

Grouping Strategies for Gifted Children



Mon. Oct. 13
2:15-3:05 pm
Iowa C Room

ITAG Conference 2014

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Philosophy of Grouping

"In performance areas, it is generally accepted that you put high performers together..

Not one country sent a mixed ability team to the Olympics."



Professor Miraca U. M. Gross is Emeritus Professor of Gifted Education in UNSW's School of Education as well as Director of GERRIC. She is recognised nationally and internationally as a leading authority on the education of gifted and talented students.

Gifted Kids Need Challenge

“The surest way to make it hard for children is to make it easy.”



Eleanor Roosevelt

What does the Research Say?

Gifted Child Quarterly-Special Issue: Best Practices in Gifted Education (fall 2007)

Authors state ABILITY GROUPING is best practice!

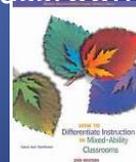
- Tonya Moon & Carolyn Callahan
- Mary Ann Swiatek
- Maureen Niehart
- Joyce VanTassel Baska & Elissa Brown
- Delcourt, Cornell & Goldberg
- Karen Rogers



Differentiation (Tomlinson, 2001):

“Instructional and management strategies”

1. Curriculum Compacting-3 step process
2. Independent Projects-identify topic of interest
3. Interest Centers or Interest Groups
4. Tiered Assignments-Heterogeneous classroom with levels of exploration.



Differentiation (Tomlinson, 2001)

5. Flexible Grouping-Based on readiness, interest and learning style.
6. Learning Centers-Stations or collections of materials to explore topics or skills.
7. Varying Questions-Teachers pose a variety of questions and use “wait time” strategies.
8. Mentorships/Apprenticeships-Networking
9. Contracts: Teacher-student agreement

Socio-affective Impact of Acceleration and Ability Grouping by Maureen Niehart, Ph.D.

Gifted Child Quarterly-Special Issue: Best Practices in Gifted Education (fall 2007)

Although the academic gains associated with acceleration and peer ability grouping are well documented, resistance to their use for gifted students continues because of concerns that such practices will cause social or emotional harm to students.

Results indicate that grade skipping, early school entrance, and early admission to college have socio-affective benefits for gifted students who are selected on the basis of demonstrated academic, social, and emotional maturity, but may be harmful to unselected students who are arbitrarily accelerated on the basis of IQ, achievement, or social maturity.

There is little research on the socio-affective effects of peer ability grouping. The limited evidence indicates strong benefits for highly gifted students and possibly for some minority or disadvantaged gifted students. Robust evidence does not exist to support the idea that heterogeneous classroom grouping per se significantly increases the risk for adjustment problems among moderately gifted students. Recommendations for best practice based on the available evidence are presented.

The Resurgence of Ability Grouping

<http://youtu.be/WDWyb4Ea8ZY>



Published on Mar 20, 2013: As part of the 2013 Brown Center Report on American Education, Tom Loveless discusses the use of ability grouping and tracking in America's schools. Read more and access the full report at: <http://www.brookings.edu>

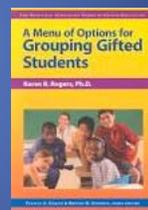
TIME: 4.08

Successful Forms of Grouping

Discussion: Why is it important to know different strategies for Grouping Students?

I. ABILITY GROUPING

II. PERFORMANCE GROUPING



I. ABILITY GROUPING

1. Full-time Ability Grouping
2. Cluster Grouping
3. Pull Out Enrichment Groups
4. Like-Ability Cooperative Groups



1. Full-time Ability Grouping

- Defined by IQ or aptitude
- Same, self contained, homogeneous groups.
- Important factor---motivation for learning (grouping and lack of Grouping)



2. Cluster Grouping

- 5-8 students are identified for having highest aptitude or TQ scores at a given grade level
- Placed in “otherwise” homogeneous classroom with a teacher who:
 - a) wants them
 - b) is trained to know how to differentiate for them
 - c) devotes a proportionate amount of time to the differentiation of their instruction.

3. Pull Out Enrichment Groups

- When students identified by high test scores are removed from regular classrooms for a specific period of time each week to
- Works on general intellectual skills with a GT resource teacher. Resource room format.
- Motivation and persistence may vary among children. High self concept & perceptions; lower motivation, however.

4. Like-Ability Cooperative Groups

- Heterogeneous classroom of students when a teacher groups 3-4 of the brightest students (by scores or IQ)
- Assigns differentiated tasks or projects.
- Kids work cooperatively and are evaluated jointly.
- Result? Possible achievement gains, does not seem to improve self perceptions or socialization among the GT but does NOT damage these aspects either.

Performance Grouping

Difference? Observable performance rather than child's potential, as in ability groups.

1. Regrouping for Specific Instruction
2. Cluster Grouping
3. Within-Class/Flexible Grouping
4. Like-Performing Cooperative Learning
5. Cross Grade/Multi-Age Grouping
6. Resource Room Pull-Out Enrichment Centers

1. Regrouping for Specific Instruction

- Most widely used in settings that cater to GT learners
- Especially when matched to their curriculum level and content expertise.
- Positive effect for high achieving students. Motivation greatly improved.
- However, general overall school motivation not changed substantially

2. Cluster Grouping of Strategies

- Grouped by extraordinary performance.
- E.g., top 10 math students in a grade level in math or reading clustered with differentiated curriculum.
- Little research on this but potential academic effects can be assumed.



3. Within-Class/Flexible Grouping

- Each teacher divides his/her students in small groups according to “readiness” for curriculum outcomes.
- Same class-groups vary. Red birds-blue birds format!
- Make learning relevant for all levels within the class. Self concept?
- GT kids tend to have higher academic self-concept than GT kids in special schools, special classes, or resource room pull out programs.

4. Like-Performing Cooperative Learning

- Similar to like-ability group.
- The teacher places students together as a cooperative “team” with differentiated task or set of experiences on which they are evaluated jointly.
- Hard to determine specific growth since individuals are not evaluated. In general, results in greater achievement.

5. Cross Grade/Multi-Age Grouping

- Placed in a higher grade (cross grade) or in a non graded room (multi-grade)
- Allowed to work at the grade where they are functioning.
- E.g. 4th grader sent to 6th gr math. Results are positive.
- Teachers report academic and leadership growth.
- High level of independence required. Careful consideration of who will thrive.

6. Resource Room Pull-Out Enrichment Centers

- Students with identifiable talents selected to participate in short term resource room pull out to develop talent areas.
- E.g., Top creative writers work with an author for a 6 wk writers workshop OR top science students work with a university scientist on a particular phenomenon. Could be a leadership academy.
- Results: Positive self-concept and self-esteem but a disconnect to real schooling, even when programs designed to fit the regular curriculum.

Critical Considerations

- **Administrator Factors**
 - Attitudes
 - Selection options
 - Identification process
- **Teacher Factors**
 - Views of grouping options
 - Background and experiences with GT students
- **Curriculum Factors**
 - What is taught more important than how kids are grouped or organized.
 - Staff development, materials
 - Assessment of achievement and attitudes



Closure

- Questions:
- Comments:
- Next Steps:

