

# Instructional Strategies Used in the PALS Classrooms



Strategy	Description of Strategy	Rationale for Use
<p><b>Flexible Grouping</b></p>	<p>When flexible grouping is a part of the classroom structure, students are a part of many different groups (and sometimes work alone) throughout the day, based upon their interests, readiness or learning style. Sometimes the groups reflect students with the same interests, sometimes with students of varied interests; sometimes the group includes mixed ability levels, sometimes homogeneous ability levels.</p>	<p>Flexible grouping ensures that students have opportunities to practice when they need more practice as well as to extend their learning in a variety of ways as they are ready. Sometimes the teacher assigns work groups to support individual readiness or further a student's interest, and sometimes students select groups if the task is suited for self selection. Flexible grouping relies on clear guidelines for how the group will function in a scholarly way. These skills and expectations are taught prior to students moving into their groups.</p>
<p><b>Curriculum Compacting</b></p>	<p>Compacting is a three step process. First, the teacher determines what a student <u>already knows</u> about the content that they will be studying (pre-assessment). Next, the teacher <u>excuses</u> ("compacts out") the student from already mastered material. Finally, the teacher creates a meaningful plan for the student to extend his/her understanding of <i>new material</i>.</p>	<p>Curriculum Compacting is important because some students have acquired many skills and/or remember much content that is required to demonstrate proficiency in a standards based classroom. Compacting allows for these students to be appropriately challenged and encourages independence, eliminating unnecessary drill and practice.</p>
<p><b>Independent Study Projects</b></p>	<p>Independent study projects offer an opportunity for students to identify and solve a problem or explore a self selected topic of interest.</p>	<p>Independent Study Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Nurture student interests</li> <li>❖ Increase motivation</li> <li>❖ Teach research skills</li> <li>❖ Encourage/satisfy curiosity</li> <li>❖ Allows for in depth study</li> <li>❖ Move from factual to abstract learning</li> <li>❖ Help to develop questioning skills</li> <li>❖ Are FUN!!</li> </ul>