What is Flexible Grouping?

- Teachers create and manage groups according to: readiness, interests, learning preferences.
- Variations may include: whole group, large group, small group.
- Individual instruction takes place as needed.

Collaborative Planning Tips and Reminders:

- Always pre-assess students before grouping.
- Consider the instructional content and purpose of each group.
- Plan for students to regularly move in and out of groups as a result of ongoing assessment.
- Create rubrics and checklists to clearly define expectations and procedures.
- Communicate and practice rules and routines about how students will function in groups.
- Steer clear of negative group labels (e.g., label groups by color rather than ability level).
- Frequently vary the membership and purposes of groups.

Remember to plan for FLEXIBLE, rather than PERMANENT groups!

Planning Questions:

- Where in the lesson or unit can we create opportunities for students to work in small groups?
- What will be the best way to group students for this part of our lesson?
- Who might need extra help from peers or teachers during group or independent work?
- When would it be more effective for students to work independently?
- How can we meet the needs of our struggling students through flexible groups?


Try one of the grouping strategies on the next page!
**Tips for Managing Groups**

- Develop **readiness-level teams** to summarize & share a reading selection.
- Create **task cards** to manage small group activities.
- Allow students time for **individual study** (Web searches, literature reviews).
- Schedule “**one-on-one**” time with a student while others work in groups.
- Establish temporary, “**just-in-time**” **groups** to re-teach a specific lesson.

**Ways to Form Flexible Groups**

### Teacher selected groups

**3 x 5 Student Information Card**

1. Collect student data: • Readiness levels • Learning profiles • Interests.
2. Create an index card for each student.
3. Use information on index cards to assign students to varying groups.
4. Differentiate the instructional activity for each group.

### Student selected groups

**Appointment Clock**

Using a clock graphic organizer, students find four students from around the room and write their names on the face of a clock at four appointment times: 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, and 9:00. At designated times during the lesson or unit, students find their “_____ o’clock appointment” and meet with that partner to complete a teacher-assigned task such as:

- Tell all you know about....
- What were some key points you remember from Chapter 11?
- How did the characters in your story resolve their conflict?
- Interview each other about your interests (books, movies, music, games).

### Randomly selected groups

**Matching cards**

Give each student a card with a question or answer related to the curriculum content. Students find their “match” (question or answer), then respond to a teacher prompt written on the board. For younger students, match pictures of animals and animal babies, or word cards with nouns and verbs, words and definitions. *Think of the possibilities!*