



# Grouping Strategies: Homogenous, Heterogeneous, and Flexible

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# Homogeneous Grouping: Grouping by similar ability

## **Advantages of homogeneous grouping:**

- Teachers can focus their attention on students that need help
  - Address specific learning gaps
- Teachers can tailor exercises to the ability of the group
- Faster paced students can accelerate each other's learning
- More even workload

## **Disadvantages of homogeneous grouping:**

- Students can be placed into "tracks" that can be hard to get out of
- Establishes a classroom hierarchy



# Heterogeneous Grouping: Grouping by mixed ability

## **Advantages of heterogeneous grouping:**

- Students can learn by teaching
- Lower ability students may feel more comfortable speaking up
- Wider variety of perspectives

## **Disadvantages of heterogeneous grouping:**

- Resentment for lower ability students in the group
- Higher ability students may have to take on more work
- Higher ability students will not be challenged as much



# Flexible Grouping: Grouping that rotates or changes

## **Advantages of Flexible Grouping:**

- Students work with more of their peers
- Builds a more inclusive classroom by exposing student to a wider variety of perspectives
- Strengthens collaborative skills

## **Disadvantages of Flexible Grouping:**

- Work may not match the ability level of the group
- Uneven workload
- Difficult to study quantitatively



# Why Choose Flexible?

- Still get of the benefits of homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings
- Students work with more of their peers
  - Fosters a more diverse and inclusive learning environment
  - Pushes students out of their comfort zone
- Teachers will not accidentally reinforce their own stereotypes of students
- Promotes equitable learning opportunities
- Helps remove classroom hierarchies, either real or perceived



# Looking at the data

- (Doubet, 2022) Argued that flexible grouping is the most versatile out of heterogeneous, homogeneous, and flexible grouping.
- (Wyman and Watson, 2020) Found that cooperative work had benefits, but found no statistically significant differences between homogeneous groups compared to heterogeneous groups.
- (Mesghina et al., 2024) Found that cooperative learning is beneficial to students with both high prior knowledge (HPK) and low prior knowledge (LPK). According to their research, there was no major difference in the gains of LPK students in homogenous groups when compared to heterogeneous groups.
- (Cheetany, 2020) First qualitative study in the area. Homogeneous groups did well in setting foundational knowledge, heterogeneous groups expounded on skills.



# Thought-Provoking Questions

- 1) How could you incorporate diverse grouping strategies into your teaching methods in order to benefit your students on all skill levels?
- 2) What are some examples of how we as teachers can enact flexible grouping within the classroom?
- 3) In your personal experience what type of grouping have you felt has been most effective for your or your students learning?



# References

Cheetany, Katia Raouf. (2023) Influences on Ability and Mixed-Ability Groups in a Qualitative Descriptive Study. Grand Canyon University ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

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Wyman, P. J., & Watson, S. B. (2020). Academic achievement with cooperative learning using homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. *School Science and Mathematics*, 120(6), 356–363.  
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