

Hello, and welcome back to Classroom Solutions audio series. Today we are going to discuss two kinds of student grouping. Heterogeneous and homogeneous. Let's first start with the difference between the two groups. Heterogeneous is grouping students of different skill levels, and homogeneous is grouping the same skill levels together.

Both ways to group students together are not right or wrong but accomplish different goals within the classroom. We are going to talk about the pros and cons of each type of grouping and when and where they would be most appropriate to do so.

First, let's discuss heterogeneous grouping. Some of the pros of the heterogeneous grouping are that your higher-level skilled students can help your lower-level students. If a student doesn't understand a direction or can't read an assignment, it is beneficial to have peer helpers. According to research, having immediate feedback from a peer helps to increase the lower-leveled students' performance. However, you must be cautious about over-taxing your higher-level students. This can burden them if they are always helping other students. Having a higher-skill level should not be rewarded with doing more work. It might be a good idea to have a peer tutoring program within your school. Older students from other classrooms can help provide feedback, and the struggling student may be more receptive to feedback when given by an older peer versus a teacher. Places where heterogeneous groupings are appropriate, are group projects and table groups but not necessarily center rotation groups. This brings me to homogeneous grouping.

Homogeneous groupings are more appropriate for students that travel together for centers. This way, you can help target the skills of one particular group. For example, you can have a group of students working on fluency together while another group works on phonics practice. This is where you can really differentiate as well as enrich all of your groups. Students will thrive when they are working at a level that is challenging but not frustrating. Of course, students who are engaged at their level are going to show more progress over time and have more time on task.

However, this is also the challenge of this type of grouping. If the students run into issues, they may not have help from a peer or teacher immediately, creating a few different types of disruptions. The students may need to interrupt the teacher or another peer for help, or they could shut down and stop doing the work altogether, thus stopping the flow of the rotation. This is why it is particularly challenging for the teacher as they need to find the 'baby bear' activity that is engaging but also supported enough so the students are independent.

So, in summary, both types of groupings have their benefits as well as their drawbacks. Teachers should use each type of grouping where its appropriate to do so. Thank you again for joining me on Classroom Solutions audio series. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to reach out via email, and I hope to see you next time.