



# Flexible Grouping & Collaborative Learning

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# Goals of Education Equity:

- High achievement and positive outcomes for *all* students
- Equitable access and inclusion
- Equitable treatment
- Equitable resource distribution
- Equitable opportunity to learn
- Shared accountability



# Dispelling the Myths *about Grouping Practices*



#1: Groupings are usually permanent.

#2: All grouping methods are tracking

#3: Groupings are based only on achievement levels

#4: Groupings only benefit high-ability and high-achieving students

#5: Grouping students eliminates the need to differentiate instruction

#6: Grouping discriminates against minority populations

# Rationale and Methods

## Questions Teachers Ask:

1. Why should we flexibly group?
2. How do we form groups?
3. What do we do once the groups are formed?
4. How do we know the groups are working?



# Grouping Practices



# Required Elements for Effective Flexible Grouping

- Ongoing formative assessments
- Target instruction
- Focus on specific objectives
- Learner confidence
- Differentiated curriculum and instruction



# Establishing Classroom Structures

*What is the **teacher's role** in the flexible grouping process?*

Guide, facilitate, model, challenge, question, set expectations, and evaluate student progress to foster a learning environment to benefit all learners.



# Developing Flexible Group Frameworks

- **Ability-based** - *students grouped with like abilities*
- **Interest-based** - *aligned to foster and develop student interests*
- **Performance - based** - *placement based on pre-assessment data*
- **Readiness - based** - *readiness to address content*
- **Preference - based** - *preferred learning modalities*
- **Objective - based** - *specific learning objectives*





# Managing Flexible Groups

Structure of the classroom for:

- Student movement
- Noise level
- Record keeping
- Organization and distribution of materials



# Addressing Social and Emotional Issues

Productive struggle  
and developing the growth mindset  
provides the tools for students to engage in a  
rigorous learning environment.

*Teach students and parents that learning is a process;  
it is a journey not a destination.*



# Teacher as Facilitator

- Creates guidelines and project criteria
- Schedules timeframes and checkpoints
- Sets expectations for group behaviors and academic output
- Seeks resources to support learning
- Develops an evaluation tool
- Offers guidance in the reflective process



# Assessment and Flexible Grouping

- Using assessments before, during, and after group instruction
- **Using results of those assessments!**
- Grading students working at different levels and in different groups
- Communicating progress to parents when students are learning at different grade levels



# Grading students working at different levels and in different groups

#1 - Learning Progressions

Setting the road to be traveled and the mile markers

#2 - Assess Progress - On and out of level

It's not about the grade but the learning that occurs

#3 - Record-keeping that works

Simple, yet complete

#4 - Purposeful and specific feedback



# Rubrics

- Essential for peer and self evaluations
- Supports student ownership of the learning experience

## Teachers:

- Construct with students
- Deconstruct with students - part of the self assessment process



# Strategies to encourage quality work and *lighten the grading load.*

- It's Time to Roll
- Divide and Conquer



# Strategies for Pre-, Formative & Summative Assessment

- One pager
- Concept maps
- Empty outlines
- Cubing
- Top 10
- KWL Charts
- Minute papers
- Most Difficult First
- Observational notes
- Exit tickets
- Give Me Five
- Muddy moments
- 5 Words
- Study guides
- Socratic discussions
- SOS Summaries
- Quick Write/Draw
- Textbook/Webpages



# Strategies for Pre-, Formative & Summative Assessment

- Opinion charts
- Yes/No cards
- SAD corners
- Quick checks
- Whiteboard checks
- Turn and Talk
- A & E cards
- Reflective journal
- Word journals
- Wonder journals
- Intrigue journals

*Many of these strategies can be used to meet all three assessment purposes.*

# Strategies to Extend Learning

Extending learning by:

- Creating structures that allow for project-based learning
- Questioning strategies for varied learning levels
- Facilitating learning to promote rigor and critical thinking



# Increasing Complexity through the Continuum of Complexity:

- Degree of assistance and support
- Degree of structure
- Rate of instructional pacing
- Concrete to abstract
- Quality of resources
- Background knowledge & skills
- Complexity of resources
- Complexity process
- Complexity of product
- Complexity of thinking skills



# Developing Depth of Knowledge (DOK)

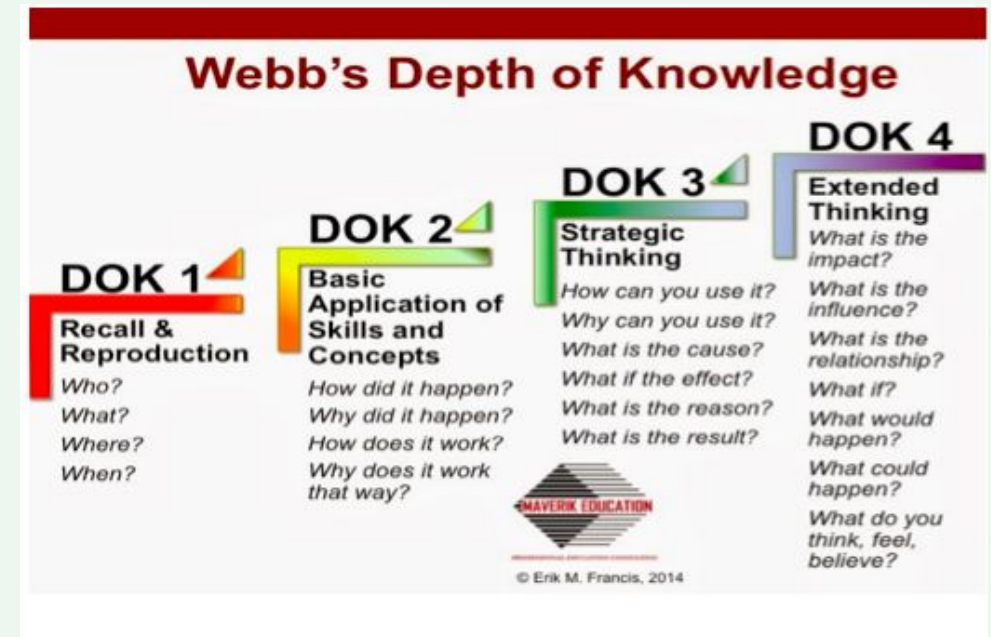
## DOK Levels of Cognitive Rigor:

#1 - Recall and reproduction

#2 - Skills and concepts

#3 - Strategic thinking

#4 - Extended thinking



# Grouping for Multiple Intelligences:

*Learning styles, description of learners and associated instructional strategies*



# Project-Based Learning

Key points:

1. Establish **real-world** connections.
2. Build **standards-based** projects
3. Structure **collaboration** for student success
4. Facilitate **student-driven** learning process.
5. Embed **assessment** throughout the project.



# Encouraging Active Questioning

Keep thinking and learning processes active by:

- Improving listening
- Increasing engagement
- Developing metacognitive skills
- Furthering imagination
- Stretching students' thinking



# Embedding Self-Regulation Skills

*Helps students learn to: work independently, manage learning tasks, assess progress, manage time and recognize strengths and challenges.*

Requires developing students' ability to:

- self-direct
- problem solve
- collaborate
- think critically and creatively





# Differentiating Daily in Flexible Groups

What role does curriculum compacting play?

How can I differentiate daily for all learners?



# Curriculum Compacting

Allows students to be moved out of curriculum they have already mastered so learning can be extended in new and challenging ways.

- Promotes the continuous learning process
- Based on assessments
- Can occur one lesson at a time, one week, or even for an entire unit



# Alternative Activities when Compacting

- Must be purposeful, meaningful and enrich the learning experience
- Must deepen thought and based on assessment data
- May address student readiness, interest and/or learning preferences

**Purely exploratory  
or  
Driven by specific standards**



# Differentiation Strategies

- Tiered lessons
- Thinking triangles
- “I Am” Strategy
- Choice boards
- Extension menus



# Tiered Lessons: Driven by Standards

*Provides appropriate challenge level for all learners*

## All learners

- offered different entry points into content through varied task complexity
- invest approximately the same amount of time
- are learning new content
- have the right to an equal amount of fun



# Choice boards and Extension menus

- Allows for student choice
- Varied organizational structures allow for flexibility of implementation
- May be used short or long term
- Varied formats:
  - Make 10
  - Choice Grids
  - Restaurant Menu



# Process for Developing Creative Thinking

- **Fluency** - ability to quickly generate a large quantity of diverse ideas and/or solutions to problems
- **Flexibility** - ability to look from different perspectives, pursue different angles of thinking, and make associations
- **Elaboration** - ability to add to an idea, give details, and expand to develop complex thinking
- **Originality** - ability to produce clever, unique responses



# Questions?





Thank you

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