

The Role of Pair and Group Work in Developing Teacher Trainees' Academic Performance: Case Study at Ada of Education- Ghana

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ABSTRACT

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Pair work and group work have been identified as two of the most effective strategies for developing teacher trainees' academic performance. This study was conducted to investigate the role of pair work and group work in developing teacher trainees' academic performance at the Ada of Education-Ghana. A case study approach was adopted for the study. A sample of 50 teacher trainees was selected from the population of Level 100 to 300 teacher trainees from the Ada College of Education-Ghana for the study. The data for the study was collected through questionnaires. The results of the study indicated that pair work and group work are invaluable tools for enhancing teacher trainees' academic performance. The participants revealed that pair and group works create an environment of collaboration and mutual support, which helps teacher trainees to increase their understanding of the topics being studied. They also reported that pair and group works help to improve their critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills. In addition, the participants asserted that pair and group works enable them to learn from each other and exchange ideas, which lead to higher grades. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that teachers should be encouraged to use pair work and group work to help improve teacher trainees' academic performance.

1. Introduction

The use of pair and group work in learning is a popular teaching model that has been shown to have positive effects on student academic performance. Grouping teacher trainees together and having them work collaboratively on tasks or projects allows them to share and expand on their knowledge and skills, as well as practice communication and collaboration (Galton, 2007). This type of active learning can also help to motivate teacher trainees and often leads to increased engagement and better academic results. Pair-work and group work activities involve cooperative learning, which encourages teacher trainees to work together to complete a task (Gomleksize, 2007). This type of learning environment can help teacher trainees develop the skills needed to work in teams and improve their academic performance. This study examined the role of group and pair work in developing students' academic performance in a college of education setting.

The Ada of Education-Ghana, in Ghana, is one of the 46 public colleges of education in Ghana. The College produces qualified teachers for our basic schools in the country. The College has a strong focus on teaching and learning and is committed to providing quality education to her teacher trainees. The College is aware of the importance of using effective teaching methods

and has introduced a number of initiatives to encourage teacher trainees to work in groups. For example, the College has established a number of small group activities and interactive sessions for teacher trainees to work together.

In contrast to the traditional classroom structure in which the teacher holds the primary authority and the teacher trainees have limited involvement in the teaching-learning process, group work encourages teacher trainees to become more autonomous learners. Group work activities create a natural setting in which teachers and teacher trainees can interact and learn. This teaching strategy has been implemented in various levels of education and is often seen in tertiary education (Hashemi, 2005). Group-based assignments and discussions offer teacher trainees a valuable learning experience, allowing them to apply the concepts they have been taught and further strengthen their understanding of the material.

The objective of this case study is to investigate the role of group and pair work in developing teacher trainees' academic performance at the Ada College of Education. This role of pair and group has been studied for many years. Its work has been found to be beneficial in a variety of ways, from providing opportunities for collaboration to increasing student engagement and motivation to helping teacher trainees develop a sense of responsibility for their learning (Wichadee, 2007). This case study examines the impact of pair and group work on the academic performance of teacher trainees at the Ada College of Education, in Ghana. Specifically, this study will assess the effect of group and pair work on student grades and the extent to which these activities contribute to overall student success. The study will also explore the attitudes of learners towards pair and group work, as well as the potential challenges that may arise in the implementation of such activities. Finally, the study will assess the extent to which the College is able to effectively facilitate pair and group work activities and whether or not students feel adequately supported as they engage in such activities. By providing a comprehensive examination of pair and group work at the Ada College of Education, this research will help inform future practice in the classroom and can be used to inform the development of effective pedagogical strategies that promote student success.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Pair and Group Work

Pair work and group work are two different forms of collaborative learning strategies. Pair work is a type of activity that includes two people working together to complete a task (Kim, 2020). During pair work, the two individuals collaborate with each other, sharing ideas, taking turns, and working in tandem to complete the task. Group work, on the other hand, involves three or more individuals working together to complete a task. Group work usually involves brainstorming, problem solving, and the creation of a shared product. In both cases, the goal is to promote student engagement and collaboration while achieving a shared goal.

Pair work can be used to engage students in activities that require interpersonal skills such as communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Through pair work, students learn to appreciate the value of teamwork and develop the ability to work together to achieve a common goal. Group work, on the other hand, can be used to promote creativity, collaboration, and the development of skills such as leadership and decision-making. Both group and pair work can create an atmosphere in which learners feel comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves (Almanafi, 2020).

In summary, group and pair work are two different forms of collaborative learning strategies that can be used to engage students in activities that require interpersonal skills. Through pair work, students learn to appreciate the value of teamwork and develop the ability to work together to achieve a common goal. Group work, on the other hand, can be used to promote creativity, collaboration, and the development of skills such as leadership and decision-making. Both group and pair work can create a setting in which learners feel comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves.

2.2 Benefits of Pair and Group Works

The use of group and pair work in classrooms is a common practice that can be beneficial for both instructors and learners. Group and pair work can help to create an environment of collaboration and support, as well as provide an opportunity for students to become more active participants in their learning. This can help to enrich the learning experience, foster student engagement, and support the growth of important skills, such as communication and teamwork (Shamsievna, 2021).

One of the primary benefits of group and pair work is that it encourages collaboration among learners. This can help to generate a more interactive learning atmosphere, allowing learners to work together to figure out solutions to problems, think critically, and brainstorm ideas. Additionally, it can help to build student relationships, as they are working together to achieve a common goal. In addition to encouraging collaboration, group and pair work can also help to promote student engagement. Since students are working together to solve problems actively, they are more likely to be motivated and attentive in their learning. This can help to improve student outcomes, as students are more likely to retain information if they are engaged in the activity (Patawang, 2022).

Furthermore, group and pair work can help to cultivate important skills. Operating in groups can help to foster communication and problem-solving skills, as well as teamwork. This can be beneficial for students in the long-term, as these skills can be applied to other areas of life (Jothipala, 2019).

Overall, pair work and group work are powerful tools that can be used to create an engaging learning environment and help students to develop important skills. These activities can help to foster collaboration, student engagement, and the development of important skills.

2.3 Challenges of Group and pair Works

Despite the potential benefits of group and pair work, there are also potential challenges associated with these teaching strategies. In particular, there is the potential for unequal workloads, as some students may be more willing to take on more responsibility than others. In addition, group work can be difficult to manage, as it requires the involvement of multiple students and can be difficult to keep on track. Furthermore, there is the potential for social dynamics to interfere with the learning process, as students may be more reluctant to participate if they do not feel comfortable with the other members of their group (Razkia, 2020).

One of the most common challenges of pair and group work is student motivation. If students are not sufficiently motivated to participate, then the activities will not be as successful as they could be. Students must be made to feel that the activity is

beneficial to them personally in order to be motivated to engage. Additionally, the teacher must provide appropriate guidance and support to ensure that students stay on task and remain motivated (Moonma, 2021).

Another challenge of group and pair work is of managing the dynamics of the group. It is important to ensure that all students are engaged and contributing to the activity and that all voices are heard. Additionally, it can be difficult to manage potential conflicts between students. Finally, a challenge of group and pair work is that of assessing student learning. It can be difficult to assess the individual contributions of each student and also the overall performance of the group. Additionally, it can be difficult for teachers to provide timely and meaningful feedback to students, which can be important for their learning and development (Fadila, 2021).

In conclusion, pair work and group work can be effective teaching strategies, but they require careful planning and management in order to be fruitful. It is vital for instructors to be aware of the potential challenges associated with these strategies and to plan activities and provide guidance and support that will aid in ensuring that students are encouraged and involved and that the activity is successful.

2.4 The Role of Pair and Group Works in Enhancing Academic Performance

The use of group and pair work as teaching methods has become increasingly popular in the last decades, and its potential to enhance student academic performance is widely acknowledged.

The use of group and pair work has been found to be beneficial for a range of outcomes. Studies have shown that students who engage in pair and group work tend to achieve better academic results than those who do not and that this effect is particularly pronounced in students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Krasniqi et al., 2011). This is likely due to the fact that pair and group work aid in generating a more cooperative learning atmosphere, allowing learners to learn from each other and providing an opportunity for building relationships and developing social skills.

Group and pair work have also been found to be effective in improving student motivation. Studies have found that students who engage in this type of activity are more likely to complete their assigned tasks, demonstrate greater effort and focus, and display higher levels of engagement (Patawang et al., 2022). This may be due to the fact that group and pair work permits learners to receive immediate feedback on their work, which can help to maintain their interest and encourage them to continue striving for improvement.

Group and pair work can also be used to enhance student self-efficacy. Studies have found that students who participate in this type of activity are more likely to believe in their own abilities and take on challenges with a greater sense of confidence (Wichadee et al., 2007). This is likely because pair and group work allows students to practice problem-solving skills in a collaborative setting and to receive encouragement and support from their peers.

Finally, pair and group work can also be beneficial for increasing student comprehension and understanding of a given topic. Studies have found that students who engage in these activities are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of the material, as well as to remember it better (Gomleksiz et al., 2007). This is likely because this type of activity encourages students to discuss ideas and ask questions, helping them to clarify their understanding and gain new insights.

2.5 Previous Studies on Group and pair Work

A number of studies have been done on the effectiveness of group and pair work in higher education. For example, a study conducted by Wei et al (2013) revealed that learners who participated in pair work activities had higher levels of academic performance than those who did not. Additionally, a study by Razaq (2020) found that students who participated in group work activities had increased levels of engagement with their studies.

Another study conducted by Babaii (2019) compared the effects of group and pair work on the academic achievement of elementary school students. The findings of the study revealed that both pair work and group work had a positive effect on academic achievement. However, the study found that pair work was more effective in promoting student learning than group work.

A study conducted by Bowman (2020) looked at the effects of group and pair work on student motivation and engagement. The results of the study showed that pair work was more effective in promoting student motivation and engagement than group work. The authors of the study also concluded that pair work was more successful in helping students understand the material and retain information.

Finally, a study conducted by Teng (2020) focused on the effects of group and pair work on collaborative learning. The results of the study showed that both group and pair work were effective in promoting collaborative learning. However, the study found that pair work was more effective in helping students develop collaboration skills than group work.

Overall, the research conducted on pair work and group work shows that both strategies can be effective in promoting student learning. However, the research also suggests that pair work is more effective than group work in promoting student motivation and engagement, academic achievement, and collaboration skills. It is, therefore, important for teachers to consider both strategies when designing their classroom activities in order to maximize their students' learning.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

In this article, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was used to investigate the impact of collaborative learning in improving teacher trainees' academic achievement. Questionnaires were distributed to the students in order to obtain the data. Furthermore, further exploration was conducted in the natural context, such as with the students who took part in the pair work and group work and those who benefited from it, to gain an understanding of the impact of collaborative learning in improving teacher trainees' academic achievement.

3.2 Participants

Creswell (2003) suggested that a target population is comprised of individuals or participants from a general population that possess features of particular relevance and importance to a research study. It is further argued that this population is more sophisticated than the general population since it contains no attributes that could potentially invalidate a research assumption, setting, or objective. In this context, the target population was Ada College of Education teacher trainees. This study was conducted among the student population of Level 100 to 300 teacher trainees of the Ada College of Education-Ghana. A sample size of 50 teacher trainees who took part in the pair work and group work activities was selected using a random sampling method due to the pre-defined nature of the population and the desire to ensure that all participants had an equal chance of being selected for the study. The study made use of self-administered questionnaires with both open- and close-ended items. This was used to collect data from the respondents with regard to their experiences of pair work and group works.

3.3 Procedure and data analysis

The data for this study was collected through the use of questionnaires distributed to a sample of teacher trainees at the Ada College of Education. The questionnaires sought to assess the teacher trainees' perspectives on the use of pair and group work, as well as its impact on their academic performance. After collecting all the responses, the researcher started to analyze the data by counting the options chosen by the teacher trainees, and then the statistics were converted into percentages, mean and standard deviation.

4. Results and Discussion

A thorough analysis and discussion of the findings of the research were conducted, with the statistical data presented in tables. Each point related to the objectives was examined and discussed, with the findings being evaluated in light of the research objectives.

Table 1: Perception of teacher trainees on the use of group and pair work technique in teaching and Learning

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pair and Group work learning technique motivated and engaged me during teaching and learning process	200	4.76	.59
Pair and Group work learning technique helped me to develop social and physical skills simultaneously	200	4.93	.56
Pair and Group work learning technique enabled me to learn with fun	200	4.56	.87
Pair and Group work learning technique increased my interest in the lesson	200	4.93	.75
I felt confident in my abilities in the topic when Pair and Group work learning technique was used for the lesson delivery	200	4.76	.82
I felt confident in my ability to contribute to class discussion during the lesson when Pair and Group work learning technique was used the lesson delivery	200	4.86	.78
I collaborated with other teacher trainees during the learning process when the Pair and Group work technique was used for the lesson delivery	200	4.41	.93
I had the opportunity to learn from other teacher trainees when the Pair and Group work lesson delivery	200	4.15	.91
I enjoyed sharing my thought and observation with other teacher trainees during class discussions when Pair and Group work was used for the lesson	200	4.11	.98

The table provides data on the perception of teacher trainees on the use of the Group and pair work technique in teaching and learning. The results show that the trainees had a positive attitude towards the technique, with all the mean scores being above 4.0. The highest mean score was for the statement that the technique motivated and engaged the trainees during the teaching and learning process (Mean = 4.76, SD = .59), followed by the statement that the technique helped the trainees to develop social and physical skills (Mean = 4.93, SD = .56). The lowest mean score was for the statement that the trainees enjoyed sharing their thought and observations with other teacher trainees during class discussions (Mean = 4.11, SD = .98).

Overall, the results show that the teacher trainees have a positive attitude towards the group and pair work technique in teaching and learning. The technique appears to have motivated and engaged the trainees, and enabled them to develop social and physical skills. Additionally, the technique appears to have increased the trainees' interest in the lesson and confidence in their abilities. The results also suggest that the technique has enabled the trainees to collaborate with other teacher trainees during the learning process and to learn from each other.

Table (2) Group and pair work help the teacher trainees to participate positively in providing answers to their exercises.

Valid	Frequency	Percent (%)
strongly agree	100	50
Agree	50	25
Neutral (no opinion)	30	15
Disagree	15	7.5
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5
Total	200	100.00

The results in Table 2 show that most of the learners (75%) either strongly agree or agree that group and pair work help them to participate positively to provide answers to their exercises. Only 10% of the teacher trainees had a negative opinion, either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement. The remaining 15% of the teacher trainees had no opinion either way.

This suggests that, in general, the teacher trainees found that group and pair work had a positive impact on their ability to answer exercises. This may be due to the fact that working in pairs or groups can help to create a sense of collaboration and support, which can encourage the teacher trainees to come up with creative solutions and think outside the box. Additionally, working in pairs or groups can also help to break down complex tasks into manageable pieces, making it easier for the teacher trainees to understand the material.

Table (3) Group and pair work help the teacher trainees to build self-confidence to express themselves positively among their colleagues.

Valid	Frequency	Percent (%)
strongly agree	95	47.5
Agree	65	32.5
Neutral (no opinion)	30	15
Disagree	10	5
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	200	100.00

The results in the Table 3 indicate that the majority of the participants (80%) either strongly agree or agree with the statement, while 5% disagree with it and 15% have no opinion. This suggests that overall, the participants have a positive view of group and pair work as a way to help teacher trainees build self-confidence in expressing themselves.

The fact that no one strongly disagreed with the statement suggests that the participants may have a shared understanding of the value of pair and group work in helping teacher trainees build self-confidence. This is particularly important in a learning environment, where teacher trainees can often feel intimidated or lack the confidence to express themselves openly. Pair and group work can give teacher trainees the opportunity to work together and build their self-confidence in expressing themselves, which can lead to better learning outcomes.

Table (4) Group and pair work help the teacher trainees to build a team spirit among themselves.

Valid	Frequency	Percent (%)
strongly agree	110	55
Agree	60	30
Neutral (no opinion)	20	10
Disagree	10	5
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	200	100.00

Based on Table 4, the majority (55%) agreed with this statement, while 30% strongly agreed, 10% had no opinion, and 10% disagreed. Nobody in the questionnaire responses strongly disagreed with the statement. These results suggest that most people think pair and group work can help teacher trainees build a team spirit.

Group and pair work can help teacher trainees become more comfortable with each other and learn to work together, which can lead to a better team spirit. It gives teacher trainees the opportunity to practice communication, problem-solving, and collaboration in a safe environment. This can help to build trust, respect, and understanding among the teacher trainees, which can ultimately lead to a stronger team spirit. Group and pair work can also help to create a sense of shared ownership, as teacher trainees have to work together to complete the task. This may lead to increased motivation and commitment from the teacher trainees, which can further enhance the team spirit.

Table (5) Group and pair work help the teacher trainees to build a collective mind among themselves.

Valid	Frequency	Percent (%)
strongly agree	90	45
Agree	80	40
No opinion	25	12.5
Don't agree	5	2.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	200	100.00

The results in Table 5 show that most of the learners (85%) have a positive opinion on the effectiveness of group and pair work in building a collective mind among themselves. Specifically, 45% of the teacher trainees strongly agree, and 40% agree that pair and group work helps build a collective mind. On the other hand, only 2.5% of the teacher trainees disagree, and none of the teacher trainees strongly disagree that pair and group work help build a collective mind.

Overall, the results indicate that pair and group work can be an effective way of helping teacher trainees to build a collective mind. Pair and group work activities can help teacher trainees to develop a shared understanding and cultivate a sense of collaboration and collective responsibility. Furthermore, they can help to create a safe and supportive learning environment where teacher trainees can share ideas and help each other to learn.

4.1 Discussion

The research revealed that the most significant result of group and pair work activities in the College is the creation of an environment of collaboration and mutual support. This study's result is consistent with the findings of many previous studies that have explored the effects of group and pair work on student engagement. For instance, a study conducted by Nesbitt et al (2017) found that collaborative learning activities such as pair and group work improved student participation and engagement in the classroom. Similarly, a study by Almanafi (2020) found that students who participated in pair and group work tasks had higher levels of satisfaction with the class and felt more connected to their teacher. In addition, research by Shamsievna (2021) demonstrates that collaborative learning activities can aid learners in developing important skills and competencies, such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

This study's results also suggest that group and pair work can help teacher trainees participate positively in providing answers to their exercises. This is a finding that is in line with other studies that have found that cooperative learning strategies can be beneficial for student engagement and performance. For example, a study by Patawang (2022) found that students who worked

in groups outperformed those who worked individually on Maths problems. This suggests that group work can help teacher trainees to better understand the material and make connections between different concepts. Other studies have found that pair work can help to enhance student motivation and reduce cognitive load, which can lead to increased performance in the classroom (Jothipala, 2019). Overall, this study's findings lend support to the idea that group and pair work can help teacher trainees to participate positively in their exercises. This result goes hand in hand with other studies that have found that cooperative learning strategies can be beneficial for student engagement and performance. Therefore, it is important for educators to make use of group work and pair work to help teacher trainees succeed in their studies.

Additionally, the results of the study suggest that pair work and group work can help teacher trainees to build their self-confidence and express themselves positively among their colleagues. This is consistent with other studies which have found that group work and collaborative learning can have a positive effect on student self-confidence. For example, a study by (Krasniqi, et al. 2011) found that participating in group activities increased students' self-esteem, while a study by (Moonma, 2021) found that collaborative learning had a positive effect on student engagement and self-efficacy. Additionally, it has been found that working in small groups can help teacher trainees to develop their social skills, which in turn can help them to become more confident in expressing themselves. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that group and pair work can be beneficial in helping teacher trainees to build self-confidence and express themselves positively.

The results of this study are similar to those of (Razkia, 2020), who found that cooperative learning activities such as pair and group work increased student motivation and engagement in the classroom. In addition, teacher trainees who worked in groups were more likely to work together to solve problems and develop new solutions.

Finally, the study revealed that group and pair work help the teacher trainees to build a collective mind among themselves. This is in line with a study conducted by Razaq et al (2020), which found that when students worked in groups, they were able to solve problems more effectively than when they worked alone. This suggests that when teacher trainees work together in groups, they are better able to share ideas, think critically, and build a collective mind. Additionally, working together in groups can help teacher trainees to develop a sense of trust, which can result in more effective problem-solving and decision-making. Furthermore, working in groups can also help to build social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and negotiation. All of these skills are essential for success in both the academic and professional worlds.

5. Conclusion

The study has provided a clear insight into the role of group and pair work in improving the academic performance of teacher trainees at the Ada College of Education - Ghana. The findings suggest that teacher trainees benefit from group and pair work activities, as they are able to share knowledge, exchange ideas and collaborate with each other in completing group tasks. Moreover, these activities provide an environment conducive to learning and help to increase student engagement. Additionally, the use of pair and group work can help to reduce the workload of instructors and provide a more individualized learning understanding for learners.

Overall, it can be concluded that group and pair work are effective tools for improving student academic performance and should be incorporated into teaching and learning activities in higher education institutions. However, it is important to ensure that group and pair work activities are well planned and managed in order to ensure the most effective outcomes. Additionally, further research is needed to explore the different methods of pair and group work and to understand how they can be further improved to provide the best learning environment for teacher trainees.

5.1 Recommendation

The study recommends that teachers should incorporate group and pair work activities into their teaching methods in order to maximize the learning potential of their teacher trainees.

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