

Flexible Grouping



RIVER BEND MIDDLE SCHOOL
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KRISTINA J. DOUBET, PH.D.
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
DOUBETKJ@JMU.EDU

Differentiation

Tomlinson, 2014

is a teacher's proactive response to learner needs

shaped by mindset

and guided by general principles of differentiation

Building Classroom
Community

High-Quality
Curriculum

Ongoing
Assessment

Flexible Grouping
& Management

Teaching Up thru
Respectful Tasks

Teachers can differentiate by adjusting

Content

The "stuff" that students grapple with to reach the learning goals

Process

How students take in and make sense of the content

Product

How students show their knowledge, understanding, and skill

according to patterns in student

Readiness

Where a student is in his or her grasp of learning goals at a certain point in time

Interest

Passions, affinities, kinships that motivate learning

Learning Profile

How a student prefers or seems to learn best

using a variety of strategies.

Let's Move!



Please find the table number that that corresponds to your card number and sit at that table. Please bring your interactions with you!

As colleagues join your table, discuss and record answers to the following questions:

- Names and grades/subjects taught
- Greeting Question: Most frequently played song in your playlist right now.
- Discussion Question: What is Flexible Grouping? What are its benefits?

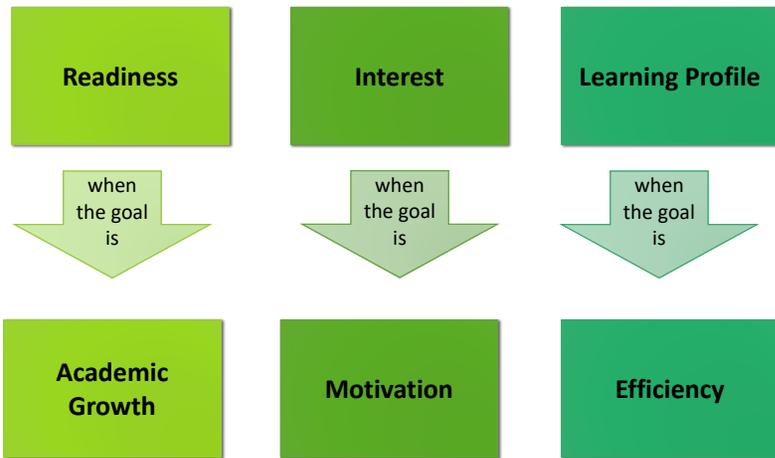
What is Flexible Grouping?

- Students consistently working in a *variety* of groups...
- ...based on *different elements of their learning*...
- ...and both *homogeneous* and *heterogeneous* in regard to those elements.



Tomlinson (2003) *Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom*.

Teachers can differentiate according to student



Based on Tomlinson, 2014

Adjusting Algebra Problems to Appeal to Student Interest

Interest	Problem Text
Traditional	A sample of ten middle school students was asked to count the number of writing utensils that they own. Their responses are represented in the following set of numbers: 5, 4, 2, 10, 6, 14, 8, 5, 1, 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is average of the set numbers? • What is the median of the set of numbers? • Create a “five-number summary” of the data and display it in boxplot format • What patterns do you see in the data?
Video Games	A sample of ten middle school students that play video games was asked how many hours they spend playing each week. Their responses are represented in the following set of numbers: 5, 4, 2, 10, 6, 14, 8, 5, 1, 8 [same questions as traditional problem]
Social Media	A sample of ten middle school students that use Facebook was asked how many status updates they post each week. Their responses are represented in the following set of numbers: 5, 4, 2, 10, 6, 14, 8, 5, 1, 8 [same questions as traditional problem]
Sports	The girl’s basketball coach was frustrated with the amount of players fouling out. For the next five games, the coach kept a record of every time a player committed a foul. The numbers below represent each player’s total amount of fouls over a five-game period. 5, 4, 2, 10, 6, 14, 8, 5, 1, 8 [same questions as traditional problem]

From Carbaugh, E.M. & Doubet, K.J. (2016). *The differentiated flipped classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (Shout out to Stephen Caviness for his help with this example!!!)

4 Corners Interest Inquiry Groups

- Students choose from the following ad options and report to the corresponding corner:
 1. Sports Drinks
 2. Hair Products
 3. Game Systems
 4. Phones
- In pairs or groups of 3 with others who chose same option, students analyze the ads (on their chosen topic) for techniques used, strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement.

Uses general areas of interest to group students for work on tasks that directly relate to these areas of interest. This IS a form of Interest Differentiation (Content).

Ability vs. Readiness



Teaching to “ability” is teaching to the past
Teaching to “readiness” is teaching to the future

Saudi Arabian teacher – personal correspondence with Carol Tomlinson 12/11

Novel: *To Kill a Mockingbird* Concept – Perspective

“You never really understand a man until you walk around in his skin... until you consider things from his point of view.”

Group 1 – The Child's (Scout's) Perspective

Group 2 – The Hero's (Atticus's and Mrs. DuBose's)

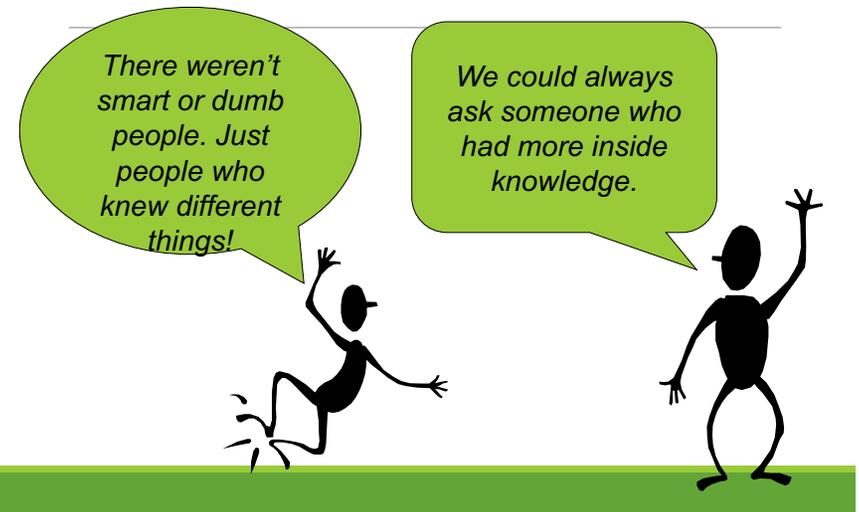
Group 3 – The Persecuted (Calpurnia and Tom Robinson's)

Group 4 – The Maturing (Jem, Mr. Underwood)

Group 5 – The Outsider's (Boo Radley, Bob and Mayella Ewell's, Dolphus Raymond's)

Conceptual base allowed for flexible groups and tiered perspectives.

The Kids' Perceptions



Flexible Grouping Helps Students...

... discover connections with their classmates; it builds community.

... figure out what is needed to collaborate in an effective fashion.

... stay tuned in and on their toes

... get used to working in different configurations; this lays the groundwork for differentiation.



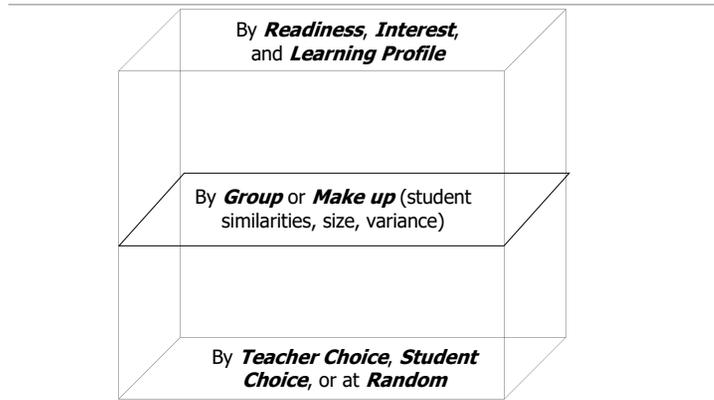
Even/Odd - Pair with someone from another table that has the opposite of what you have



Sit anywhere and discuss/record

- Names and grades/subjects taught
- Greeting Question: Favorite sport (to watch or play)... or alternate activity
- Discussion Question: How can you put students in groups? List as many kinds of instructional groups as you can think of.

Flexible Grouping Options

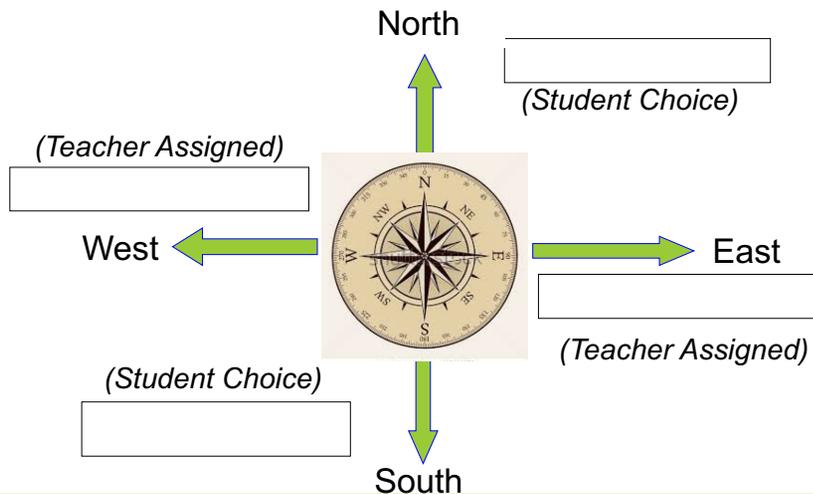


Flexible Grouping Planner

Grouping Planner	
Use or Purpose of Grouping <i>What learning experience has prompted the decision to group?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Practicing/Applying Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Investigating New Content <input type="checkbox"/> Examining a Text, Data Set, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Working on a Project
Duration <i>How long will this grouping last?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than a class period <input type="checkbox"/> A class period <input type="checkbox"/> Less than a week <input type="checkbox"/> More than a week
Student Characteristics <i>What characteristics matter for this task or learning experience?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Readiness/Skill Level <input type="checkbox"/> Interest <input type="checkbox"/> Preferred Way of Learning/Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Experience <input type="checkbox"/> Background
Composition <i>Should the group be homogeneous or heterogeneous by student characteristic?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Homogeneous <input type="checkbox"/> Heterogeneous
Configuration/Size <i>What is the best configuration for this learning activity? What size makes sense, given the goals?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Partners <input type="checkbox"/> Circles (groups of 6-8) <input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups of ____ (#) <input type="checkbox"/> Split Class
Formation <i>How will the groups be formed?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Student Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Randomly

Hockett and Doubet (2017). <https://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/use-flexible-grouping-classroom/>

Compass Partners for _____



Directions



Please sit in groups of like suit

Sit anywhere and discuss/record

- Names and grades/subjects taught
- Greeting Question: Favorite local restaurant
- Discussion Question: What can a teacher do to make group work... work?

Getting Students Into Groups

- ✓ Make it Routine!
- ✓ Up front clarity: *goals, time, space*
- ✓ Visual and oral directions (recorded if necessary)
- ✓ Anticipate reactions
- ✓ PRACTICE (time, movement, signals, etc.)
- ✓ Something produced
- ✓ Accountability



From: Doubet & Hockett (2015) *Differentiation in Middle and High School*.

Groups for the Day (on Board)

Group 1

[Student names]

Group 2

[Student names]

Group 3

[Student names]

Group 4

[Student names]

DOUBET & HOCKETT - ASCD - 2015

So HOW would you logistically group students each day? One approach:



Each student creates a nameplate on a index card.

They come in each day and find out where they are sitting.

From the classroom of Jack Stephenson, Evanston Township High School (IL)

Amelia Worthington – Louisville, KY



Colored Orbs hang over groups of desks to enable the teacher to group her HS students easily.

She often hands them the correct color popsicle stick when they enter to send them to their groups.

They record answers on the white board using corresponding colored markers

She can also call on groups randomly using the colored popsicle sticks.

John Hostetter's Room



© 2016 BY DOUBET & HOCKETT

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John Hostetter's Room



© 2016 BY DOUBET & HOCKETT

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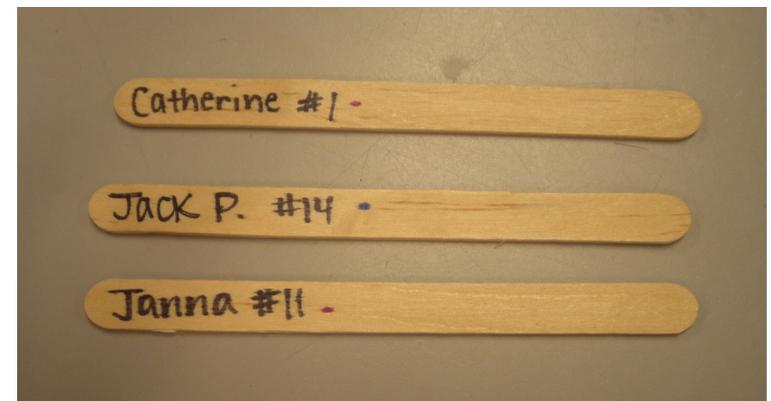
Index Cards with color-coded names – Taped or in Clear Photo Frames



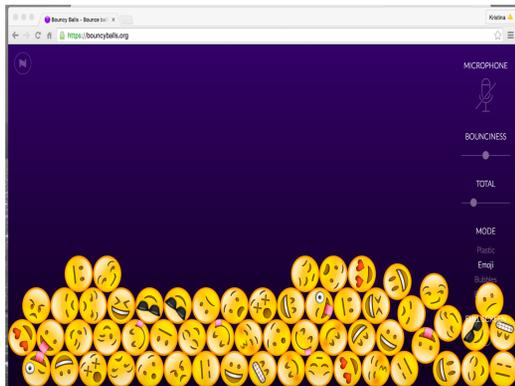
**Flexible
Grouping
made
manageable
at
Mamaroneck
High School
in New York**

Photo Cred: Jessica
Hockett

“Sticks of Accountability”



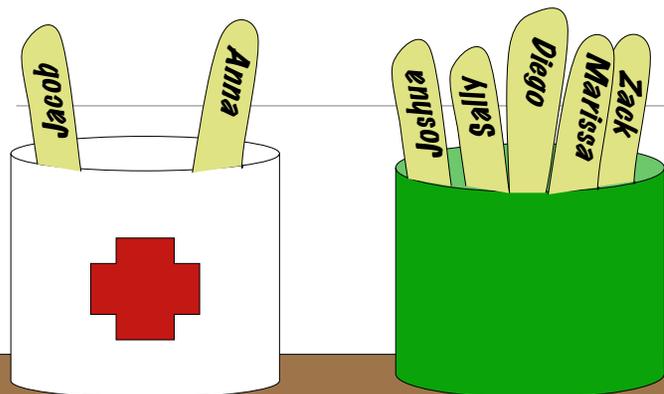
Bouncyballs.org (Google Chrome)



Getting Help During Group Work



“Red Cross Emergency” System

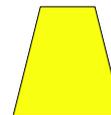


Every student has a tongue depressor with his/her name on it in a green can. Beside the green can is a white can with a large red cross on it. When students need to meet with the teacher during writing workshop or need “emergency help”, they put their depressor in the “Red Cross Emergency” can. The teacher looks in this can first when she is ready to circulate the room to assist students.

From: Doubet & Hockett (March 2015) *Strategies for Differentiation in Middle and High School*. ASCD.



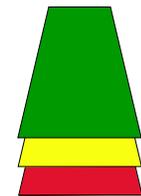
Green = We're good to go!



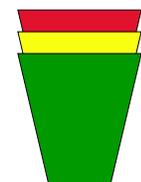
Yellow = We need you over here, but we can continue working!



Red = S.O.S. We need you here right now, and we've stopped working!



Upside down during task



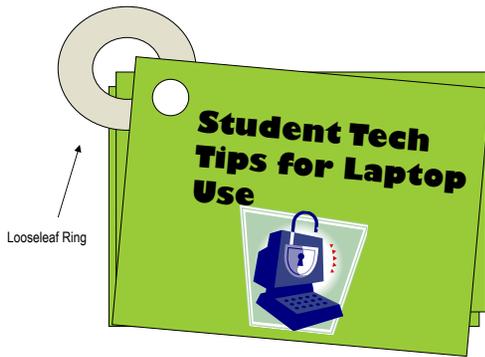
Right-side up when finished

COLORED CUPS FOR MANAGING GROUPS

You can post a sign like this in the room to teach students how to use the system.

Place cups on desks prior to the start of the period to “signal” students that they will be doing group work.

DOUBET & HOCKETT - ASCD - 2016



Looseleaf Ring

Rescue cards

Great for "workshop" times when the teacher needs to assist individual or small groups of students while the rest of the class works independently.

Keep them in the same spot and monitor student use to establish routine

More sets = more students can access at once

"My paper won't print!"

Step 1: Are you connected to Apple Talk? (If not, and you're not sure how, go to the "How do I connect Apple Talk?" card.)

Step 2: Go to the Chooser. Are you connected to the Room 216 printer?

Step 3: If Steps 1 and 2 don't work, ask another student to assist you

Step 4: See me.

DOUBET & HOCKETT - ASCD - 2015

"My computer says 'Unexpected Error -10'"

Step 1: Uh-oh! Go see Ms. Thorne, the technologist, in the library. Bring your laptop with you!

Hockett - UVA - 2007

Hint cards

Chalkboard

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/hint-cards>

(File Folders with support materials inside)

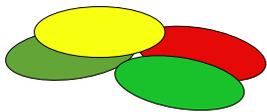
What is a symbol?

"Self-help" and reminders for group or independent work
Can change with units, or be recycled for similar purposes in different units.

Graphic organizers for compare/contrast

From: Doubet & Hockett (March 2015) *Strategies for Differentiation in Middle and High School*. ASCD.

QUESTION CHIPS



Judy Rex



Rules for Using Question Chips

1. Each student or group gets a certain number of chips (e.g., 3)
2. 1 chip = 1 opportunity to ask the teacher a question; when you're out, you're out!
3. During group or independent work, students must decide if they need the teacher to answer their question. If they can figure it out together or ask another student/group for help, they should "reserve" their chip for a situation that seems more "urgent"

From: Doubet & Hockett (March 2015) *Strategies for Differentiation in Middle and High School*. ASCD.

Directions



Move to the Corner that corresponds to your favorite entertainment genre

1. Comedy/Romantic Comedy (E.g., Parks & Rec)
2. Mystery/Thriller (e.g., Stranger Things)
3. Drama (e.g., This is Us)
4. Documentary (e.g., Black Fish)

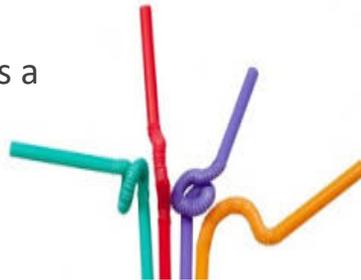
In your genre groups, discuss and record

- o Names and grades/subjects taught
- o Greeting Question: Your favorite show from that genre
- o Discussion Question: *What grouping configurations do you see in the tasks in the FG example?*

Evaluate!!!

Study the tasks in these lessons

- What grouping formations did you see?
- Do you feel like this was a flexibly grouped unit? Why or why not?
- What might you add to “mix it up” even more?



General Principles of Flexible Grouping

- Vary groups frequently enough that there is no stigma attached to one particular formation
- Group size under 4 is ideal to ensure that all students in the group participate
- Be conscious of conferring status to all students
- Assign roles within the group to facilitate the management of the group
- Debrief with students (collectively, individually) about the group dynamics, process
- Set management procedures in place to ensure smooth working of teams (e.g., thorough written and/or recorded directions, modeling how to work in teams)



Other Questions to Consider...

- Homogeneous groupings: When does it make the most sense to group students with like needs/interests/ learning preferences?
- Heterogeneous grouping? When does it make better sense to purposefully vary the needs/interests/ learning preferences of the group?
- When does it make sense to allow students to choose their groupings?
- When does whole group, or individual work make best sense?



What is the Instructional Purpose?

Motivating Reluctant Students	Increasing Students' Engagement	Increasing the Challenge for All, Including the Most Able	Making Difficult Content/Concepts Accessible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sternberg lessons (learning profile)</i> • <i>Allowing choice (e.g., choice menu, RAFT)</i> • <i>Novel materials (Think Dots)</i> • <i>Children's books as "Hooks"</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Interest centers</i> • <i>Authentic tasks/real audiences</i> • <i>Allowing choice (e.g., choice menus, RAFTs)</i> • <i>Entry points (learning profile)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tiered Assignments (FA)</i> • <i>Expert resources</i> • <i>Independent study/learning contracts</i> • <i>Adjusted Graphic Organizers and Think Dots</i> • <i>Extending concepts to new and varied contexts</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tiered Assign. (FA)</i> • <i>Accessible resources</i> • <i>Use of models and examples</i> • <i>More structured graphic organizers and Think Dots</i> • <i>Mini-lessons based on need</i>

Looking at the Entire Flexible Grouping Picture...

	Readiness	Interest	Learning Profile
Content	Resources at varying levels of complexity; tiered learning contracts	Varied Entry Points to a unit of study; Study of people who embody their interests	
Process	Varied levels of support/graphic organizers; tiered process-ing tasks; Anchor Activ.	Choices of activities; choice menus; allow grouping choices; choice of graphic organizers	Vary learning conditions/room arrangements, give product options; provide Sternberg processing choices
Product	Tiered Performance Assessments	Choices for showing what they've learned in a unit of study; summative choice menus, RAFTS	Authentic assessments using Sternberg's theory and/or the Profiler

Flexible Grouping "Warm Up"

Day 1 | Grouping 1

Students line up by birth date (MM/DD) & form partners

Day 2 | Grouping 2

Students receive a playing card and form "same suit" trios

Day 3 | Grouping 3

Students use playing card (or a new one) to form "like number" quads

Day 4 | Grouping 4

Students report to corner of room that corresponds with a favorite food & form a duo or trio

Day 5 | Grouping 5

Students line up in ROY G VIB order by shirt color. Teacher "folds" line to form partnerships from opposite ends of spectrum.

Kristina Doubet & Jessica Hockett

"How *flexible* should my groups be?"

"After a month's time, every student should have had the opportunity to both **be challenged** and to **be the challenger.**"

C.A. Tomlinson – UVA – 2005

FLEXIBLE GROUPING

Grants access to learning opportunities
Strengthens classroom camaraderie
Exposes students to varied perspectives
Combats status differences
Builds empathy

Jessica Hockett & Kristina Doubet

Management Issues Jigsaw



Group Work Guru – 5-12

<http://padlet.com/doubetkj/groupwork>

- Follow the instructions on the screen. You will read, watch, and examine materials and then report your findings to those who competed different Padlets.



TIME!!!- 5-12

<http://padlet.com/doubetkj/TIME>

- Follow the instructions on the screen. You will read, watch, and examine materials and then report your findings to those who competed different Padlets.



Peer Relationships/Getting Along in Groups – 5-12

<http://padlet.com/doubetkj/community>

- Follow the instructions on the screen. You will read, watch, and examine materials... and then report your findings to those who competed different Padlets.

