

Figure 12

Three Kinds of Groups

Type of Group	Flexible Groups	Ability/Aptitude Groups	Cooperative Groups
Determined by	Determined by teacher perceptions or evidence of learning needs.	Determined largely by scores on standardized test of intelligence or aptitude.	Determined by the teacher or student choice.
Based on	Based on specific learning needs, strengths, or preferences.	Based on general performance or achievement.	Usually random as to student ability or learning preferences.
Who	Fluid group membership.	Rigid group membership.	Fluid group membership.
What	Groups work on different activities based on needs, strengths, or preferences.	Groups all tend to work on the same or similar activities.	Each group works on the same task or on one facet of the same task.
How	Students are grouped and regrouped as appropriate for particular activities.	Students may or may not be regrouped within the classroom based on instructional needs.	Students may be purposely mixed as to learning needs and academic strengths to provide peer instruction or leadership within groups.
When	Occurs as needed.	Occurs daily.	Occurs when a task seems appropriate.
Why	Grouping based on individual students' skill proficiency, content mastery, learning preferences or interests.	Grouping based on perceptions about innate ability.	Grouping for the purpose of developing collaborative skills.
Whole Group			
Whole-group instruction is your most effective teaching method when:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building community through common activities or experiences. ▪ Introducing new units, topics, skills, or concepts. ▪ Conducting discussions of important content. 			

Adapted from *Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom*, Diane Heacox, Ed.D. 2002, Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., MN
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