LESSONS FROM GROUP WORK ACTIVITIES: A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Gobotsamang Balibi Pitse
University of Botswana
E-mail: Balibi.Modibetsane@mopipi.ub.bw

Ngozi Umunnakwe
University of Botswana
Email: ngozi.umunnakwe@mopipi.ub.bw

Abstract

Group work as a learning strategy is gaining currency in tertiary education. The reasons for group learning and assessment vary. They range from the need for students to develop skills such as cooperative learning, peer collaboration, team spirit and interpersonal communication, to the need for educators to use strategies that enable them to cope with teaching and assessing large classes. This paper evaluates group work from the students' perspective, with focus on the lessons that students learn from group activities. A total of 100 final year undergraduate students from various disciplines at the University of Botswana participated in the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire and interviews. Insights were drawn from the sociocultural theory and social constructivism theory in order to explore students' perception of the merits and demerits of group work. The paper also highlights outstanding moments of students' experiences during group work activities. Finally, suggestions on how group work could be efficiently utilized as an effective learning strategy in the tertiary classroom are made.

Key words*: group work, cooperative learning, peer collaboration, scaffolding, free riding, sociocultural theory, social constructivism*

Introduction

Group work (also known as cooperative learning or collaborative learning) is defined as 'a graded assignment requiring students to work collaboratively across multiple class periods and involving some time outside the normal class meeting' (Ettington and Camp, 2002: 357). Group assessment makes use of small groups so that students work together and learn from each other. Higher education is viewed as a foundation for a lifetime of learning in work and other social settings beyond the classroom (Bouv & Falchikov 2006). The need to manage teaching and learning with more focus on the assessment of graduate attributes rather than acquisition of

knowledge requires an educator with focus on the life of a student beyond the classroom environment. The mission to provide quality education and produce graduates with relevant attributes for the world of work has put pressure on tertiary educators to come up with innovative and flexible ways of teaching and learning without compromising the quality of education. Burdett (2003) and Cumming (2010) observe that challenges such as limited resources in tertiary institutions also result in group activities as one of the efficient alternatives to individual work given the large classes and limited time. This paper makes an evaluation of group activities with focus on lessons learnt by students through these activities. The paper examines the positive and negative experiences that students faced during group work activities. It goes on to identify the problems encountered during group assessment activities and to explore the different ways that are used to solve the problems. The solutions are based on suggestions made by students regarding their group assessment experiences.

Background

There are various reasons why educators employ group activities in the teaching and learning process. These include: the need to develop effective cooperation and collaboration skills (Cumming, 2010; Mafela, Molosiwa and Mmolai, 2013). Group work has also been found to foster development and acquisition of skills that are vital in the professional world such as effective team work skills, which is one of the attributes required by employers (Exley 2010; Maiden & Perry 2011; Webb, Nemer, Chizhik & Sugrue, 1997).

Some of the benefits of group activities include development of effective interpersonal communication skills through interaction with other students from different backgrounds, development of positive traits such as accountability in instances where each member is allocated roles and responsibilities. The fact that students operate within set time parameters helps in the development of good time management skills. The spread of positive peer pressure can also result in instances where there are role models to emulate within the group. It is in group activities that students' diverse viewpoints and knowledge of solving problems are harnessed. Students are able to solve complex problems that they would not handle on their own, leading to developing new approaches to solving problems. Smith & Bath (2006) reveal that students engaging in group assignments develop generic skills, such as communication and critical thinking. Webb, Nemer, Chizhik and Sugrue (1997) acknowledge that group activities have a significant advantage for below average students, especially, in cases where the group has a member who is knowledgeable and proficient in the subject matter. Neo (2005) further states that group work provides a learner-centered instruction as students assist each other to carry out tasks and the teacher only stays in the background for consultation. The University of Wollongong assessment policy (2002) articulates that group work, under proper conditions, encourages peer learning and peer support, and many studies validate the efficacy of peer learning.

Some scholars (Exley, 2010; Mello, 1993; Mellor, 2009) point out that the benefits of group activities are observed even beyond the classroom as they play an important role in the general development of transferable 'life skills'. These 'life skills' such as leadership, decision making, negotiating and problem-solving, flexibility and ability to adapt and accommodate roles are vital in graduate employability. Generally, research reflects that employers' demand for graduates with attributes such as teamwork skills necessitated integration of group work in the curriculum beside the technical competence.

On the side of educators, well planned group activities can help decrease the work load involved in assessing, grading and providing feedback to students (Rust, 2001). Cummings (2010:1) acknowledges that, ''as student numbers continue to rise in parallel with declining resources, group work has become a more attractive alternative to individual projects in higher education''. This practice is evident in instances where the student teacher ratio is very high. Aggarwal and O'Brien (2008) add that projects are marked as per group and this reduces the marking load on the side of the teacher.

Statement of the Problem

The use of group work at all the levels of education has become very popular. Researchers have come up with a variety of reasons why group work should be incorporated into classroom activities. Learners collaborate and cooperate during group work sessions to share ideas and acquire some vital life skills which are necessary in the professional workplace. It helps teachers to cope with large classes and ensures that learners take control of their own learning. In spite of these laudable learning outcomes, students' views are divided regarding its usefulness as a learning strategy. It is therefore necessary to conduct a thorough investigation on this phenomenon from the students' perspective. Their voices need to be heard concerning the best strategies to employ in order to conduct group work for effective learning outcomes. This study investigates the use of group work in the tertiary classroom with a view to finding out students' opinions and experiences to make group work sessions more effective and meaningful.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims at investigating group work from the students' point of view. In this study, group activities will be evaluated with special focus on graduate attributes acquired and lessons learnt by the students. The study will examine both positive and negative experiences of students, and identify problems encountered during group work sessions. The study will explore ways of improving the use of group work as a learning strategy in the tertiary classroom based on students' suggestions.

Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What graduate attributes did the students learn from group activities?
2. What challenges did students encounter during group work sessions?
3. What positive moments did students experience during group activities?
4. What negative moments did students experience during group activities?
5. In what ways can group assessment activities be improved?

Literature Review

There is generally, a lot of research on various aspects of group work assessment such as the benefits of group work, its challenges as well as students' views about group activities (Bentley & Warwick, 2013; Gibbs, 2009). Research reveals that students are aware of the various benefits of group work and are appreciative of group assessment (Bentley & Warwick, 2013; Hall &

Buzwell, 2012; Hassanien, 2011; Jones, 2011; Mills, 2003). For example, Mills (2003) carried out a group project study with undergraduate veterinary science students at the University of Queensland, Australia, aimed at evaluating group work experiences of students. The study reports that, despite the encountered pitfalls, group assessment was appreciated by students as an alternative form of assessment that has the ability to foster in-depth learning.

A study carried out by Jones (2011) to find out if students benefitted from learning in groups reported benefits such as performance improvement, opportunity to be exposed to different viewpoints from other students, an opportunity to interact and know each other and socialise. Interacting indirectly improved individual performance as students got to know each other. The same results were established by Bentley and Warwick (2013) in an online survey carried out to investigate students' experiences and perceptions of group assignments. The survey revealed that students reported development of team work and interpersonal skills. It also emerged in a study by Hall and Buzwell (2012) that group activities provide a positive learning experience. Hassanien (2011) explored the feelings and experiences of students regarding group work and group assessment and found that students view group work as a significant teaching method that fosters the development of critical thinking since they are given an opportunity to discuss issues and air their views in a manageable and relaxed set up, as well as evaluate others' ideas. On the other hand, Refeque, Balakrishnan, Inan Harji (2017) investigated students' perceptions towards group work. The study revealed that, contrary to popular belief, that students do not like group activities, preference for individual work over group activities is not significant.

The literature on students' perception on group work activities indicates that although students appreciate group activities, there are pitfalls associated with it, the most prevalent being free riding. Free riding or social loafing is defined as absconding from doing the assigned work and letting others do the work alone (Aggarwal & O'Brien, 2008). In other words, free riding results in one or only a few students being overworked. Students report free riding as a 'major setback' to the success of group activities (Hall & Buzwell, 2012). It results in uneven contribution and, therefore, students "overwhelmingly dislike group assignments" (Hall and Buzwel, 2012; Boud, 2001). Freeman and McKenzie (2002) assert that students resent group work and view it as unfair, especially, in cases where there is equal reward for unequal contributions.

Failure to attend meetings is another challenge that students encounter in group activities (Hassanien, 2011; Jones, 2011). This challenge is attributed to a number of factors. For instance, students may take different programmes and courses and, therefore, not have a common free hour to meet; so the "fully packed schedules" make it difficult to find a common free slot for meetings. There may also be poor communication in terms of meeting times and venue, as well as lack of convenient spaces to accommodate group meetings (Hall & Buzwell, 2012; Hassanien, 2011). Hall and Buzwell (2012) report overwhelming work load from other courses as another factor that contributes to failure to attend meetings. Students who miss group meetings do not contribute to discussions. Some students attend sessions unprepared, resulting in unproductive meetings. Students also complained about disagreements as they could not harmonise certain answers. Similarly, Hassanien, (2011) adds that students see group activities as inefficient because a lot of time is spent arguing, and in the end, only a small fraction of the assignment is completed, as opposed to individual work, where one is able to focus and achieve a lot in a short time. Mills (2003) also notes that students reported poor group dynamics and inadequate

preparation time. Another pitfall is failure for individual members to take the leadership responsibility. This is mainly because, in the end, all the members benefit from the same grade.

In terms of solving problems of group activities, students prefer division of tasks among the members rather than completing all tasks as a group. This facilitates fair distribution of tasks and in turn fair grading (Refeque, Balakrishnan, Inan Harji, 2017). As the educational institutions try to provide a better learning experience to students through various assessments, research reveals that diligent care needs to be taken to maximise the benefits and minimise the demerits associated with group work. One of the recommendations for group work assessment is allocating group work marks based on the contribution of individual members (Refeque, Balakrishnan, Inan Harji, 2017).

Research shows that students prefer to have a fair system in place to consider individual contribution for allocating marks. According to them, successful attainment of group objectives entails many strategies, such as effective communication and follow-up mechanisms, taking leadership and motivational roles, encouraging continuous involvement of members and clear and fair distribution of responsibilities and grades, as well as availability of the teacher for consultation outside the classroom. Educators are, therefore, encouraged to consider ways of assessing both the processes of group work activities as well as the product, as this would ensure fairness in group work assessment. Research shows that it is vital to acknowledge the student's contribution to the process and the best person placed to make an informed assessment of an individual's input to the process is the student (Toynbee-Wilson, 2001; Elliot & Higgins, 2005). It can be noted that the pitfalls encountered in the processes involved in group work result in learner resentment. There is, therefore, the need for educators to come up with strategies for enhancing group activities.

Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by two of Vygosky's related theories; namely, the sociocultural theory and social constructivism. According to Vygosky (1978) human beings are culturally and historically positioned; they do not exist as isolated individuals. The theory makes specific emphasis on the different ways that humans support each other and learn successfully as opposed to studying and grasping objectives on their own. Vygotsky uses the term scaffolding to refer to this type of support. According to him, scaffolding can be provided to a student by teachers and by students from different levels. Group work activities provide a platform that enables students to work together and 'scaffold' each other. The different skills possessed by learners complement and contribute to the successful attainment of learning objectives. To a certain extent, group learning overlaps with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of human learning as it fosters an environment that nurtures cooperation and team work spirit. The theory views on one hand, learning as a social process and on the other hand, society or culture as important aspects of human intelligence. The sociocultural theory asserts that social interaction has a major role in cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978) points out that learning is a process that takes place at two levels: the first being interaction with other people, and the second, integration into an individual's mental structure.

Social constructivism also emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the construction of knowledge (Vygosky, 1978). Lynch (2016) notes that all knowledge develops as a result of social interaction and language use, and is therefore, shared rather than an individual experience. In the social constructivist context, the teacher is not a dispenser of knowledge, but rather a guide, a facilitator and a co-explorer who encourages learners to question, challenge and formulate their own ideas, opinions and conclusions. Vygosky (1978) believes that learners learn best when they function as a social group that collaboratively constructs a shared culture or artefacts with shared meaning. Group work is one of the platforms that support the two approaches (Mafela, Molosiwa & Mmolai, 2013; Neo, 2005). The success of group work activities is, therefore, premised on the notion that social interaction is vital for effective learning and problem solving.

Methodology

The survey method was used to collect primary data for this study. A questionnaire was administered to 100 undergraduate students randomly sampled from a population of 300 registered final year undergraduates taking various courses in the Faculty of Humanities during the 2017/ 2018 academic year. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A sought demographic information of the participants, such as gender, age, course of study and year of study. Section B sought information on students' perspectives on group work as a learning strategy in the university. The respondents were required to state whether they did group work in their various courses, whether they liked or disliked group work activities, as well as reasons for liking or disliking group work. Furthermore, the students were requested to state the skills they acquired as a result of engaging in group work activities; whether group work helped them to score high or low marks, and if they would recommend group work as a learning strategy in the university. The students were also required to suggest ways of improving group work as a learning tool. The students' responses were analyzed using frequencies and simple percentages. In addition to the questionnaire data, 10 students, randomly selected from the questionnaire sample, were interviewed specifically to record outstanding experiences they had during group work activities. The students were requested to share spectacular experiences, both positive and negative, that they encountered during group work sessions. The responses were recorded verbatim and thematically analyzed. The results of the data analysis are presented in the next section.

Presentation of Results

Of the 100 participants who answered the questionnaire, 80% were female and 20% were male undergraduates. Their ages ranged between 15 to above 30 years, with the majority (63%) within the 21 to 25 age range. The majority of the final year students (69%) were from the Faculty of Humanities; 12% were from the Faculty of Law, another 12% from Media Studies, and the rest (7%) were from the Faculty of Education. The sample for the interviews was made up of five female and 5 male undergraduates. Four of them were from the Faculty of Humanities; while two each came from Law, Media Studies and Education.

Analysis of the Questionnaire Data
The first question that the participants were asked was: Did you do group work in your courses? All the participants (100%) stated that they did group work in their courses at the university. This answer suggests that group work is quite popular as a learning strategy in the university.

The second question was: Did you enjoy group work as a learning strategy in the university? The majority of the students (63%) revealed that they enjoyed group work, while 37% did not. The next question wanted the students to state what aspects of group work they enjoyed. Many of the students (50%) enjoyed sharing of ideas and helping one another to understand difficult concepts. Also, 20% enjoyed meeting and socializing with colleagues, making friends and getting to know each other closely. Researching and presenting information during group meetings was also an aspect of group work that a few students (18%) enjoyed. A further (10%) reported that they liked group work as it helped to boost their continuous assessment marks. Group work also improved their communication and interpersonal skills. Students also reported seeing it as generally a good learning experience.

The aspects of group work that respondents disliked were lack of cooperation and commitment of some group members, lack of participation; poor time management arising from lateness to meetings or absenteeism; and the difficulty in choosing convenient times for group meetings.

The participants indicated that they acquired a number of skills through group work activities. The skills include team spirit, communication, interpersonal, leadership, research, presentation, time management, critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation, patience and tolerance, as well as organizational and management skills. The students were also asked if group work helped them to score high marks. The majority (81%) agreed that group work helped them to score high CA marks while 19% said it did not help them score high marks. They had the following reasons for their answers: Group work ensures that extensive research is carried out to gather information for the given assignment; different ideas from members are pooled together to produce an excellent piece of work; group discussion ensures better understanding and good performance; committed students do the work and every member gets the same score. On the contrary, those who, at some point scored low marks in group assignments blamed it on lack of cooperation and lack of commitment by some of the members. This lack of commitment, they say, resulted in a substandard assignment submitted and consequently poor performance.

In addition, the students were asked if they would recommend group work as a learning strategy. The majority of the participants (70%) agreed that they would recommend group work to their friends while 30% would not. The following reasons were given: those who would recommend group work said that sharing of ideas help in learning; working with other students is part of learning ; group work teaches interpersonal skills; helps in the cultivation of critical thinking and problem-solving skills; makes students to work extra hard; helps in the development of presentation skills; improves communication skills; enhances understanding of concepts as fellow students explain things better to their peers; helps in the development of team spirit; students learn to be patient and tolerant of others when they work in groups. On the other hand, those who would not recommend group work as a learning strategy stated that some students are difficult to work with, therefore, it is better to work individually; group work encourages laziness as some students depend on others to do the work and get the same group marks (the so-called free riders); it is time consuming and stressful; some students lack commitment and cooperation; it is a drawback in learning.

Finally, the students were requested to suggest ways of improving group work in the classroom. The following suggestions were made: lecturers should allow students to choose their group members; group members should be allocated specific tasks to ensure that every member actively participates in group activities; uncooperative members should be penalized, the groups should be kept small, about 3 to 4 members; group work should be done in class because it is always difficult to find convenient hours outside class time; adequate time should be allocated to group work activities; there should be an adequate monitoring system put in place by the lecturer; there should also be a good feedback system in place; and the use of social media such as Facebook and What's App to facilitate and enhance group work.

Results of the Interviews

Ten students were interviewed by the researchers as earlier indicated. The results show that the students had positive as well as negative experiences during group work sessions. Of the 10 interviewees, seven (70%) shared outstanding positive experiences while three (30%) shared negative group work experiences. Two students (A and B) stated that group work motivated them to embark on extensive research for the task assigned. They students reported that they worked hard and found very useful information which they shared with their peers during the group discussion. This earned them a lot of respect from their group members who were very impressed at the amount of information they shared. Student A said, "I felt on top of the world. I was very proud of myself." Student B stated, "It boosted my ego and I determined to work harder to maintain that respect." These were outstanding moments for them.

Student C revealed that he was chosen as the group leader by his group members and that made him feel good. It made him realize that he had some leadership potential. In his own words, "I saw myself as a leader and I utilized the opportunity very well. I was the one assigning tasks, setting time for meetings and generally running the group. In the end, our group assignment scored 85%. Leading the group and achieving that high performance was for me an outstanding experience."

Student D was the secretary of his group because the members said he was very organized and had good computer skills. He said he felt highly honoured to have been recognized in that way. He set up a group chat on what's app; collated members' ideas on the topic, scheduled meetings for discussion and produced the final document for submission. He said, "That assignment scored 88%, and I was very proud of the role I played. For me, it was an outstanding experience which I will not forget."

Student E stated that she had been ill for most part of the semester and was going to fail the course if not for the group assessment. Her group members understood her predicament and did most of the work in her absence. Her contribution was word processing, printing the assignment and submitting to the lecturer. "In the end, I passed that course because of the group assignment," she said.

Three students reported negative experiences. Student F stated that her group members attended meetings but they never agreed on any point. "Everybody felt their ideas were the best, so we always spent the time arguing over everything. This was very time-consuming and frustrating. In

the end, we did not do a good job; we submitted the assignment late, and got penalized." She said she would have done a lot better if she had worked alone.

Student G said that in her group, the extroverts always dominated the discussion. Being an introvert, she often had ideas but never got a chance to share them. According to her, the group members perceived her as a dull student and that was very depressing. "This is why I prefer individual work because I always score high marks. Group work has always lowered my Continous Assessment (CA). For this reason, I don't like group work."

Student H shared a very pathetic experience. His group members were not cooperating. They would schedule meetings and the other members would not show up. He ended up doing the work alone. He then gave the draft to the other members to edit, type, print and submit to the lecturer. One day, he got an email from the lecturer demanding the group assignment. That was when he realized that his group members had not done anything with the draft he had given to them. "I quickly typed what I had done, took it to the lecturer and explained what had happened. The lecturer said that the due date had passed, and scored it 40%. I was so angry that I swore never to be in the same group with those students. It was a bad experience for me," he ended.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal that the majority of students like group work as a learning strategy. This finding contradicts other studies (Bentley & Warwick, 2013; Hall & Buzwell, 2012; Refeque, Belakrishnan, Inan Harji, 2017) which found that students "overwhelmingly dislike group work" (Bentley & Warwick, 2013). Those who dislike group work in this study were much fewer than the majority that advocated that it should be used as a learning strategy. Results also show that the majority of the participants acquired a number of skills or graduate attributes through group work activities. These skills include team spirit, communication, interpersonal, leadership, research, presentation, time management, critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation, patience and tolerance, as well as organizational and management skills. Most of these skills are life skills which are vital for graduate employability in the world of work (Exley, 2010; Mello, 1993; Mellor, 2009; Mills, 2003).

The students revealed a number of challenges that they encountered during group work sessions. Lack of cooperation and commitment was the major problem. Some group members did not attend group meetings or consistently came late; some would not perform assigned tasks; and some others came unprepared for group discussions. These problems led to free riding or social loafing (Bentley & Warwick, 2013; Hall & Buzwell, 2012; Refeque, Balakrishnan, Inan Harji, 2017). Hall and Buzwell (2012) view free riding as a huge problem which is caused by lack of commitment, poor time management and unbalanced contribution of members. For these reasons, some students resent group work and view it as unfair, especially where there is equal reward for unequal contributions (Hall & Buzwell, 2012). Difficulty in scheduling meetings was also identified as a drawback. The fact that students belong to different programmes and have different schedules makes it difficult for group members to easily and conveniently schedule meeting times. This results in poor performance and late submission of assignments. Disagreements and arguments during group meetings (Jones, 2011) were also mentioned as challenges that students encountered during group work sessions.

From the interviews, the researchers recorded outstanding moments as well as negative experiences shared by the students. Group work enabled serious students to engage in research to source useful information for their assignments. Such students went to group meetings prepared for the discussions and shared their knowledge with their peers (Neo, 2005). Consequently, they earned the respect of their peers and that gave them positive self-image. In addition, group work helped to unlock latent potentials such as leadership, organizational and management skills (Exley, 2010). These are graduate attributes that students need to acquire for the professional workplace (Mello, 1993; Mellor, 2009). On the other hand, some students had negative experiences which made them resent or abhor group work as a learning strategy (Jones, 2011). Dealing with difficult group members, uncooperative and uncommitted students could be very frustrating (Bentley & Warwick, 2013; Hall & Buzwell, 2012); and the fact that in the end, a few students do the work while every group member gets the same mark could heighten the frustration (Orlando, 2017). Freeman and Mckenzie (2002) also agree that students resent group work and view it as unfair, especially in cases where there is equal reward for unequal contributions.

The participants made useful suggestions regarding how group work could be improved to ensure effective learning. They strongly felt that lecturers should allow students to choose their group members. This suggestion makes sense because the students know themselves and know who they would want to work with. Imposition of group members by the lecturer may be counter-productive in the end. The participants also stated that group members should be allocated specific tasks to ensure active participation and eliminate free riding. The assignment topic should be broken down into different sub-sections and given to each member to find information and present to the group. Refeque, Balakrishnan, & Inan Harji (2017) also recommend division of tasks for group members to make sure that everybody actively participates in group activities. Uncooperative members should be reported to the lecturer so that an appropriate action is taken. The students also suggested that groups should be small, between three to four members for easy management. The students also suggested that group work activities should be carried out during class time because of the difficulty in finding convenient times after class. This suggestion might create problems because it will definitely reduce time for guided instruction. Bennett (2015) cautions that group work should not take the place of fully guided instruction. To solve the problem of meeting times, the use of social media such as Facebook should be encouraged. Emailing should also be considered as a useful tool for group activities. Group discussions could take place on these platforms to reduce face-to-face meetings. Furthermore, the students suggested that adequate monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be put in place. Lecturers should not give group assignments and then wait for them to be submitted. They should be interested in the processes that lead to the product (Elliot & Higgins, 2005; Toynbee-Wilson, 2001). The grading should be based on the different processes that took place during the group activities. There should be consultation times with the lecturer, for group reporting and feedback as a way of monitoring the progress and level of participation of each member of the group. This will ensure the effectiveness of the assessment and the quality of the assignments that are submitted for grading.

Conclusion

This paper has examined group work as a learning strategy primarily from the perspective of the learner, and found that the students are favourably disposed to it. The majority of the participants endorse it because it provides a platform for sharing ideas, interacting with each other and being exposed to different viewpoints on a given topic. Difficult concepts are better explained by peers during group discussions. Graduate attributes such as team spirit, critical thinking and problem-solving , communication and interpersonal skills, research and presentation skills, leadership, management and organizational skills are some of the skills students acquire as they engage in group work activities. These generic and life- long skills are much sought after by employers in the world of work. However, there were some demerits associated with group work which the students highlighted. Primarily, free riding or social loafing topped the list. Students resent the fact that some of their colleagues do not participate actively in group work, yet, they share the group marks. Lack of cooperation and commitment, arguments and disagreements during group sessions, as well as working with difficult students were aspects of group work that students disliked. Some students view group work as stressful and time wasting. To improve on group work dynamics, adequate monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be put in place; group members should be assigned tasks to ensure active participation; uncooperative group members should be penalized and the use of social media should be encouraged to ameliorate the difficulty of finding convenient times for face-to-face group meetings. Lecturers should be involved in the processes as well as the product of group work activities. It is hoped that group work will continue to be a popular learning strategy in the tertiary classroom as long as lecturers implement the suggestions that the students have proffered to improve how it is used for educational purposes.

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