

Groups

Grouping Strategies

Grouping decisions involve the size of the groups, who is in the group, the roles assigned to different group members, and the tasks assigned to the groups themselves.

Different project activities lend themselves to different grouping arrangements. Some activities may best be accomplished by students working by themselves. Other activities may lend themselves to students participating in pairs, in small groups, or as a whole class. Grouping decisions should reflect the nature of the activity and the learning goals envisioned. For example:

Group Size Considerations

SIZE OF GROUP	BEST USES
Individuals (students working alone)	Learning (and teaching) fundamental skills. Researching in the library or on the Web.
Pairs	Providing one-on-one feedback, editing, peer assessment Providing one-to-one support or training
Small Groups	Working on tasks that have multiple dimensions or steps. Sharing perspectives or reaching consensus.
Mid-Size Groups	Holding discussions, debates, role play activities
Whole Class	Presenting orientations, debriefings, progress checks

The location of project activities also influences the size of groups. In many projects, each major activity might have a different location. For example:

Potential Project Sites

LOCATION	USEFUL FOR
In-class	Orientation, coordination, group work, etc.
Home	Generating ideas, revising work, reading, note taking
Library	Research, reading, using technology
Other classroom	Presenting, getting feedback, gathering data
Community	Gathering data, observing, interviewing, collaborating
With mentor	Modeling, getting advice, getting feedback
With electronic partner	Collaborating, sharing information, getting feedback