________________.
6. When I’m by myself, I like to ___________________________.
7. My favorite book is ________________________________ because ____________________________________________________.
8. I live with ________________________________________.
9. Something I would like to learn this year is _____________________.
10. Something I want my teacher to know about me is
    ____________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________.
## Checklist

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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
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Cooperative Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COOPERATIVE LEARNING IS:</th>
<th>COOPERATIVE LEARNING IS NOT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Students working together, for one class period to several weeks, to achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments</td>
<td>✗ Having students sit side by side at the same table and talk with each other as they do their individual assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ An academic objective specifying the concepts and strategies to be learned and a social skills objective specifying the interpersonal or small group skill to be used and mastered during the lesson</td>
<td>✗ Having students do a task individually with instructions that the ones who finish first are to help the slower student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Assigning each group member a role and specific responsibilities to complete the work</td>
<td>✗ Assigning a report to a group where one student does all the work and others put their name on it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essential Elements of Cooperative Learning

Most cooperative learning advocates agree that for a teaching method to fit the cooperative learning model, it must employ a number of characteristics. Some forms of the following five are often cited as essential elements:

1. **Positive Interdependence** - a sense of sink or swim together
2. **Individual and Group Accountability** - the group goal cannot be reached without each member’s contribution
3. **Equal Participation with Face-to-Face Interaction** - supportive academic interaction between group members (working together to create and celebrate learning moments)
4. **Simultaneous Interaction to Build Social Skills** - supportive social interaction between group members (problem-solving, trust, communication, conflict resolution)
5. **Group Processing and Evaluation of Learning Goals** - reflection on group’s success and goal-setting for future activities
Flexible Grouping in the Differentiated Classroom

**Jigsaw**

**Student Groups**

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<table>
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<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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**Expert Groups**

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Random Appointments

Appointment Calendar for

Student Name: ___________________________

8:00 ___________________________
9:00 ___________________________
10:00 ___________________________
11:00 ___________________________
12:00 ___________________________
1:00 ___________________________
2:00 ___________________________
3:00 ___________________________
Assessment to Support Grouping

The purpose of pre-assessment is to determine what students know about a topic before it is taught. Pre-assessment will help the teacher determine flexible grouping patterns and should be used regularly.

Types of Pre-Assessment include:
- Teacher prepared pre-test
- KWL Charts
- Graphic Organizers
- Writing Prompts and Samples
- Student demonstrations and discussions
- Student products and work samples
- Show of hands/EPR Every Pupil Response
- Standardized Tests
- Diagnostic Data
- Exit Cards
- Teacher Observation/Checklist

### ALPHA-BOXES

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**TOPIC:**
Think-Tac-Toe
List of Related Citations

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Melissa Dickson


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