

**Figure 5.3: FLEXIBLE GROUPING WITH ADVANCED LEARNERS
IN MIXED-ABILITY CLASSROOMS**

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Whole-class instruction	
<p>Opportunity to accept, discuss, and listen to others' diverse perspectives. Useful for topic introduction, general directions, read alouds, closure, and group building.</p>	<p>Off-task behaviors may be demonstrated as level and pacing is more likely to be inappropriate. May be bored with content level. Less active engagement in learning.</p>
Mixed-readiness small groups	
<p>Advanced students can experience the satisfaction of helping less-skilled learners and modeling more complex ideas. May build confidence for advanced students as tasks require simpler skills.</p>	<p>Advanced learners infer that school is easy and boring. More likely to work below readiness level as tasks are typically set for the middle range of learners. Advanced learners may resent the responsibility of teaching others and wonder: <i>When it is our turn to learn?</i> They may be expected to do too much of the group's work. Can dominate.</p>
Similar-readiness small groups	
<p>Instruction can match pace and readiness levels. Above grade-level materials can be used so in-depth content is developed. Advanced students can challenge each other as they share expertise, use higher vocabulary, and incorporate more abstract or complex ideas.</p>	<p>Advanced students who are introspective, less verbally advanced, or less confident can be intimidated by the rest of the group. May result in labeling if overused.</p>
Individual work	
<p>Appropriate pace and level is possible. Individual interests and ideas can be pursued. Allows greater diversity of responses. Encourages greater depth and complexity in responses. Allows accurate evaluation.</p>	<p>Individual work can feel isolating if overused. A less-motivated advanced student may underachieve or exhibit a lack of task commitment.</p>