

FLEXIBLE GROUPING IS AT THE HEART OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

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Teachers worldwide continue to seek the most effective teaching methods to meet the specific needs of their students, despite the 21st-century classroom and learning environment undergoing a period of transition. As of the turn of the century, unfortunately, best practices are no longer significant enough to maintain students' attention while simultaneously ensuring that the learning environment is real and engaging. The current trip through the digital revolution and a pandemic sweeping the globe provides educators with the opportunity to determine the new model of education that is considered the best. Not too long ago, educators were confronted with students and learning conditions that were not anticipated. In regular education classrooms, the number of children who struggle with learning and the variety of specific learning needs that teachers must accommodate are both increasing (Dube, 2023).

A fundamental component of differentiated training is the use of flexible grouping styles. Students are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of groups, which may be based on their prior knowledge, areas of interest, or preferred learning style. The composition of these groups can be either homogeneous or heterogeneous. These individuals could be chosen by the students or by the teachers. There is the possibility of both planned and random group placements. Groups might do work for a single day or for an entire month. Opportunities for individual work are also made available through flexible grouping. The educational approach known as flexible grouping employs a combination of heterogeneous groups, which consist of students with diverse ability levels, and homogeneous groups, which consist of students with comparable skill levels, to help students achieve a specific learning objective. Two or three students can make up

a small group, whereas a larger group can have up to six members. Group sizes can vary. Students spend the time required to acquire a specific skill or complete a learning activity, working together under a teacher's guidance. This distinguishes it from static groups, which do not change based on the students' requirements, the skills they acquire, or the levels of knowledge they demonstrate. The teaching approach of flexible grouping is informed by data, as noted by Morin (2025). Students are placed into temporary groups to work together only long enough to develop a specific skill or complete a learning task. This technique is used to facilitate learning and understanding. Groups can be heterogeneous, meaning they consist of individuals with diverse skill levels, or homogeneous, meaning they consist of individuals with the same skill level. The groups are frequently reorganized in accordance with the learning purpose and the students' requirements or interests.

Students can also be better prepared for working with others when they leave school if they have the opportunity to participate in flexible grouping environments that encourage collaboration and teamwork. The placement of students in these types of collaborative experiences is an essential component of college and career readiness.

However, there is no definitive formula for forming ideal groups in the classroom.

References:

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