

FIGURE 12

Three Kinds of Groups

Flexible Groups	Ability/Aptitude Groups	Cooperative Groups
Determined by teacher perceptions or evidence of learning needs.	Determined largely by scores on standardized tests of intelligence or aptitude.	Determined by the teacher or student choice.
Based on specific learning needs, strengths, or preferences.	Based on general performance or achievement.	Usually random as to student ability or learning preferences.
Fluid group membership.	Rigid group membership.	Fluid group membership.
Groups work on different activities based on needs, strengths, or preferences.	Groups all tend to work on the same or similar activities.	Each group works on the same task or on one facet of the same task.
Students are grouped and regrouped as appropriate for particular activities.	Students may or may not be regrouped within the classroom based on instructional needs.	Students may be purposely mixed as to learning needs and academic strengths to provide peer instruction or leadership within groups.
Occurs as needed.	Occurs daily.	Occurs when a task seems appropriate.
Grouping based on individual students' skill proficiency, content mastery, learning preferences or interests.	Grouping based on perceptions about innate ability.	Grouping for the purpose of developing collaborative skills.