

Group Size and Seating Arrangement



Decision about size of a group and seating arrangement for group work depends on factors

- class and classroom sizes
- availability of resources (both ICT and non ICT)
- pupils' age and previous experience of working in groups and
- *most importantly*, the **objective** of group work.



such as:

Features of group sizes and recommendations for use:

Group size	Formal features i.e. attributes of group size	Process features i.e. how group of this size functions	Recommended when...	Seating Arrangement
2-3	<p>Equal agreement as well as majority- split in the group.</p> <p>Ample time for each member to contribute.</p> <p>Loss of even one group member can affect outcome.</p>	<p>Greatest possibility of sharing very strong opinions.</p> <p>Easiest to ensure that all members have learnt.</p>	<p>Ideal for working with computers.</p> <p>Useful for drill and practice of previous concepts as well as exploring new concepts.</p> <p>When sharing of personal experiences (specially on sensitive issues) is expected.</p> <p>When use of one resource is expected by all group members at the same time.</p>	<p>In a line next to each other ○○ ○○○</p> <p>In a line with ICT in front ○○ ○○○</p> <p style="text-align: center;">□ □</p> <p>In a triangle ○○ ○</p>
4-6	<p>Chances of agreement, equal splits as well as majority-minority splits.</p> <p>Reasonable time for each</p>	<p>Optimum possibility of listening to many ideas through brainstorming <i>and</i> every member getting a chance to contribute.</p>	<p>When objective is to explore a new concept rather than drill and practice.</p> <p>When turns can be taken to</p>	<p>As a square or rectangle ○○ ○○○ ○○ ○○○</p> <p>May or may not be around a table. Floor is</p>

	member to contribute.	<p>Works well if group members have defined roles (to ensure that everybody learns and to avoid free rider effect).</p> <p>Group pressure can make members conform to norms.</p>	<p>use resources within the group.</p> <p>For group work outside the classroom as peers ensure each other's safety and peer pressure keeps focus on learning.</p> <p>Useful when the expected outcome is in written form as well as performance form (drama).</p>	<p>also a good alternative.</p> <p>As a horseshoe</p> <p style="text-align: right;">U</p> <p>In a circle</p> <p style="text-align: right;">O</p>
7-12	<p>Greater chances of equal splits and majority-minority splits.</p> <p>Less time for each member to contribute.</p>	<p>More possibility of hearing ideas than chances of contribution.</p> <p>Group pressure is high.</p> <p>Active structuring of group tasks and assignment of roles is required.</p>	<p>When outcome is expected in the form of performance, such as drama or puppet show as more time can be given for each presentation.</p> <p>When concept requires further sub-grouping.</p>	<p>In a circle</p> <p style="text-align: right;">O</p> <p>As a horseshoe</p> <p style="text-align: right;">U</p> <p>In subgroups of 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 (see above for arrangement)</p>

Group work with group size more than 12 pupils is not recommended as it is practically similar to working in the whole class.

GROUP TASKS

1. Below are some lesson objectives to be achieved through group work. Discuss which group size and seating arrangement you will use for achieving these objectives. Briefly write reasons for your choices.

Lesson Objective	Group size?	Seating arrangement?	Reasons?
To read a historical story and present the events as a time-line on a chart.			
To work out problems on problems on division on a calculator and discuss instances when a remainder is left.			
To learn about changes in boys and girls during puberty.			
To identify examples of solids and liquids that can dissolve in water.			
To collect information about the average income from 20 families and present them as bar graphs.			

2. The other groups are working on different aspects of group work. For their benefit, prepare a presentation of about 3-5 minutes on 'group size and seating arrangement' with examples of objectives that you can achieve through various compositions. Of course add reasons to your examples...!

(If you were not a member of the group working on *Group Size and Seating Arrangement*, you can use this space for writing your thoughts while watching the presentation.)

Reference: Atherton J S (2011) *Teaching and Learning; Group size* [On-line: UK] retrieved 12 May 2012 from http://www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/group_size.htm

Read more: [Group size http://www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/group_size.htm#ixzz1ufDvEDvs](http://www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/group_size.htm#ixzz1ufDvEDvs)
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