

Chart of Common Grouping Practices

Ability grouping	A generic umbrella term used to describe various methods for grouping students, such as those described in this chart. <i>Note:</i> Ability grouping includes groupings based on interest, achievement level, learning style, and other factors in addition to ability level.
Flexible grouping (or flexible learning groups)	Students are grouped and regrouped in a variety of formats for specific instructional purposes.
Fixed groups	Students remain in static assigned groups for the entire school year. Examples include both homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings described below.
Homogeneous grouping	Students of similar ability are grouped together for instruction; typically used in self-contained gifted classes, content replacement or honors classes, enrichment groups, and tracking models.
Heterogeneous grouping	Students of mixed ability are grouped together for instruction; used in typical classes and in gifted-cluster classes.
Cluster grouping	Gifted students are grouped together in one class at every grade level. The cluster group is a homogeneous grouping within a heterogeneous classroom.
Whole-class groups	Students are intentionally grouped, as in the homogeneous grouping of a self-contained gifted class or in a tracking model. Students may also be grouped heterogeneously, as in a typical classroom, or intentionally, as in a gifted-cluster model.
Small groups	Students are grouped together in a variety of formats, such as a gifted cluster within a classroom, a pullout group for gifted instruction or for content replacement, within-class grouping, and regrouping for specific instruction or interventions. Small groups may be formed in one grade level or across grade levels.
Within-class grouping	Similar to small groups (described above) but only within the same class. An example is a gifted student group within a gifted-cluster classroom.
Regrouping for specific instruction	Method emphasizes the specific instruction for each group, which is usually dependent upon the group's needs.

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Chart of Common Grouping Practices, continued

<p>Cooperative learning groups</p>	<p>A small-group setting where students are grouped intentionally for instruction. Typically include flexible groups that <i>may</i> be homogenous (like ability) or heterogeneous (varied ability) depending on the instructional purpose.</p>
<p>Cross-grade grouping</p>	<p>Students in different grade levels are grouped for specific subjects, typically math and/or reading. Students are placed based on expressed academic need to learn that subject at a different level than their own grade level.</p>
<p>Tracking</p>	<p>Students are typically grouped by achievement levels. Groups remain fixed throughout the school year (and typically beyond the school year).</p>
<p>Combo or multiage classes</p>	<p>Classes containing two grade levels within one classroom. For example, a grade 1/2 class.</p>
<p>Pullout groups</p>	<p>Students pull out of the regular classroom for focused instruction. Examples include daily content replacement, where students receive instruction in accelerated content in core academic subjects, and intermittent pullout for enrichment.</p>