

Utilising Team-Building Exercises to Improve Level 5 Students' Experiences of Groupwork

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Introduction

Groupwork can have myriad benefits for students, such as developing teamwork skills, increasing confidence, building friendships, and facilitating peer learning (Mamas, 2018). Yet, this approach can also bear some challenges, such as unequal individual contribution to the group task (social loafing: Luo et al, 2021), the need for group members to negotiate cultural differences toward learning (Matsunaga et al, 2020), and interpersonal friction.

The presence of these challenges can cause students to dislike groupwork, especially when it forms part of a summative assessment (Pfaff and Huddleston, 2003). This is backed up anecdotally via my recent observations when using groupwork in numerous Marketing modules at Level 5.

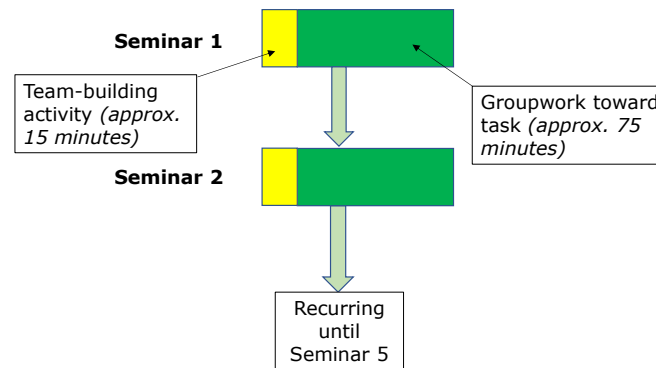
Aim and Objectives

Mittelmeier et al (2018) suggest that the challenges of student groupwork could be alleviated by providing opportunities for group members to get to know each other. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore whether utilising team-building exercises can improve Level 5 students' experiences of groupwork. The objectives are to:

1. Trial the incorporation of team-building exercises in groupwork at Level 5
2. Examine the impact of the team-building exercises on groupwork from the perspective of Level 5 students
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of team-building exercises in student groupwork

Proposed Programme of Team-Building Exercises

The following proposal is based on a Level 5 *Marketing Management* module at NBS where 5 consecutive seminars are dedicated for groupwork toward a summative group presentation:



Examples of 15-minute team-building exercises that could be employed are:

- **Unique Fact Quiz.** Each student shares their name and a unique fact about themselves (noted down by the tutor). Then, the tutor picks a fact at random. Students get a point for correctly remembering the person's name
- **Line Up.** Group members must arrange themselves in a line ordered by, for instance, age (youngest to oldest), shoe size (smallest to biggest), or how far their home is from campus (nearest to farthest).

(UoM, 2010)

Research Methods

The intended research methods are:

- *Semi-structured interviews* with 10 individual students
- *A focus group* with 7 students

Both the 10 interviews and the focus group will be repeated before and after the programme of team-building exercises with the same students. This will help to examine any changing attitudes toward groupwork, and the impact of the team-building exercise programme on groupwork from the student perspective.

Expected Outcomes

- Gaining an understanding of whether team-building exercises are effective in improving Level 5 students' experiences of groupwork
- If successful, tutors will have another strategy to facilitate rich groupwork learning experiences, which could be trialled at other Levels and in different subject areas

References

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