

***PEDAGOGY OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE, 1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR, COURSE-7(A), UNIT -03,  
STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT  
IN PHYSICAL SCIENCE , -----BY RAJU KUMAR  
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Heterogeneous groups in educational settings include students from a wide range of instructional levels.

Heterogeneous groups contrast directly with homogeneous groups, in which all students perform at roughly the same instructional level.

Heterogeneous grouping is a type of distribution of students among various classrooms of a certain grade within a school. In this method, children of approximately the same age are placed in different classrooms in order to create a relatively even distribution of students of different abilities as well as different educational and emotional needs. Gifted children will be scattered throughout the various grade level classrooms, rather than all together in one classroom.

Homogeneous grouping is the placement of students of similar abilities into one classroom. Although there may be a range of abilities in one classroom, it is more limited than the range found in the heterogeneous classroom. All gifted children within the same grade level will be in the same classroom, for instance.

**Examples of Heterogeneous Groups**

A teacher may deliberately pair low-, medium-, and high-level readers (as measured by reading assessments) together in a heterogeneous group to read and analyze a given text together. This type of cooperative group can improve outcomes for all of the students as the advanced readers can tutor their lower-performing peers.

Rather than putting gifted students, average students, and special-needs students in separate classrooms, school administrators may divide students into classes with a relatively even distribution of abilities and

needs. Teachers may then further divide the group during instructional periods using either the heterogeneous or homogeneous model.

### **Need/Advantages:**

The needs of individual students may not be fully met in a heterogeneous classroom environment, but for average students, it can be helpful to be exposed to students with different learning skills and styles. It's up to parents and educators to decide which type of learning structure works best for each student.

There are many social benefits to heterogeneous classrooms. When students in gifted or special education programs go to special instruction classes common in homogeneous classes. Students may feel stigmatized socially if they have to go to a "special" class every day and could find themselves the targets of bullies.

Heterogeneous classrooms present different challenges for teachers. On the one hand, a teacher has to try to be sure everyone in a heterogeneous classroom is being challenged and learning the material.

Gifted students in heterogeneous classes may not fare as well as their peers. They may feel pressure to be "second teachers," that is, help students who are not grasping the material as readily. These gifted students may also grow impatient and bored at the pace of a traditional classroom, which can lead to frustration. Since the majority of students in a classroom are average students, classrooms tend to be geared toward their learning needs. That means, for example, that even if a gifted child starts kindergarten not knowing how to read, a full week spent on only one letter of the alphabet is unnecessary. The lessons can become frustrating.

Gifted children need plenty of intellectual stimulation, and if they don't get it from their teachers, they will often provide it for themselves.

But heterogeneous classrooms may help students who have social anxiety or learning disabilities to learn much-needed social skills.

Kids who take "special education" programs may have some problems keeping up in heterogeneous environments, but that should be weighed against the possible stigma they may face if they are grouped in a homogeneous classroom.

For students of lesser ability, being included in a heterogeneous group rather than pigeonholed into a homogeneous group reduces their risk of being stigmatized. And labels that classify academic skill can become self-fulfilling prophecies as teachers may lower expectations for students in special-needs classrooms. They may not challenge those students to perform well and may rely on limited curriculum that restricts exposure to concepts some students could, in fact, learn.

A heterogeneous group gives advanced students a chance to mentor their peers. All members of the group may interact more to help each other understand the concepts being taught.