Learning Cohorts:
Managing Student Groups to Maximize Learning Time
Participant Learning Outcomes

Participants will be able to identify key roles within the EIT position and implement grouping strategies for instructing larger numbers of students in the classroom.
“Extending the Reach of Excellent Teachers”

**Direct Reach**
- Teach more students with support from either technology or a paraprofessional

**Indirect Reach**
- Give feedback and coach team teachers
- Co-teach and model with team teachers
  - Lead, co-plan, and collect/analyze data for teaching team
  - Support adults
Roles to Consider

• **Multi-Classroom Leaders:** excellent teachers who teach and take on leadership responsibilities to coach, model, co-teach, and guide colleagues

• **Expanded Impact Teachers:** excellent teachers who take on more students

• **Reach Associates:** excellent paraprofessionals who work with an MCL or Expanded Impact Teacher and have an increased level of responsibility
Roles

• **Multi-Classroom Leader I:**
  – Supports 2-4 teachers

• **Multi-Classroom Leader II:**
  – Supports 5-6 teachers

• **Expanded Impact Teacher (EIT) I:**
  – Increased student load by >30%

• **Expanded Impact Teacher (EIT) II:**
  – Increased student load by >50%

• **Associate Teacher or Digital Lab Monitor:**
  – Paraprofessional role with a $30,000 salary (0.6 FTE)
Opportunity Culture Texas Roles

Multi-Classroom Leaders

Multi-classroom leaders are teachers who have a history of excellent results with students as well as adult leadership skills. They support their colleagues in planning and delivering lessons that integrate effective strategies and best pedagogical practices. Additionally, multi-classroom leaders (MCLs) teach students for a portion of the day. This might be for a couple class periods, in small groups, or through co-teaching with teachers the MCL supports. More students are reached by an excellent teacher, the MCL, through direct instruction or indirectly through the teachers the MCL supports.

Expanded Impact Teachers

Expanded Impact Teachers (EIT) are teachers who have a history of excellent results with students and would like to take on more responsibility, for more pay. While the common factor for EITs is they are extending their reach to more students, the way in which this is accomplished can vary greatly.

EIT: Specialized Teacher

An EIT: Specialized Teacher is an excellent teacher in high-priority content areas who takes on significantly higher student loads through increased class size or innovative scheduling. The EIT: Specialized Teacher often works with the assistance of a paraprofessional.

The EIT: Specialized Teacher focuses on:

- A flexible schedule in which the teacher pulls out students in frequently changing, flexible groupings based on student needs.

The excellent teacher serving in the EIT: In-Person Blended Learning role also collaborates with and guides support staff members, such as digital lab monitors, tutors, and assistant teachers who are a part of the blended learning teaching team.

EIT: Remote

Another role for an excellent teacher is the EIT: Remote Teacher. In this role, the excellent teacher plans and delivers instruction for multiple classrooms simultaneously using technology. These classrooms may be in the
Why Small Groups?
Why Small Groups?

• Grouping creates a supportive environment responsive to individual student needs.
• Collaborative groups give students the opportunity to learn to work with different types of people.
• Small-group formats can aide in the effective delivery of instruction to larger numbers of students.
Characteristics of Small Group Instruction

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<tr>
<th>Effective Small Groups</th>
<th>Ineffective Small Groups</th>
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Effective Small Group Instruction

• Uses data to create lesson plans and determine the groups
• Keeps groups small, preferably three to four students to a group
• Remains flexible—groups change as students grow, achieve mastery of the concept/skill, choose activities based on the type of activity required, etc.
• Uses materials that match students’ ability levels and learning preferences/styles
• Tailors small group activities to address student needs
Ineffective Small Group Instruction

- Assigns students in groups, but activities can be completed individually
- Keeps students in the same groups continually, usually in same ability groups
- Uses the same materials with all students in all groups
- Lacks clear directions for small group activities
- Uses small groups to complete worksheets, and more worksheets
The right answer is in the right questions.
Planning Questions

1. What is the standard/content/big idea?
2. What needs to be accomplished by the end of the day (my “objective” or the students’ “essential question”)?
3. How will I group my students most effectively and efficiently?
4. What types of behavioral or academic adaptations might I need to make?
5. What accommodations do I need to ensure are provided to students?
6. What is the level of rigor based on Bloom’s Taxonomy or Depth of Knowledge? How will I increase or decrease the rigor level based on student’s readiness levels?
7. How will I know the plan has been effective?
8. What materials do I need?
9. When co-teaching, who will keep time? What signal will we use?
Questions to Consider

When you are beginning to form small groups, ask yourself the following questions:

- How will we decide on the learning targets and goals for the groups?
- What data will we base our grouping decisions on?
- How often will data be collected and evaluated?
- How will we decide on the size of the groups?
- Who will teach each group?
- What will each group look like?
- What activities and materials will be needed?
- How much movement of students might be expected in the groups?
- Will some students work in an independent group?
- Who will design materials for the group and assess the effectiveness of the lesson?
- How will we differentiate activities for our groups?
- How will you support students who need assistance?
- How will the two teachers communicate about the outcomes of the groups and the progress students made?
- How will you check for understanding?
Preparing for Small Groups

Group Composition

Group Expectations

Logistical Considerations
Group Composition
How many groups should I have?
How many students should be in each group?
Data Activity

Math TEKS: (2) Number and operations. The student applies mathematical process standards to represent, compare, and order positive rational numbers and understand relationships as related to place value. The student is expected to:

(A) represent the value of the digit in decimals through the thousandths using expanded notation and numerals

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student’s Name</th>
<th>TELPAS Listening</th>
<th>TELPAS Speaking</th>
<th>TELPAS Reading</th>
<th>TELPAS Writing</th>
<th>Math TEKS 5.2A</th>
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B: Beginner
I: Intermediate
A: Advanced
AH: Advanced High
How can I group students?

- Teacher chooses
- Students choose
- Readiness/Ability
- Learning Profile
- Interest
- Self-starters with students who need support to get started

Using strategic behavioral grouping

Student similarities/dissimilarities
Group Expectations
Strategies for Effective Group Processes

1. The teacher(s) set up the rules, train students, give directions, give norms, assign groups, plan lessons, plan groups, plan questions, plan roles, hold students accountable, etc...

2. Monitor students as they work through independent stations

3. Pull a small group of students at a time to work on a targeted skill (different students that need support on targeted skill at that time)

4. Have a plan for notifying students when they only have a few minutes left prior to switching groups or ending time.
Promoting Successful Small-Group Learning

Teach students how to work in a group. Establish norms for interaction—these are the guidelines that must be enforced by teachers and students themselves in order for group work to be effective.
Classroom Management

Ensure your small groups and stations will run smoothly by setting up classroom expectations and procedures.

There are fewer discipline problems when students are engaged in active, hands-on learning appropriate to their ability level.
Student Expectations

Teachers need to plan how they want to set up stations and then specifically teach, model and scaffold instruction about what students are expected to do during that time.

When teachers teach students to manage themselves and work responsibly, we give them the tools they need to become independent, life-long learners.
Student Roles

1. Assign each student a role in the group.
2. Assure each student understands their assigned role.
3. Consider rotating roles periodically.
Part of managing small groups and stations is to develop a system for students to follow so they know what to do if they need help.
Getting Materials

Students need to be taught how to get and return materials, so they do not disrupt you while they are working. Here are some suggestions for getting and returning materials.
Planning is not Optional.
Logistical Considerations
One of the challenges of utilizing stations and small groups is structuring the classroom physical arrangement to accommodate student desks/tables and allow space for other furniture, walking room, etc...

This is the most common excuse for not implementing stations and small groups.
Scheduling
Scheduling Scenarios

• The EIT independently leads a classroom of about 30 students.

• Two EITs, each with about 30 students, and an Associate Teacher work together on a grade level. The Associate Teacher works with students in another room using blended learning strategies. An MCL, who supports multiple grade levels, will also provide intermittent support for the team.

• Two EITs, each with about 30 students, work together on a grade level. Groups of students receive some instruction in a computer lab monitored by an Associate Teacher, who is shared with another grade level.
Use Flexible Grouping Arrangements

Establish strong management routines

Capitalize on your resources: space, time, and people
Extra Resources & Ideas

- http://thecornerstoneforteachers.com/free-resources/centers/setting-up-centers
- http://www.dailyteachingtools.com/cooperative-learning-grouping.html#2