Types of rereadings that require less teacher direction and invite more pupil interaction include:

- Buddy or partner reading (see Pairs, p. 35) of the selection, or of a portion or adaptation of the selection (i.e., first and last page, one page or one paragraph, a story summary, or a predictable version of the story)
- Assigning individual parts for story or readers' theater

Finally, successful use of small needs-based groups requires some system for classroom management. The timeworn idea of learning centers can be dusted off and reconceptualized a bit to help teachers manage small groups simultaneously, while offering some extra help and other challenging activities. Centers can be made up of materials brought by teachers and students alike. Third-grade teacher Caryl Crowell (1991) includes materials in the students' native languages in the centers in her multilanguage classroom. Included in thematic or more general centers for early readers can be follow-ups to predictable books:

- Sentence strips or word cards to sequence
- Materials for students to use in making reproductions (copies) of predictable books in varied formats such as accordion books, ziplock-bag books, or Big Books
- Frames for students to use in writing their own innovations (_____ , _____ , *who do you see? I see* _____ *looking at me.*)
- Computer use in completing story reproductions and innovations
- Materials for use in dramatizing the selections or innovations

Teachers in classrooms where space is limited might pair up with an adjoining classroom. One alternative is to use manila envelopes, shoe boxes, or milk crates to house center activities, which are then taken to the students' seats.

COOPERATIVE GROUPS

Of all grouping options, cooperative grouping may represent the best opportunity for every student to contribute to the group. As one second-grade teacher commented, "The children like cooperative grouping because they get to work with different students in their class. It takes the pressure off because everybody has something to add to the group."

Research (Slavin, 1991) indicates children in cooperative-learning groups consistently show increased achievement, self-concept, and social skills. Cooperative groups may provide a forum for sharing predictions and ideas, or for discussing and responding to one or more selections. Members of cooperative groups are interdependent. All group members have responsibilities for group and individual learning. Cooperative groups may be used before or after reading.

Cooperative groups are typically formed with three to six students, but most often three to four. Tasks may be assigned, or students may select among several options. Tasks frequently culminate in a written group product. Examples include: comparing predictions made prior to reading and actual story events, describing character traits and their impact on the story, listing predictions, summarizing a selection, or comparing a selection with one read previously. Tasks are structured so face-to-face interaction among group members is possible, with both interdependence among members (sink or swim together) and individual accountability (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1990).

Possible cooperative groups include the following:

- Interest groups that work on theme projects
- Literature response groups where groups of students each read and discuss a different title
- Computer work groups where rotating roles can be keyboard operator, monitor, and checker
- Story-retelling groups where each group member retells a story read to the group and fields comments

Appropriate procedures for cooperative grouping may vary from culture to culture. Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp (1987) report high levels of peer interaction and helping among heterogeneous groups of native Hawaiian students. However, when Vogt et al. attempted to use these same arrangements with Navajo students, they found resistance. Better success came when restricting cooperative learning to single-sex groups, because of the distinct and separate gender roles in Navajo culture. Au (1993) also contrasts native Hawaiian interactions, where students persist in efforts to help peers even when the targeted students initially refuse assistance, with Yup'ik Eskimo students, where help is more subtle and less obviously intrusive.

Cooperative learning is a grouping practice that has received abundant support from researchers and teachers. Most agree, however, it requires thoughtful planning and execution. Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec's *Circles of Learning* (1990) is an excellent source for more general information on cooperative learning. Keegan and Shrake (1991) provide specifics about using cooperative learning to support literacy learning.

PAIRS

Cooperative pairs are perhaps the easiest form of cooperative grouping to manage. Pairs allow both for "less negotiation and more opportunity to construct" (Berghoff & Egawa, 1991). Pairs can be ideal for the following literacy tasks:

- Finding and recording information
- Planning, co-authoring, revising, and drafting writing
- Interviewing a partner and responding to the book the partner has read
- Testing each other on material each has studied
- Listing predictions in preparation for reading
- Completing everyday tasks, which might otherwise have been independent seatwork
- Solving problems

Following are a number of paired-learning variations.

➤ 1. Peer Tutoring. Peer turoring involves a more proficient student tutoring a less proficient student, either within the classroom or across grade levels. The responsibility of peer tutors is generally to reinforce previous teaching. This grouping option provides opportunities for practice and benefits both tutors and tutees in achievement, self-concept, social relationships, and attitudes toward reading (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Topping, 1989). Topping (1989) provides several suggestions that promote effective implementation of peer tutoring. He emphasizes: (a) training and modeling for tutors increases the procedure's effectiveness; (b) training should include appropriate ways of correcting, giving praise, and stimulating learning; and (c) the differential in proficiency between the students should allow the tutor to provide an adequate model of competency.

➤ 2. Reciprocal Teaching. One of the most well-known and most effective peer-tutoring strategies for use with pairs or small groups is reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Palincsar, Brown, & Martin, 1987). Reciprocal teaching strategies include clarifying, summarizing, questioning, and predicting, allowing lower performing students to reread and respond to small segments of text with more able students who model, support, and extend their understanding. Reciprocal teaching can be used before, during, and after reading.

➤ 3. Partner Reading. Another activity that can, but need not, be a form of peer tutoring is partner or buddy reading. Partner reading provides

practice that promotes fluency in word recognition and comprehension. The listener can enhance comprehension through discussion and questioning (Topping, 1989). Within pairs, students often alternate the reading of a selection. As one student reads, the other follows the text, assisting with unknown words as necessary. Unevenly matched partners may each be given the choice, for example, of (a) reading a paragraph or a page, (b) reading difficult parts together, or (c) following along while the partner does the reading. Making a choice can help both partners feel ownership in the activity.

One variation of buddy reading is the use of pairs where each student reads a portion of text silently, or, in some cases, orally in unison (Wood, 1987). One student acts as recaller, verbally recounting what the two had read. The buddy acts as listener and clarifier for the recaller. Paired reading effectively supports young children's reading development, especially for at-risk readers (Eldredge & Quinn, 1988).

One of two final paired activities includes reading aloud in content areas. Students take turns reading aloud to the class one or two paragraphs assigned to practice. They alternate until passages are read aloud fluently (Pardo & Raphael, 1991). In the second paired activity, Think-Pair-Share (McTighe & Lyman, 1988), students think about a high-level question, quickly discuss it in a pair, and then share their thinking with the whole group.

Paired learning can fit effectively into the classroom routine with little preparation, and can be monitored with ease. It is a useful way to stretch instructional time and provide students with practice in reading connected text.

INDIVIDUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

While working with individuals is not strictly a form of grouping, it is addressed here because of its vital place in the overall classroom organization. Individual teaching often takes place in one-on-one conferences. These serve not only to personalize instruction and to review skills/strategies taught to large or small groups, but also to monitor the progress of individual students (Strickland, 1992). As fifth-grade teacher Debra Goodman stated: "The twenty minutes that I spent with Amanda that day were probably some of the most valuable minutes she spent in my class" (Goodman & Curry, 1991, p. 152).

As opposed to individual teaching, individual learning takes place in any grouping situation. Particularly important for individual learning are times when students set their own goals/purposes, reflect on ideas and on their progress, apply and practice skills/concepts/strategies, do self-selected reading and writing, and engage in personal creative tasks. Strategies and

activities students may practice alone include journal writing, question generation, project development, and some types of repeated readings (e.g., following along with audiotaped selection, "mumble" reading, and simple rereadings). When teachers choose to use a single text with the whole class, there is a risk that some students may be "held back" or not be given enough opportunities to read and write on their own. Ample opportunities for individual practice and extension are important and should not be neglected in the effort to build more collaborative learning environments.

MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS
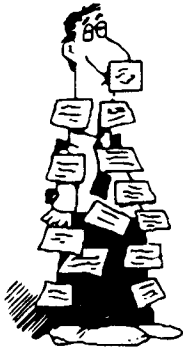
"Yes, but how do I put this all together?" is the key question. Conversations with teachers suggest that "putting it all together" can be both intimidating and difficult. Combine the ideas of several teachers and the following list of guidelines emerges:

➤ **1.** Introduce general procedures a step at a time, helping students to gradually acquire reading and writing routines. For example, one second-grade teacher outlines her procedures as follows: (paraphrased)

On the first day of school, we introduced a song from a chart, sang it together, and read a few predictable books. We showed students where these books would be kept, in case they wanted to read them on their own when making choices later. Then we began to introduce writing workshop to the whole group. Everyone received a portfolio and listed possible ideas they could write about. Everyone started their first written piece, and, when they wrote all they wanted to, they decided to read, individually or in pairs, the song or the books.

On the next day, we continued introducing more elements of writing workshop, while adding a few new easy books to the growing collection and singing the songs. We introduced something new every few days. Especially when we introduced something that was quite different, we would all do it together before it became one of a growing list of choices. We listed the choices on a large chart as we introduced them so that, when we were ready for the children to make their own choices, we reviewed the options from the chart. Our time together developed a very regular structure, and we soon did not need to refer to the chart (Jacobson, 1991).

➤ **2.** If students are expected to move through several centers, provide a system that helps children to make appropriate choices. For example, a fifth-grade teacher makes a Velcro board listing optional centers and activities on the left, with as many spaces to the right as the number of students who can work on an option at one time. Students attach a construction paper shape with Velcro backing as they go to an activity of their choice. Activities may take place throughout the day and are usually untimed. The activities are:

- Listening station
- Computer station
- Writing station
- Sitting on floor by classroom library
- Buddy reading with nature (outside)
- VIP chair (for reading with teacher, aide, or older/younger student)
- Teacher (one-on-one conference over work, or time to chat)
- Rainbow (electronic cards)
- Language master
- Mini filmstrip projector
- Math manipulatives
- Science/social studies

Another intermediate teacher uses a magazine rack to label activities and inserts index cards with student names in the appropriate places. A New Zealand primary teacher makes a "Things I Can Do" book with photographs of children engaged in optional activities. The book grows throughout the year. Children use the book for ideas when they have time for optional activities.

➤ **3.** Provide ongoing activities for children to turn to as they finish assigned work. One reading coordinator suggests having ongoing projects that allow time for meaningful activity. This also reduces the problems created when students finish before others.

Beyond these suggestions for management, you will need to devise your own grouping plan. As you read the next two chapters, consider which aspects of the individual plans may work for you and which will not. In experimenting with various grouping options to devise your own plan, you may want to follow the suggestions below:

- Closely observe and assess students to learn their strengths and weaknesses, both initially and throughout the year.
- Model to ensure that your students understand strategies and appropriate group behavior (Strickland, 1992).

- Map out a tentative plan of grouping options to try at the beginning of the year, and alternatives to add to the repertoire while exploring new combinations.
- Keep a log of experiences in matching grouping options with curricular goals and individual needs.
- Be flexible about schedules for each subject.
- Allow students to have some ownership in choices of how they will spend their time (Atwell, 1987).
- Observe and network with colleagues to support each other while trying new grouping options.
- Continually read and reread relevant professional publications.

The management plans devised by individual teachers will be unique and pliable. Mold them to meet a class's particular needs.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter we have categorized grouping options as whole class, teacher-facilitated needs-based groups, cooperative groups, pairs, and individual teaching and learning. We see these as ad hoc groups, each with potential strengths and weaknesses. To assist teachers in forming and dissolving groups according to need, we have also provided management ideas and suggestions to consider in developing a local plan. Chapters 3 and 4 put grouping options into plans for organized literacy instruction.

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