

Grouping can be an effective way to achieve optimal performance from students. Grouping is called "flexible" when students are not locked into the same groups for each area of study or activity.

Students can be selected for groups based on formal or informal assessment of achievement levels or by using interest surveys. Teachers who use a variety of grouping methods and assign students to different groups during their courses of study will find that their students will benefit most from the practice of grouping. Follow the [60% rule](#) for formation of small groups.

Teachers can choose from among three ways to group depending on the assessment used and the objectives of the lesson:

Grouping	Nature of Group
Heterogenous Grouping	Groups consist of students representative of each ability/achievement level in the class. Students become aware of one another's strengths and weaknesses. "Such an approach does not result in genuine growth for struggling learners." (Tomlinson, 1999)
Homogenous Grouping	Groups consist of students from similar or like ability/achievement levels. This method of grouping allows similar students to work at a pace common to each member of the group. Learners who need more time to assimilate information or to learn skills can work at an appropriate pace. "Advanced learners benefit from brisk paced, stimulating discourse, raised teacher expectations, and enriched materials." (Kulik and Kulik, 1991, in Tomlinson, 1999)
Interest Grouping	Groups consist of students with similar interests. Students need not be from similar or like ability/achievement levels. This method of grouping allows struggling learners to gain confidence as they contribute to the group, and advanced learners can learn that every student has something constructive to offer.

60% Rule

If 60% of the class needs a particular skill or concept, whole group instruction is appropriate. If less than 60% is struggling with that skill or concept, small group instruction is most effective and efficient.

<http://www.eht.k12.nj.us/~jonesj/differentiated%20instruction/1%20DI%20Homepage.htm>