

Using Groups

Courtesy of Hal White and Deb Allen



*Institute for Transforming
Undergraduate Education*

University of Delaware





Video Clip

<http://www.udel.edu/pbl/groups-in-action/mpegs/dawn.mpg>



Questions to Consider

What is wrong with this group?

What could be done to help this group work better?

Could this situation have been prevented?



Videotape Credits

Author:

“Dawn’s Eight O’Clock” – Harold White

Director:

Nancy King

Producers:

Deborah Allen and Harold White

Student Actors:

Melissa Reddish, Michelle Lyons, Eric Moskal,
Crystal Mack, Amanda Simons



Suggestions for Using Groups

Set the stage early, introduce idea of group work.

Form heterogeneous groups.

Use permanent groups.

Rotate roles of responsibility.

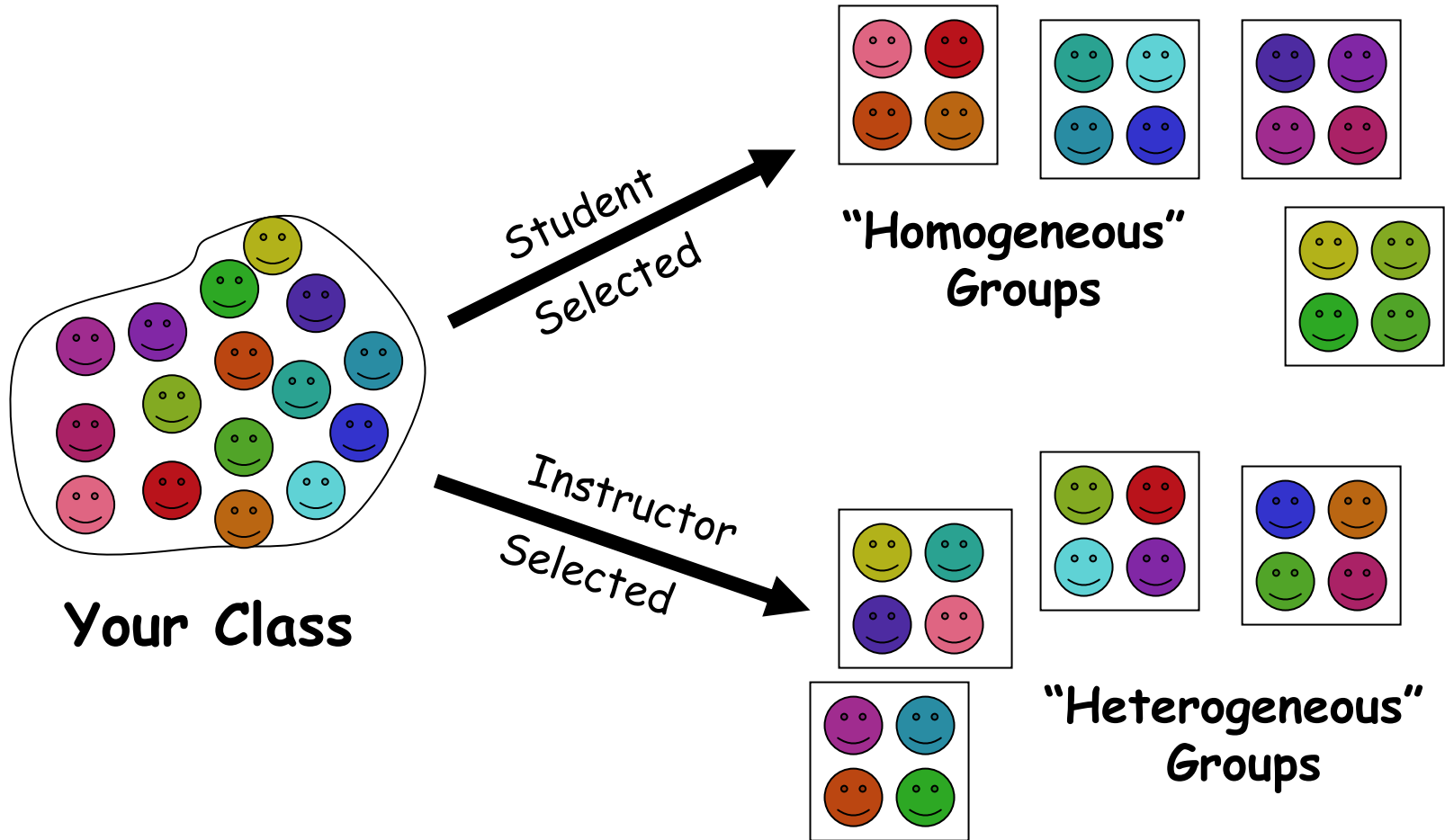
Rely on group-selected ground rules.

Conduct peer evaluations.



Forming Groups

Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous





What Aspects of Heterogeneity are Important for You?

Skills?

Age?

Major?

Personality Type?

Gender?

Learning Style?

Ethnicity?

Academic Record?

Factors to Consider When Forming Groups



Is the size of the group appropriate for the task?

For this task, is it better to select the students for the groups or allow students to select their group?

For this task, is it better to form heterogeneous or homogeneous groups?

Will you need to keep the group together or change membership throughout the semester or problem?

Are students with different ability levels placed in the same group?

Factors to Consider When Forming Groups



Are the personalities of students in the group compatible?

Are some members likely to be dominated by others? (by virtue of gender, cultural differences)

Does the physical arrangement of the room affect how you need to select groups?



Roles of Responsibility

Discussion Leader

Keeps group on track; maintains full participation

Recorder

Records assignments, strategies, unresolved issues, data; convenes group outside of class

Reporter

Reports out during whole class discussion; writes up final draft of assignments

Accuracy Coach

Checks group understanding; finds resources



Sample Ground Rules

Come to class on time every day

Come to class having done the assignment and prepared to discuss it

Must notify members of the group ahead of time if must miss class for any reason

Be willing to share information

Respect the views, values, and ideas of other members of the group

If members of the group violate these ground rules, other members of the group may impose the following consequences:



Peer Evaluation

Some general suggestions:

Use predetermined written criteria that focus primarily on behaviors.

Do at least 2 times per semester.

Factor results into students' grades.

Summarize results and distribute summaries.

Keep the process simple.

Incorporate into group assignments.