



# **Promoting Mixed-Ability Grouping in Physical Education: An Investigation of Inclusivity in Pedagogic Practice**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the perspectives of physical education (PE) teachers from the municipalities of Antipas, Arakan, Magpet, and President Roxas regarding the promotion and implementation of mixed grouping in inclusive learning environments. Using purposive sampling, PE teachers from these municipalities were selected to provide in-depth insights into the benefits, challenges, and strategies associated with mixed grouping in PE. The study employed qualitative phenomenology to understand the lived experiences of the teachers, and data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Key themes that emerged included inclusivity, collaboration and peer learning, social interaction and support, and diverse group composition. Teachers emphasized the importance of creating inclusive environments where students of varying abilities, genders, and backgrounds could interact and collaborate. The study also highlighted the significance of skill development and support, as higher-skilled students could guide their peers, promoting mutual learning. Social interaction and group dynamics were also identified as essential elements, as they fostered communication, teamwork, and emotional growth. Furthermore, the importance of group composition and fairness, along with clear instructions and role clarity, was stressed as vital to ensure equal participation and the effective delivery of learning. Environmental and safety considerations were also noted as crucial in ensuring that all students could engage safely and comfortably in physical activities. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on mixed grouping strategies in PE and offers valuable insights into the factors that influence successful inclusive learning practices in local educational settings.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Inclusive pedagogy highlights that everyone in the class is special. The teacher knows no bound in responding to the needs of the student. Inclusive classroom assumes that teachers are in the highest forms of consideration especially on the types of learners that they have. Not all in the class have the same capabilities. Each learner is unique with relative talents and skills that teachers can hone to make them the best version of themselves.

It cannot be denied that not all students would have the interest towards the activities in Physical Education (Evans, 2017; Giese & Ruin, 2018). The differences that each learner showed are an indication of challenges to teachers (Tasngariduo, 2017; Soini et al., 2023). As they modify their strategies, they need to be always considerate to their learners who tend not want to take the lead in the activities. The promotion of mixed-abilities grouping in Physical Education opens the doors of opportunities not only to students but to teachers as well (Blegur et al., 2023; Wilkinson et al., 2016).

Mixed grouping has been widely practiced in language teaching, mathematics (Boyd, 2020; Francome & Hewitt, 2020), and sciences (Taylor et al., 2017; Towers et al., 2020). Limited studies were recorded on its applicability in Physical Education (Pereira et al., 2015; Salvador-Gracia et al., 2020). With the participation of Filipino teachers, this widens the gap in the local aspects. In addition, this will utilize the qualitative-phenomenology which is a different methodology used by previous studies (Han et al., 2016; Sturm et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the timeliness of this study indicates the need to listen to the lived experiences of public-school teachers especially those who are specializing in Physical Education. The conduct of this study will be the source of information in the limited literature in the Philippine contexts. It is within this premise that the researcher is motivated to explore mixed-grouping that leads to inclusiveness in the Physical Education pedagogic practice. However, research in the context in local parlance is not yet explored.

### ***Research Questions***

This study was conducted to determine the efficacy of mixed-grouping in physical education that promotes the delivery of inclusive pedagogic practice. In this manner, the researcher investigated the following sub-problems:

#### **Study 1 Mixed Grouping in Physical Education: An Investigation of Inclusive Learning in Junior High School Teaching**

1. How does mixed grouping in physical education promote inclusive learning;

2. How does mixed grouping in physical education improve the delivery of learning?

### **Study 2 Suggestions and Policy Development on the Integration of Mixed-Grouping in Physical Education**

1. What suggestions can Physical Education teachers share to improve mixed grouping as an approach towards inclusive learning; and
2. What policy brief on mixed grouping in physical education can be proposed to strengthen the inclusive learning in schools?

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## **METHODOLOGY**

This section provides the methodology which incorporates the study's design, locale, informants, procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

### **Research Design**

This study employed the qualitative-phenomenology as a research design. Qualitative research aims to build a holistic, primarily narrative, description to inform the researcher's understanding of the occurrence of the phenomenon in a social and cultural context (Flick, 2018). In addition, it is a combination of observations, interviews, and the review of documents (King et al., 2018; Tracy, 2019). Hence, it gives the significance of finding the variables in the natural setting in which they are found. The gathering of the data is made through the utilization of open-ended questions (Forester & Sullivan, 2018).

Meanwhile, phenomenology intends to focus on a detailed description of the phenomenon being explored before the researcher could reach at interpreting the descriptions or interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The purpose of phenomenology is to look closely at the phenomenon under study to give an in-depth meaning to the lived experiences of the participants (Qutoshi, 2018).

This study is qualitative since the researcher did not use any statistics in the interpretation of the study. It is the lived experiences of the Physical Education teachers relative to mixed-grouping that was determined. Phenomenology on the other hand, will draw the line of how teachers integrate inclusivity in enhancing the students' well-being and capability.

### **Research Participants**

There were twenty-five participants in this study, the Key Informants. Each has its own roles in the provision of the significant data. The Informants participated in the Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). There were 25 individuals who served in the interview. They were selected through purposive sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). Selection criteria were used to provide a clear limitation of the number of informants and participants.

1. A public-school teacher;
2. Specializing in Physical Education; and
3. Has been in the teaching profession for at least 3 years.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instruments guided the researches in the gathering of the data. An interview guide reflected the questions which was asked to the informants and participants. Also, the researcher used an audio and video recorder.

### **Data Analysis**

The data gathered in this study was analyzed using Colaizzi's method. Colaizzi's (1978) process of analysis and identification of themes were used in this study. This process offered insights taken from the personal perspectives of how the audit train in a phenomenological research study and navigated issues of rigorous process and trustworthiness. The following Colaizzi's process for phenomenological data analysis (Fretchette et al., 2020) will be utilized.

First, familiarization of the data was conducted by the researcher. She reads and rereads all the narratives of the participants and developed a deeper understanding of their experiences. Significant statements relative to the phenomenon under study were extracted from each transcript. Identification of the statements from the accounts was done which have bearings to the phenomenon under study.

Next, is the formulation of meanings. In this manner, the researcher determined the purport of the relevant phenomenon that occurred from the careful consideration of the important statements. Thus, flexibility of the researcher has to bracket herself relative to the pre-suppositions in order to stick closely to the occurrence of the phenomenon as Physical Education teachers on mixed-ability grouping.

During the clustering of the themes, the identification of meanings was extracted by the researcher that showed commonality across all the accounts of the participants. Again, bracketing of pre-suppositions was observed to avoid the potential influence of existing theory. After this, the exhaustive description was developed by the researcher herself.

Lastly, there was the seeking verification of the fundamental structure. In this process, the researcher returned the fundamental structure statement to all participants and asks them whether it captures their experiences of the phenomenon being investigated. Credibility also involved triangulation where the participants confirmed their responses after the transcription and analysis was done. This is essential to attest to the validity of the data gathered.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the responses of the informants. The foregoing discussions is highlighted.

### Phase 1

#### Themes on the promotion of mixed grouping in physical education

##### in inclusive learning

**Inclusivity.** Promoting mixed grouping in physical education ensures that students of different abilities have the chance to work together. This approach allows students to learn from one another and build relationships. It also creates an environment where all students feel valued and included. By participating in activities together, students can develop mutual respect and understanding. This method helps break down barriers between students with different abilities. It encourages collaboration and teamwork, making physical education accessible to everyone.

Mixed grouping allows students to engage with peers from different backgrounds and abilities, promoting a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

*"Mixed grouping means grouping regardless of gender, ethnicity, and level of performance." (Informant 4 Q 1.1 L 61-63)*

As well, it creates a setting where all students can participate equally promotes a sense of belonging and encourages collaboration among diverse learners.

*"For me, mixed grouping means creating a setting where all students can take part in activities regardless of their gender, background, skill levels, and physical abilities." (Informant 18 Q 1.1 L 243-248)*

In addition,

*"Mixed grouping means combining the students regardless of skill levels, genders, and group affiliation. It means having a diverse class and inclusive learning environment." (Informant 19 Q 1.1 L 261-265)*

Also, it ensures a more inclusive environment where all students have the opportunity to contribute and learn from one another.

*"For me, mixed grouping means creating groups regardless of students' abilities, capabilities, skills, learning styles, gender, age, and many others." (Informant 23 Q 1.1 L 321-324)*

One of the significant benefits of mixed grouping is the opportunity for students to develop vital social skills. When students of different abilities and backgrounds collaborate, they learn important life skills, such as communication, empathy, and teamwork. Studies by Oliver and Horne (2016) emphasize that mixed grouping in PE helps students build strong social bonds by encouraging interaction across ability levels.

**Collaboration and Peer Learning.** As teachers promote mixed grouping, it encourages students to collaborate and work together. Students with different abilities can learn from one another by sharing their knowledge and skills. This approach allows them to build teamwork and communication skills. It also helps break down barriers between students of varying abilities.

*"In the context of physical education, mixed grouping for me means putting students of different skills level or different abilities together in the same group. This will help every student to learn from each other and also to work as a team. Instead of dividing students by how good they are, everyone needs to work and share their ideas with others." (Informant 6 Q 1.1 L 82-90)*

Collaboration in physical education promotes cooperation among students with diverse abilities, enhancing their learning experience and skill development.

*"I believe mixed grouping provides various benefits in the teaching and learning process most especially in physical education. One benefit would be the so-called 'collaboration' which encourages cooperation among others/students with varying abilities in terms of skills and knowledge towards sports." (Informant 13 Q 1.1 L 190-196)*

Finally,

*"In physical education, mixed grouping refers to organizing students of different abilities. This promotes inclusivity, peer learning, and social interaction, allowing students to support and challenge each other in a diverse setting." (Informant 15 Q 1.1 L 244-249)*

Mixed-ability grouping in PE has been associated with positive student relations, where students appreciate peer assistance and are willing to provide support. This approach aligns with values of equality and inclusion, contributing to a harmonious learning atmosphere. The role of teachers in implementing inclusive physical activities is crucial.

##### Social Interaction and Support.

Mixed grouping in physical education involves creating diverse teams that promote collaboration, inclusivity, and teamwork, while reducing competition and enhancing the overall learning experience.

*"For me, in the context of physical education, mixed grouping refers to organizing students into diverse teams or groups that include varying skill levels, gender, and background. This approach encourages collaboration, inclusivity, and social interaction, allowing students to learn from one another and build teamwork skills. It can also help to reduce competition and promote a supportive environment, making physical activity more enjoyable for everyone." (Informant 3 Q 1.1 L 27-38)*

This approach promotes social interaction, allows stronger students to lead, and gives those needing extra support a chance to improve in a supportive environment.

*"For me, it encourages social interaction within groups. It also allows stronger students to take on leadership roles while providing opportunities for those who may need extra support to improve their skills in a supportive setting." (Informant 7 Q 1.1 L 101-106)*

As such, it organizes learners with varying characteristics, promoting social interaction, cooperation, and ensuring full participation from all students.

*"In the context of physical education, mixed grouping refers to organizing learners in groups with different characteristics. It may be grouped according to their gender, skill level, and age or grade. These mixed groupings encourage learners to have social interaction, cooperation, and enhance everyone to have participation that no learners are left behind." (Informant 16 Q 1.1 L 265-273)*

And of course,

*"When it comes to learning, especially in physical education where movements like physical activity and exercise are necessary to develop and remaster, an individual must have a group to be motivated and can gain support from his/her peers, that they will be addressed according to their learning needs." (Informant 22 Q 1.1 L 302-309)*

The social support aspect of mixed grouping is particularly beneficial for students who may feel isolated due to their abilities or disabilities. A study by McGuire and Scott (2018) examined the impact of peer support in inclusive PE environments and found that mixed grouping helps students build peer networks that offer emotional and academic support. Students with higher skill levels act as role models or mentors for less skilled students, providing guidance and encouragement. This peer support not only enhances the self-esteem and confidence of students with lower abilities but also helps develop leadership and empathy skills in more skilled students. Peer networks formed in these settings are essential for creating a sense of belonging, reducing feelings of exclusion, and supporting the personal growth of all students (McGuire & Scott, 2018).

### **Diverse Group Composition**

Though this approach, it organized students based on their strengths, abilities, and habits to encourage diverse learning experiences.

*"Mixed grouping in PE for me, it is defined as combining learners depending on their strength, ability, and habit." (Informant 1 Q 1.1 L 1-3)*

Grouping students of varying abilities in physical education ensures that they receive the same instructions and resources, regardless of age or academic level.

*"Mixed grouping in the context of physical education is the educational practice of grouping students of varying abilities together in the same space to receive the same instructions and resources. Students may be put into groups with someone of different age, and at different academic levels from themselves." (Informant 2 Q 1.1 L 11-18)*

Similarly, an informant shared that:

*"Mixed grouping is a strategic approach in teaching and learning of physical education where the students are grouped regardless of sex, age, ability, and gender preference. It is a common approach among classroom settings to encourage mentoring, leadership, and utilizing skilled students to lead group practices and performances." (Informant 9 Q 1.1 L 138-145)*

Mixed grouping combines students with varying strengths and weaknesses to enhance their collective learning experience.

*"Mixed grouping is to encourage inclusivity, collaboration, and peer learning by combining students with different strengths and weaknesses." (Informant 17 Q 1.1 L 294-297)*

Mixed-ability grouping has been linked to improvements in both social and cognitive development. A study by McDougall and Skidmore (2018) highlighted that when students of differing skill levels work together, they learn from one another, improving not only their physical abilities but also their social skills, such as communication and teamwork. Lower-skilled students benefit from observing and interacting with their more skilled peers, while higher-skilled students gain leadership experience by mentoring others.

### **Themes on the improvement of delivery of learning through mixed grouping**

**Peer Learning and Collaboration.** Mixed grouping encourages a learning environment where students with varying abilities can share knowledge, strategies, and skills with one another. This approach enhances the learning experience by allowing students to actively participate in teaching and learning, thus deepening their understanding. Peer learning also builds a collaborative spirit among students, reducing barriers between different skill levels and promoting teamwork. By pairing students with different strengths, they can support each other and develop a shared learning experience, increasing both engagement and retention of physical education concepts.

Facilitating peer learning and collaboration in physical education through strategies like partner activities and group challenges creates a supportive environment that helps students learn from each other and build important life skills.

*In facilitating peer learning and collaboration in physical education can be achieved through various strategies like partner activities, group challenges, reflection sessions, rotating roles, and inclusive games. These approaches create a supportive environment where students can learn from one another, build relationships, and develop life skills. (Informant 3 Q 2.1 L 26-34)*

Those with more skills can serve as models to guide and support students who may be struggling.

*Mixed grouping helps students to learn from each other and they can work together. Students with more skill can stand as models to demonstrate and guide the students who are not performing well. (Informant 6 Q 2.1 L 69-73)*

Students of different abilities and experiences creates opportunities for them to learn from each other and share diverse perspectives.

*Combining students of different abilities and experiences which encourages them to learn from one another. (Informant 7 Q 2.1 L 87-89)*

The ability to collaborate in mixed groupings not only enhances academic learning but also plays a significant role in the development of social skills, such as communication, teamwork, and empathy. As pointed out by Hill and Blom (2019), students working in mixed-ability groups are more likely to engage in collaborative problem-solving and share ideas. This collaborative process can result in a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. The research highlighted that students with diverse abilities can share strategies, and by teaching each other, they build stronger social connections and improve interpersonal relationships. Collaboration in mixed groups is crucial for promoting inclusive learning, as it breaks down social barriers and provides students with the tools to work effectively with others from diverse backgrounds and abilities.

**Skill Development and Support.** In mixed grouping, students with higher skill levels can mentor their peers, offering guidance and sharing techniques, which strengthens both the mentor's and the learner's abilities. This reciprocal learning process allows for better retention and skill development, as students can observe, practice, and receive constructive feedback from their peers. Additionally, students with lower skill levels benefit from the support of their more experienced peers, allowing them to improve in a more comfortable, collaborative environment. As a result, students develop a range of skills, both in their physical abilities and in their social interactions.

Grouping students with varying skill levels allows those with more ability to guide and demonstrate, helping less skilled students improve through peer support.

*Mixed grouping helps students to learn from each other and they can work together. Students with more skill can stand as models to demonstrate and guide the students who are not performing well. (Informant 6 Q 2.1 L 69-73)*

Grouping students of varying abilities promotes cooperation, allowing them to share ideas and collaborate effectively on tasks and projects.

*Mixed ability students group provide various benefits in the teaching and learning process. First is collaboration. It encourages cooperation among students with varying abilities, enabling them to collaborate on assignments and projects. This fosters sharing of ideas. (Informant 8 Q 2.1 L 93-99)*

It encourages leadership development and the exchange of diverse ideas among students with varying skills and abilities.

*Mixed grouping can let the students be a leader, and since their skills or abilities vary, different ideas will arise. Some will be leaders, some will be subordinates. (Informant 9 Q 2.1 L 113-116)*

Corollary to this,

*Mixed grouping in PE significantly facilitates peer learning and collaboration by balanced skill distribution. With this, higher skilled students can help others by demonstrating techniques or offering advice. While less experienced students benefits by observing and learning directly from their peers, who may explain or model skills in a more relatable way than a teacher. (Informant 16 Q 2.1 L 221-230)*

Collaboration among students with different abilities enhances skill development and fosters important social skills like communication and teamwork.

*The collaboration of students with different abilities allows stronger students to assist their classmates in improvement, creating a space for sharing and strategies. This process aids in the development of social skills like communication and teamwork. (Informant 18 Q 2.1 L 283-288)*

The role of teachers in facilitating skill development within mixed groups is crucial to creating an inclusive learning environment. Research by Hill et al. (2018) highlights that teachers' facilitation of group dynamics and task structuring in mixed-ability settings leads to better skill acquisition for all students. Teachers can provide differentiated tasks that are accessible to students at various skill levels while ensuring that the challenges are appropriate and stimulating for all. By carefully assigning roles within groups and providing timely feedback, teachers support skill development, helping students feel confident in their abilities. The study further suggests that the presence of a teacher who actively monitors progress and offers guidance ensures that no student is left behind, and skill development is maximized across the group.

**Social Interaction and Group Dynamics.** Mixed grouping implies a sense of belonging and camaraderie among students, helping them feel more comfortable and confident in expressing themselves. As students work together, they build strong social bonds, which promote a more inclusive and positive learning environment. This approach not only improves communication and teamwork but also supports the development of emotional

intelligence, such as empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution. The collaborative nature of mixed groups ensures that students interact with a diverse range of peers, enhancing their social skills and broadening their perspectives.

This approach helps learners feel more comfortable with their classmates, boosting their communication skills.

*It will make learners to be more comfortable in their classmates to increase their communication skills. (Informant 1 Q 2.1 L 1-3)*

Camaraderie is built as all members are encouraged to share their ideas and knowledge with one another.

*Camaraderie is fostered and observed and every member is given the chance to share ideas and knowledge. (Informant 12 Q 2.1 L 158-160)*

Mixed grouping creates an inclusive environment where students support and learn from each other, strengthening social bonds in physical education.

*Mixed grouping create a dynamic and engaging learning environment where students can learn from each other, support each other, and build strong social bonds. This contributes to a positive and inclusive physical education for all. (Informant 21 Q 2.1 L 326-331)*

It provides students to share their skills and talents, helping to enhance their emotional intelligence (EQ).

*It can carry learners with high intelligence on different areas. In mixed grouping, everyone can share their skill or talent. Most of all, it can improve their emotional intelligence or EQ. (Informant 22 Q 2.1 L 340-344)*

A study by Coelho and Oliveira (2017) highlighted that mixed-ability groupings foster an inclusive environment where students from diverse social and academic backgrounds can interact, collaborate, and learn from one another. These interactions help break down barriers, promoting social cohesion and enhancing communication skills. The study emphasized that when students from varying abilities are grouped together, they develop stronger interpersonal relationships, as they must collaborate and rely on one another to achieve common goals. This social interaction improves the overall learning experience and helps to create an inclusive and supportive environment in physical education (Coelho & Oliveira, 2017).

**Group Contributions and Responsibility.** In mixed grouping, students are encouraged to take on different roles and contribute to the group's overall success, leveraging their individual strengths. This shared responsibility fosters a sense of accountability and teamwork, ensuring that every student plays a part in achieving the group's goals. Students also learn to appreciate the diverse abilities and perspectives of their peers, which contributes to a collaborative and inclusive environment. By working together towards a common objective, students develop important life skills such as problem-solving, leadership, and adaptability, which extend beyond the physical education context.

*Mixed grouping encourages every group member to give contributions to the group output. It is done through sharing of ideas, abilities, and skills to come up with a collaborative effort in finishing the task. (Informant 23 Q 2.1 L 350-354)*

Students with higher skills lead the tasks, while those with lower skills focus on following instructions.

*In a group where members have varied strengths, each one will take advantage of the skill that they have to come up with a desired group output. (Informant 25 Q 2.1 L 373-376)*

The concept of shared responsibility in mixed groupings is critical for promoting inclusivity and enhancing learning outcomes in physical education. According to a study by Wang and Zhang (2017), when students are grouped with peers of varying abilities, they tend to assume more responsibility for the learning process. Each group member contributes their unique skills and knowledge, which not only supports individual growth but also strengthens group cohesion. The study found that when students share responsibility for group tasks, they are more likely to engage actively in both the learning process and the achievement of collective goals. This increased accountability within mixed groups leads to more effective learning outcomes and promotes a sense of ownership and inclusivity, as each student's contribution is valued.

## Policy Brief

### Introduction

The Importance of Mixed Grouping in Physical Education for Inclusive Learning

Mixed grouping in Physical Education (PE) refers to organizing students into diverse groups regardless of their skill levels, gender, abilities, and other characteristics. This approach is increasingly recognized for its role in fostering an inclusive learning environment, where all students, irrespective of their physical and cognitive abilities, can participate and learn. As educational institutions aim to provide equitable learning opportunities, mixed grouping is a practice that aligns with inclusive education policies, contributing to students' personal growth, social development, and academic success.

### Key Issues

#### 1. Promotes Inclusivity and Equal Participation

By integrating students with varying abilities, mixed grouping ensures that no student is excluded based on skill level or background. Students are encouraged to collaborate and support one another, creating an environment where everyone feels valued. This inclusivity enhances the sense of belonging and helps eliminate the barriers that often segregate students by ability, making PE more accessible and equitable.

#### 2. Encourages Peer Learning and Collaboration

In mixed grouping, students can learn from one another through peer teaching, which enhances the learning process. More skilled students can serve as role models, while less experienced peers benefit from their guidance. By working together, students can share ideas, discuss strategies, and develop a deeper understanding of physical activities.

### 3. Supports Social Interaction and Emotional Development

Mixing students of different backgrounds, abilities, and social dynamics encourages positive social interaction. The diverse nature of mixed groups fosters empathy, cooperation, and respect for differences. Moreover, students develop key social and emotional skills, such as conflict resolution and emotional regulation, which are essential for building positive peer relationships. These skills extend beyond PE and are transferable to other areas of life.

### 4. Enhances Skill Development and Personal Growth

When students are grouped with peers who possess different skills, they are exposed to a wider range of techniques and approaches. This exposure encourages personal growth as students are pushed beyond their comfort zones to develop new skills. For example, less skilled students can learn through observation and direct feedback, while those with higher skill levels have opportunities to refine their leadership abilities by guiding their peers.

## Recommendations

### 1. Clear Group Composition Guidelines

PE teachers should ensure that groups are balanced, taking into consideration a mix of abilities, genders, and personalities. Avoiding grouping students with similar abilities allows for more dynamic interaction and prevents some students from becoming overly dependent on others.

### 2. Ongoing Professional Development for Teachers

Teachers should receive professional development training on how to effectively manage mixed groups. This includes learning how to facilitate collaboration, monitor group dynamics, and provide differentiated support to ensure all students benefit equally from the experience.

## Conclusion

Mixed grouping in PE is a valuable approach that aligns with the principles of inclusive education, fostering an environment where all students can thrive. By promoting collaboration, peer learning, social interaction, and skill development, mixed grouping helps create a supportive, dynamic, and inclusive learning environment. While there are challenges, thoughtful planning, regular group rotations, clear role definitions, and teacher support can significantly enhance the effectiveness of mixed grouping. For these reasons, mixed grouping should be incorporated as a core strategy in PE to ensure that all students receive a comprehensive and inclusive education.

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## IMPLICATIONS

The following implications are drawn based on the findings of the study.

### Implications for Practice

Mixed grouping enhances inclusivity by ensuring that students of various abilities, backgrounds, and genders can interact and learn from one another. Teachers must carefully select group compositions to balance skill levels and ensure no student is excluded or marginalized. This approach contributes to creating a more inclusive environment where every student feels valued, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities.

This provides opportunities for students to take on leadership roles and allows those who are struggling to learn from their peers in a supportive environment. Teachers should facilitate this process by creating opportunities for structured peer teaching and collaborative tasks that focus on both skill development and teamwork. Working in mixed groups encourages positive social interactions and the development of essential emotional and social skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, and empathy. Teachers should be mindful of group dynamics and ensure that students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations, practice cooperation, and develop strong interpersonal relationships.

### Implications for Future Research

The practice of mixed grouping in Physical Education (PE) presents various opportunities for future research. While much has been explored regarding its benefits and challenges, there remain critical areas that need deeper investigation to optimize its implementation. Future research should focus on the long-term impact of mixed grouping on skill development across various student groups. While short-term improvements in social skills and teamwork are well-documented, the sustained impact on physical skill acquisition and performance requires further exploration. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into how mixed-grouping practices influence physical abilities over extended periods.

Research is needed to investigate the role of teacher facilitation in the success of mixed-grouping strategies. Understanding how different teaching styles, instructional strategies, and teacher support can enhance the effectiveness of mixed groups is crucial. Future studies could examine how varying levels of teacher involvement impact students' participation, engagement, and learning outcomes in diverse group settings.

There is a need for more research on the specific social and emotional benefits of mixed grouping in PE. How do mixed-group activities influence self-esteem, social cohesion, and emotional intelligence? Longitudinal studies or case studies on how students' emotional and social skills develop over time

in mixed-group environments would offer valuable insights. Researchers could focus on particular subgroups, such as students with disabilities, to assess how mixed grouping affects their emotional development.

### Concluding Remarks

Mixed grouping in Physical Education (PE) offers a powerful approach to fostering inclusivity, collaboration, and skill development among students of varying abilities, backgrounds, and experiences. By strategically grouping students of different skill levels, genders, and personalities, PE educators can create an environment that encourages peer learning, social interaction, and teamwork. This inclusive approach not only promotes physical development but also helps in the growth of social and emotional skills, such as communication, empathy, and problem-solving.

However, for mixed grouping to be truly effective, it is crucial for educators to consider factors like group composition, clear role assignments, and ongoing support. Teachers must be prepared to facilitate the learning process by providing guidance, ensuring equal participation, and maintaining a supportive atmosphere where all students feel valued and empowered. Regular reshuffling of groups, along with strategies for monitoring group dynamics, can ensure that no student feels isolated or left behind, and that everyone has the opportunity to contribute and learn.

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