

## COOPERATIVE GROUPING STRATEGIES

Grouping strategies can be used to organize students into equal or unequal groups of participants depending on the needs of the teacher. This set of strategies offers unique and creative ways to group students based on shared interests and characteristics.

### Toy Car Groups

Issue a toy car (like a Hot Wheels or Tonka car) to each student or allow them to select their favorite from a variety of options. Once every student has a car, assign them to groups based on the characteristics of their car.

*Grouping characteristics may include:*

- Car color
- Type of car (SUV, sportscar, truck)
- Car function (construction vehicle, family car, emergency vehicle)
- Model (Ford, Chevrolet, Jeep)
- Physical characteristics (sun roof, hatchback, number of doors)

### Puzzle Pieces

Give each student a piece of a puzzle. You can make your own puzzle pieces or use some from a storebought puzzle. Task students with finding a partner, or multiple partners, that have pieces that fit their own piece.

### Flower Cards

Laminate fresh or fake flowers to create flower cards or print pictures of flowers. Issue a card to each student and assign them to groups based on the characteristics of their flowers.

*Grouping characteristics may include:*

- Flower color
- Type of flower (rose, tulip, pansy, etc.)
- Stage of bloom (bud, full bloom, multiple blooms)

### Leaf Cards

As with the flower method, laminate leaves or print pictures of leaves to create cards. Issue a card to each student and assign them to groups based on the characteristics of their leaves.

*Grouping characteristics may include:*

- Leaf type (tree, flowering plant, fern)
- Tree leaf type (oak, maple, pecan)
- Seasonal leaves (spring, autumn)

### **Rotating Assignments**

Assign equal numbers of students to various tasks required by an assignment. For example, one student to read a passage, another student to read questions about the passage, and one student to write answers. Have students form groups by finding other students assigned to different tasks.

### **Alphabetical Groups**

Grouping students by last name is an easy but overused method of organizing learners. However, you may choose to use unique methods of alphabetical grouping like organizing students based on the last letter of their first name or last name.

### **Number Groups**

This method commonly involves giving each student a number (one, two, three, four, five, etc.) and instructing them to form a group with classmates that share their number. You may also choose to divide the class in half based on odd vs. even numbers.

### **Grab Bag Groups**

Have students choose an item from a grab bag and organize them into group based on their item color, number, brand, shape, etc.

*Items could include:*

- Cards
- Geometric shapes
- Pieces of candy
- Colored paper
- Colored toothpicks

### **Personal Characteristics**

You can choose to organize students based on characteristics they have in common.

*Characteristics could include:*

- Height (similar heights or height ranges)
- Birth month
- Hair color
- Color of socks
- Brand of shoe/type of shoe

### Citations

Walser, N. (1998). *Multi-age classrooms: An age-old grouping method is still evolving*. *The Harvard Education Letter*, 14(1), 2–4.

Kizlik, B. (n.d.). *Ability and instructional grouping Information*. Adprima. <http://www.adprima.com/grouping.htm>

Valentino, C. (2000). *Flexible grouping*. Education Place.

Lathan, J. (2023, November 30). *8 cooperative learning strategies to use in the classroom*. University of San Diego Online Degrees. <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/cooperative-learning-strategies/>