

***PEDAGOGY OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE, 1ST YEAR, COURSE-7(A), UNIT -03,
STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT
IN PHYSICAL SCIENCE , -----BY RAJU KUMAR
(LECTURE SERIES NO.- 33)***

Disadvantages

Students, parents, and teachers may prefer to work in a homogeneous group or be part of a homogeneous classroom. They may see an educational advantage or just feel more comfortable working with peers of similar ability.

Advanced students in a heterogeneous group may at times feel forced into a leadership role they do not want. Rather than learning new concepts at their own speed, they must slow down to assist other students or curtail their own study to proceed at the rate of the whole class. In a heterogeneous grouping, advanced students may take the role of co-teacher, rather than advancing their own skills.

Students of lesser abilities may fall behind in a heterogeneous group and may be criticized for slowing the rate of the whole class or group. In a study or work group, unmotivated or academically challenged students may be ignored rather than assisted by their peers.

Teachers will need more time to develop and try out new strategies and methods for heterogeneous classes. But most important, the group noted, the concept of student as worker and teacher as coach must be employed in the heterogeneous classroom. If students and teachers interact using this approach, many of the pressing problems of differing ability levels can turn into actual assets, through peer tutoring and increased responsibility for individual research.

Still, many teachers spoke of their frustration with “forced” heterogeneous grouping, and especially of the burdens that it places on more capable students. “How am I supposed to meet the needs of students,” asked one teacher despairingly, “when they are so diverse in

academic ability, social and physical maturity, emotional stability, ethnic background, and socioeconomic status?” Ninety percent of his energy is focused on ten percent of the kids, said one inner-city teacher. And the more skilled kids themselves complain, others noted, when they perceive that they are being used as classroom caretakers.

Management of a Heterogeneous Classroom

Teachers need to remain aware and recognize when a heterogeneous grouping does not function properly for a student at any level. Teachers should support advanced students by supplying additional academic challenges and help students who fall behind receive the assistance they need to catch up. And students in the middle of a heterogeneous group face the risk of getting lost in the shuffle as the teacher concentrates on the special needs of students at either end of the spectrum.