

# Organizing Students in Small Groups to Practice and Deepen Knowledge

An Important Element of  
Marzano's Domain 1: Addressing Content

# Learning Goal

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Participants will understand characteristics of grouping strategies as they relate to the Teacher Observation/Evaluation Rubric.

# Grouping Students for Learning

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- The purpose of grouping students for learning as defined by research is to provide students opportunities to practice new skills and deepen their understanding of new information.
- The most effective way to initiate group learning is with a problem, question, or puzzle that needs to be solved.
- Consideration should be given to:
  - Areas for Small Group Instruction (room arrangement)
  - Adequate Time for Completion of Activities

# Effective Grouping

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- Effectively grouping students for learning is a very deliberate, organized, and planned activity that provides an opportunity for students to practice and deepen knowledge.
- Without this processing, students may initially understand the content but may lose the skill over time.

# Considerations

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- Planned or structured activities that provide opportunities for students to reflect and apply content (content should always be part of the group activity).
- Organized practice or exploratory opportunities to deepen or expand knowledge.
- Reflective opportunities to apply to real world events for students to experiment with new knowledge and solve problems.
- Engagement of students to achieve a higher level of fluency in the new knowledge and make predictions related to their work.

# Grouping Students Is Not...

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- Unorganized, undefined groups of students with no identified purpose for the activity.
- Delivery of content (unless the activity leads to further expansion of the learning).
- Unrehearsed activities.
- Unrelated to content being learned.

# Routine Events for Grouping

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- Students demonstrate appropriate behavior.
- Students demonstrate grouping tasks and routines.
- Students demonstrate understanding of grouping expectations.
- Students can relate what they are doing and why they are doing it.

# 3 Types of Grouping

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- Informal—activities that last a few minutes (e.g., turn to your partner and...)
- Formal—activities designed to last for several days or weeks (e.g., projects, writing processes)
- Base—long-term activities that usually last a semester or year.



# How To Group Students for Learning

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- There is no set way to group students for learning as long as there is a deliberate purpose to the grouping.
- Students should be grouped in a manner that most efficiently accomplishes the outcome of the activity.
  - Heterogeneously
  - Homogeneously
  - Randomly
  - Ability Grouping (e.g., reading level, achievement level)

# How To Get Started With Grouping

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- Provide and practice routines for grouping with your students (includes behavior).
- Start small as you implement small groups into your instruction.
- Establish and model areas for small group instruction.
- Relate content to all group activities.
- Ensure that students know how the activity relates to content learned.

# Grouping Students for Learning

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**Good Luck!**

Robert Marzano, *The Art and Science of Teaching*, 2007  
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