Peer group and learner involvement in collaborative work at the University of Maroua, Cameroon

Bachir Bouba

The University of Maroua, Cameroon

Email: bachirbouba@yahoo.fr

*Author

Bachir Bouba

The University of Maroua,
Cameroon

*Author Email:
bachirbouba@yahoo.fr

Abstract

The objective of this work is to analyse the influence exerted by peer group on learner's involvement in group work, particularly in the context of collaborative intellectual work, namely tutorials, group presentations and writing of dissertations. This works follows from the observation that students of the Higher Teacher-Training College (Henceforth HTTC) of the University of Maroua do not have the same attitude towards group work. Some participate actively while others are passive, feeling a sense of helplessness and strangeness. Yet the mark obtained for a group task is the same for the whole group, despite the different levels of involvement. This observation raises the question of whether learner's involvement in collaborative tasks depends on the influence of the group. The general hypothesis of this study is that peer group work exerts an influence which inhibits student' involvement in group work. Data collected through interviews conducted with 22 students was analysed qualitatively using content analysis. The data which was analysed based on the theory of social influence corroborated the fact that reliance on group, conflicts among group members, arbitrary allocation of roles and the recognition of one's insufficient intellectual capacity in the group, inhibit learner involvement in collaborative work.

Keywords: Social influence, peer learning, peer group, collaborative work, learner involvement group work.

Introduction

Since the coming into force of the Bachelor, Master, Doctorate (BMD) system in higher education in Cameroon through the signing of ministerial circular n°07/0003 MINESUP/CAB/IGA/ of October 19, 2007, to specify provisions relating to the functioning of the BMD system, university education requires more involvement of students in their training. The objective here is to increase their autonomy in learning and to make them more active and participative in the development of their career path. At the university, teaching activities comprise, apart from lectures, tutorials, student's personal input (SPI) and practical class work without forgetting the writing of dissertations. All these activities are subject to an assessment. The ever increasing number of students hinders the carrying out of these activities by individual students. This is why students are grouped to do tutorials, to carry out student personal input tasks, practical work

and sometimes even write end-of-course dissertations as is the case at the Higher Teacher-Training College (HTTC) of the University of Maroua. Students come together and create their groups in order to study or carry out tasks assigned them by the lecturer. Some lecturers give students the liberty to form their group as they like while other lecturers organize predefined groups according to particular requirements.

Group work entails collectively organizing and elaborating an intellectual work, allowing each one to bring their own contribution to the whole work. Generally, students collectively define the methodology of their work, share tasks, and discuss the research findings of each group member for amendment. Meetings are held at regular intervals for exchange and discussion. Everyone is expected to be involved in the entire process of developing the work. Since it is up to them to choose how to organize themselves to work, the collaborative pedagogic scenario is one where they themselves

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determine the tasks to be accomplished, how to go about it, even the resources and the choice of work tools and means of communication, especially today with the presence of ICTs.

It is worthy of note that the Cameroonian educational system is constantly seeking to adapt to new teaching approaches. This is why teaching/learning in higher education recommends a participatory and collaborative approach in order to increase learners' performance. As a matter of fact, students learn better in a cooperative and supportive environment than in a competitive one. They need a practical framework that is secure and favourable to study. Therefore, it is possible to support the idea that group work "limits workload in terms of bringing out a solution by sharing workload among the different team members. Furthermore, thanks to interactions among peers within a team or between teams, cooperation encourages questioning much needed to attain objectives. It should also be noted that this cooperative aspect makes it possible to establish initial group dynamics, which is favourable for the carrying out of other cooperative activities. "Bette (2019:5)

From pre-school education to high schools and universities, the forming of work groups for tutorials, peer learning and group presentations is essential for the development of skills and the socialization of learners. In this sense, we can say that "cooperative leaning is now utilized in schools and universities throughout most of the world in every subject area and from preschool through graduate school and adult training programs." (Johnson & Johnson, 2009:365) However, it is common knowledge that for there to be cooperation amongst people, there must be agreement between the people involved and their commitment. Group work thus requires that the learner be involved in the learning process and respect the rules laid down by the group.

Nevertheless, collaborative work also has disadvantages. It can lead to inappropriate and unproductive debates. In addition, some people find the opportunity to do their "one-man show" with their peers, and can thus hinder the attainment of set objectives.

This paper analyses the influence of peer group work on student's involvement in group work. At this juncture, it is important to lay the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this study.

Situating the context of the study

Statement of the problem

From a socio-constructivist point of view, learning is more successful when it is carried out collectively, and thus opens the way for emulation and, above all, to socio-cognitive conflicts amongst learners. However, results can only come in when group members effectively participate in the work. Indeed, students themselves consider involvement to be one of the keys to success in group work (Dejean-Thircuir, 2008).

Most of the research works carried out on collaborative intellectual work at school or university reveal that collaborative learning is not a new approach and that it contributes greatly to the learning process. In this respect, Dejean-Thircuir (2008) analysed distant learning interactions among students. The study revealed that

tensions and conflicts are potentially part of group life when the group sets to carry out a common task, even if the tensions and conflicts do rarely manifest themselves openly. In his case study of Master's degree students, Dejean-Thircuir concludes that, despite everything, these collaborative interactions foster the creation of an online community.

After a comparative study of face-to-face learning and online learning, Walckiers and De Praetere (2004) concluded that collaborative online learning offers several advantages, notably time flexibility and autonomy, development of critical thinking, conviviality, emulation, and mutual aid.

According to Verzat, Noreen O'Shea, and Jore (2016), the effectiveness of student group work helps develop proactivity regardless of the instructional approach. In contrast, self-directed learning develops creative teamwork, which allows the group to create and take the initiative.

Thus, people may put up behaviours that the group would encourage. Claire Denis (2005:16) opines that collaborative work "promotes the development of group dynamics capable of increasing interactions among students. In a collaborative situation, they adopt a more active role, are more autonomous, and more responsible for their learning". However, the author brings out the limitations of cooperative learning thus:

This approach strengthens group dynamics, which can backfire on the teacher at times and generate conflict. It can also generate group outcasts. That is, students who have difficulties in integrating the group. The teacher risks losing control of the situation. On overly emotional context can lead to major conflicts within the group and between the teacher and the class. (Denis Claire, 2005:18)

From the forgoing, and the observation made with the students of HTTC Maroua, it is understood that peer group work has both advantages and disadvantages. Indeed, collaborative work can be a threat. It can lead to intra-group conflicts, tensions, and even hinder learning. During the collective realization of this work, it was noticed that students face several challenges in their work groups. They are worried over the manner of work organisation and distribution, the choice of methodology, and communication tools. They also have concerns on how to agree on the work to be carried out, and on the modalities of writing on the same document, how to reach a decision, and appreciate the points of view of each group member. As a result, the group finds it difficult to make decisions. It experiences internal conflicts. Sometimes it witnesses long futile debates, waste of time, and the dictatorship of so called group leaders who want to impose their points of view.

Faced with this situation, the student finds himself embarrassed and suffers the dictates of the group. He adheres to the idea of the group, sociologically stronger than the individual, even if he/she sometimes does not agree with it. His/her effective group participation is therefore compromised. As immediate consequences, the work is sometimes submitted late, the names of some group members are omitted on the final write-up in spite of their participation. Furthermore, the form of the final write-up written by so many hands is replete with so many errors concerning font size, character, line spacing. In addition, during the oral presentation of the work, it is

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sometimes noted that some group members do not know anything about the topic and cannot answer any questions from their fellow classmates. Finally, the effectiveness of active learner participation in group work so badly sought for in the learning activities is jeopardised. Hence, the following general research question arises:

- Is the learner's involvement in collaborative work explained by the influence exerted by the peer group?

This work is guided by the following hypothesis:

- Social influence exerted by the peer group hinders student's active involvement in collaborative work.

Theoretical framework

This section refers to two main concepts namely peer learning and social influence.

Peer learning

The concept of peer learning is fundamental in this study. It stands for collaborative learning, cooperative learning and teamwork. It should be also said that "the longest established and most intensively researched forms of peer learning are peer tutoring and cooperative learning." (Topping, 2005:362). According to Sharan (2010 :301), "the idea that one can learn best with another is by no means new. Cooperative learning as a strategy for people to learn together and to come together to learn has roots in several sources". The students are then involved in cooperative planning of all academic subjects and applied to seeking solutions to social problems that arose in their classes and in the school. This issue activates students and prepares them for responsible participation as adults to deal with society's problems.

According to Henri and Lundgren, quoted by Walckiers and De Praetere (2004: 57), teamwork or collaborative work is "any learning activity carried out by a group of learners with a common goal, each of them being a source of information, motivation, interaction, mutual aid, etc., and each of the learners benefitting from the contributions of others, from group synergy and from the help of a trainer, working to facilitate individual and collective learning."

In the same line, Topping (2005: 631) emphasises that "peer learning can be defined as the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions. It involves people from similar social groupings who are not professional teachers helping each other to learn and learning themselves by so doing."

Claire Denis (2005) corroborates the potential contribution of collaborative learning. According to the author, collaborative learning which is supported by socio-constructivist theories, "allows students to collectively construct knowledge or an opinion by inviting them to share their learning. This collaboration enables not only knowledge sharing amongst learners but also their creativity and ingenuity "(Claire Denis, 2005:16). Therefore, peer learning or group work is for the individual learner, a resource, a source of security, a place of motivation, exchange, and construction. It is "a strong

agent of cultural transmission, capable of creating a unified structure around its members and encouraging oneness, particularly by promoting the production of similar acts." (Mathys et al., 2014:289).

In the context of this work, the terms peer learning, collaborative work, cooperative work are quite similar. But, we use the term peer learning which seems more appropriate to the reality of the students in HTTC of the University of Maroua.

Social influence

The present study can also be understood from the point of view of the theory of social influence. Social influence theory has been largely discussed in the research in Social Psychology and Sociology. The social influence theory holds that the individual is subject to social pressures which end up to imposing dominant norms on him with regards to attitudes and behaviours. According to Moscovici and Ricateau (1972), the functions of social influence are norm formation, socialization of individuals, social control and exchange. Within the framework of his interactions with the group, the individual is neutralized and follows the group's ideas. Influence can manifest itself in the individual through conformity and submission.

The individual conforms to the group rather than expressing his or her judgment based on his or her perception. De Montmollin (1958: 431) reminds us that "conformism can be explained by the need of certain individuals, who are not sure of themselves, to rely on others or to be accepted by them, the 'need for affiliation.' "Thus, a learner who lacks self-esteem adheres to the ideas of the group not out of conviction, but out of concern for avoiding social decline. Moscovici and Ricateau (1972: 147) further note that: "The individual is pushed to seek the opinion of the group, to integrate himself into the social unit, to accept its conventions, which serve as reference points for him. Hence the need to communicate more with these "outcasts" to convince them to adhere to the group's views. One can even consider society as a vast assimilating machine or rule out non-conformist tendencies in order to remove any possibility of social inequality or conflict. "

Social submission, on the other hand, emphasizes obedience group. The individual responds by submitting to an order that comes from a legitimate authority. The authority here is comparable to the group leader or any other influential person in the group.

Research methodology

Population of the study

The population of the study consists of 24 students in the department of Sciences of education from the HTTC of the University of Maroua. This department has 2 sections: the section of Student-Teachers for Teacher Training schools and the section of guidance and counselling.

They have been chosen by convenience sampling to achieve the objective of this work. These students are the ones whose dissertations are supervised by us at the HTTC in 2019/2020 academic year. They have been involved in group work during their training such as tutorials and group presentations, and more especially in

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joint peer writing of end-of-course dissertations. In writing their end-of-course dissertation, they were organized in groups of two and they are in the last year of their training.

The following table (Table 1) shows the population by program and by gender.

Table 1: Population by program and by gender

Sections	Number of men	Number of women	Total
Sciences of education	08	06	14
Guidance and counselling	06	04	10
Total	14	10	24

Data collection and analyses

From a qualitative research perspective based on content analysis, we conducted a telephone interview with 24 students chosen through convenience sampling. We interviewed all the 24 students within one week. The online interview with a student took about 20 minutes. Unfortunately, the study was carried out during the lockdown period due to the Covid-19 health crisis when lectures were suspended. Therefore, it was impossible to expand the population size of the study. Nevertheless, our observation also helped strengthen the analysis.

Results and discussion

From the analyses of the transcribed interviews, four factors linked to the mode of functioning of group work explain student's timid involvement in collaborative work notably, reliance on group members, conflicts among group members, the arbitrary attribution of roles to group members, and the recognition of the student's insufficient intellectual capacity in the group.

Reliance on group members

Many students do not get involved in collaborative work because they rely on the group. Indeed, group work is a form of collective assessment at the end of which the mark obtained by the group is attributed to all the members. Those who are lazy and who put in less effort can then benefit from the efforts of others. A student in the Guidance-Counselling program said, "*Even if you do not work, others will work. We hide behind the crowd,* "and her classmate added, "*Some people believe that even if they do not participate, others will. They rely on the effort of others, on others are stronger and more dynamic*". This refusal to work is an expression of a lack of will and the search for the easy way out. "*Among us students, there are those who, instead of contributing, they expect to benefit from the work of others. Sometimes, they contribute financially and leave the group*" (A student-Guidance-counsellor), knowing that the teacher who grades the work does not discriminate between the members of the group. The reality as described is more accurate for students engaged in some income-generating activities or who are employed. This is evident in the following statement made by a student in the Sciences of education program: "*Married women, our classmates who work as motorcycle cabs and those who run a store do not have time to participate in group work because of their workload.*" It can therefore be understood that this situation is due to a neglect of academic work on the part of students for their personal occupations since they suffer little or no academic consequences.

More than that, some students sometimes act in bad faith, as one Student- Guidance counsellor points out. According to him, "*some think they had better spend their time on individual work than on group work*". Beyond group work, students are also subject to individual assessments, especially within the framework of Student Personal Input (SPI). Thus, the act of relying on group work causes some students to prioritise, out of selfishness, their personal academic activities where everyone is graded individually.

Apart from the reasons mentioned, it should be noted that groups made up of several students do not encourage the involvement of all at work. There are always only a few people working in a large group. This is why Johnson & Johnson (2009) recommend the constitution of small groups for a collaborative work.

Conflictual climate among group members

Intellectual work in a group allows for the exchange of ideas and the confrontation of viewpoints that can create socio-cognitive conflicts. However, the conflicts that arise in writing a dissertation in pairs or preparing group presentations are not likely to boost everyone's involvement. These conflicts are intellectual on the one hand and linked to the behaviour of individuals on the other hand.

As far as intellectual conflicts are concerned, it must be recognized that "*conflicts are recurrent, debates are contradictory. Group leaders impose their ideas, thinking that they have a monopoly on knowledge, which discourages the others,*" says a student-teacher. The group leader is not the only one accused of being responsible for the refusal of some of his classmates to get involved. In a group, there are often members "*who think they are above others, smarter and always right. They impose their views on others.* "(A student counsellor-guidance). They are people who always pretend to be knowledgeable, in and out of class. They are proud and full of themselves, sometimes they are smooth speakers. They are "dominators," a term used by the respondents. In this case, the group leader gives them the upper hand and decides to get everyone on their side. In principle, differences of opinion are supposed to "increase critical thinking and divergent thinking, allow members to openly evaluate all possibilities, including those not initially supported" (Buchs et al., 2008: 107). However, in this case, differences in opinion are poorly managed among members, which is likely to cause frustration among others. Consequently, they refuse to continue to

contribute their ideas since they feel that these will not be considered in all cases.

Similarly, another student Guidance-counsellor noted that "*Disagreement during group work sometimes leads to arguments and quarrels, discouragement and resignation of others.*" Instead of exchanges being constructive and catalysing emulation, they become an obstacle to the show of intelligence. This is so because, especially in the case of the Guidance counsellor program, learners do not necessarily have the same intellectual and academic background. There are diverse and varied profiles, some of which are very distant from the program and the teachings delivered.

The second type of conflict derives, according to the respondents, from the condescending attitude of certain members of the group. In reaction to this situation, there is a sort of "refusal" to get involved in order to show that they their dissatisfied. The class delegate of the Guidance counsellor program stated bluntly, "*Those who have higher degrees look down on others. They overestimate themselves. This hurts others and leads to conflicts. In the end, we let them do the work.*" "It should be remembered that among the learners, there are some who are holders of Master's degree, while the majority are holders of Bachelor's degree. *"In the groups where I had to work, there were always conflicts. Especially, when some people want their ideas to be taken, others get angry and this leads to quarrels. Some classmates, when their ideas are not taken into account, they get frustrated and become spectators of the work,*" said one student. Another, recalling a very recent experience, said, "*Some people are by nature imposing and usually think they are very educated. They want their ideas to prevail at all costs. This was the case with my classmate with whom I wrote the dissertation. I had to adopt a different temperament in order for the work to progress normally.*"

Moreover, "*some of the group members have had a history of conflict at other times, and if you put them together, it affects their work.*" The consequence is that the work does not progress because everyone does the work alone, but they compile it at the last minute to present in the hall on presentation day. Laziness also leads to conflict and refusal to participate in the work. Indeed, when there is a lazy person in the group, some see themselves carrying the burden of the work, and as a result, they are not happy and "*do a sloppy, poorly done, and late job to punish the whole group,*" as one student-teacher put it. Similarly, some learners do not want to receive criticism from their peers. After dividing the work among the members, they meet to present research results. When they are criticized for their work, they get angry, create tension, and react badly by keeping quiet until the end in order to avoid being belittled.

There is therefore, the existence of a negative social interdependence. According to Johnson & Johnson (2009), social interdependence exists when the outcomes of individuals are affected by their own and others' actions. "There are two types of social interdependence: positive (when the actions of individuals promote the achievement of joint goals) and negative (when the actions of individuals obstruct the achievement of each other's goals).

Arbitrary allocation of roles in the group

Group work can only be carried out within the framework of well-established rules of operation. As far as group assignments are concerned, students share tasks without sometimes an actual negotiation that requires the consent of all. For example, groups are formed by affinity. But sometimes they are formed by the teacher according to alphabetical order or by the course delegate. When the course delegate forms groups without respecting the alphabetical order, problems often rise because one wonders on what basis the group has been formed.

Moreover, the assignment of exercises or topics to the different groups is problematic. Students have often accused the class representative of distributing complicated topics to some groups with whom he or she has no affinity and easy topics to others. This is the case of arbitrary assignment of tasks which is not positively appreciated. This point of view is confirmed by student-guidance counsellor thus: "*The leader chooses what seems easy and gives the complex tasks to others with whom he is not in good terms*". When a group is arbitrarily assigned a complicated topic, they do not make any efforts to work and tend to attack the course delegate.

Not all student-teachers have the same status. Among them are course delegates, student association presidents, group leaders, wives of university officials, or wives of different city authorities. The formation of working group does not take into account these different statuses. When carrying out tasks, it is not uncommon to find that status determines the organization and conduct of the work. These students with special status are influential. They dictate their points of view while the others are the last to be listened to in the group. It is often their plan of work that is validated and their ideas that are retained. "*Without any consultation, they impose the plan, so the others do the work without any show of interest,*" says one student-teacher. They decide for themselves what role they want to play. "*I am the moderator,*" "*I will conclude the work because I will summarize everything that was said in a few words*" are expressions repeated by the respondents. It can be seen that the most influential person in the group exercises an authority that gives him or her the right to decide on the rules of conduct in the group. According to a student-teacher, "*those who express their disapproval of the group's operating principles will have their names handwritten on the final work. Their names will be deliberately omitted with the intention of harming them*" because the teachers consider them to be intruders, and they will be punished. This pressure pushes members to unconditionally accept the distribution of tasks made by the group leader.

From another angle, work is usually done by a few people deemed intellectually capable of leading the work, while others do the typing, make their computers available to the group, or spend their money without participating intellectually. This is sometimes the result of transparent negotiations among the group members. The group leader decides that "*those who do not make an effort contribute more financially and those who are absent contribute more than those who have participated in the work,*" says a student teacher who goes on to say that "*the financial contribution is often unequal. This is because some finally complain that they do not have any money*".

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Moreover, to others who have not worked, the leader imposes a sum of money as he pleases. In this case, they are obliged to pay this amount, which is higher. Otherwise, the group leader will put them away. It should not be forgotten that "*there are those who offer money as part of their own work*". It is as if everyone should choose or have him or herself imposed a method of contributing to group work, which can be financial, intellectual, or material. This is the condition for the group members to see their names on the final work even without their knowledge. Nevertheless, this poorly negotiated concession leads to low learner involvement in group work.

One student in Sciences of education program says, "*Sometimes I work on the tutorials by myself because my group members have complete confidence in me. I do it, and we get a good grade. The main thing is to get good grades. They are willing to pay any amount of money to have their names on the group list. Furthermore, when they come back, I impose my rules on them, and what will they say? They did not contribute anything intellectually*". The situation creates leeway for group leaders who eventually wallow in corruption and cheating. As can be seen, group members who do not make any effort to work can only rejoice; they hardly complain because they can get a grade without ever investing intellectually in group work.

Recognition of one's intellectual inadequacy in front of the group

During group presentations of tutorials, student personal input and cognitive sharing, group members do not all have the same intellectual level. The low intellectual level of some students is easily noticed. Conscious of their insufficient academic background, especially in front of the group, they do everything to avoid getting involved in the work through avoidance strategies. They speak little or not, prefer typing, or slowly write the work plan on the board during the presentation while others are speaking. These students find it challenging to invest themselves personally in the collaborative work but want to benefit from it in terms of marks.

The situation can be explained by the fact that the entry profile into the training school of some of them does not match their training profile. The most obvious cases are candidates with profiles of lawyers, economists, literary scholars, etc., who end up in the Guidance counsellor program, which requires a good foundation in psychology. This profile mismatch benefits group leaders who create norms that discriminate against certain members because of their profile. This hinders their intellectual contribution.

A student-guidance counsellor states, "*Some group members are present, but they do not participate. They say they have done research but have not found anything. During the presentation, they choose to copy the outline on the board or pretend to read*" to give the impression that they are involved in the work. It is because they are not "*up to the task*" and "lack the will." It is a way of escaping from work, of avoiding being confronted with intellectual challenges. Moreover, they do not respond to questions from their classmates during the presentation. His colleague from the Education Sciences program shares this view. He argues that his non-interactive classmates are characterized by "*a lack of will and low

self-esteem. They are aware of their low level and are afraid of being criticized by his peers.*"

We also notice students who are "*afraid to express themselves for fear of exposing their shortcomings*". Not only do they not master the topic, but also, they sometimes have difficulties of expression that limit their involvement. As a result, they agree with all the ideas in the group, simply out of conformity and submission to the group. "*Most group members simply adhere to the principles prescribed in the group in order to benefit from the fruits of group labour,*" says one student-teacher. Conformity is a way to avoid socio-cognitive conflict. The effect of conforming to the work group allows members to hide their intellectual limitations. For the lazy, it is simply a way to escape from work by accepting everything that is said. It can be seen that conformity has an impact on the learner's involvement, as several issues are highlighted in the group work. Tedongmo and Bapes (2010:4) confirm this thesis by specifying that "The fact of conforming results from a pressure exerted by the social group. Individuals with low self-esteem or self-confidence are the most likely to conform, simply because they seek the protection of the group, or want to avoid being excluded from it. Moreover, as De Montmollin states (1958:432), "The subject who has a strong need for conformity is less anxious when he conforms to a norm contrary to his initial point of view than when he maintains it. Thus conformity would be a tension-reducing response. "

Similarly, some students who receive criticism of their research work from their peers quickly become angry. Sometimes they cause tension in the group. They eventually decide not to get too involved in the rest of the work. They feel that their peers have no business evaluating them intellectually, even though they are aware of their shortcomings.

Conclusion

The problem of learner involvement in collaborative work is now very current in schools and universities where participatory and active teaching methods are being highly praised. Levels of commitment in cooperative learning are raising important questions which should interest every teacher-trainer. This is why one is forced to him or herself whether collaborative work at the university inevitably leads to emulation among group members. At the end of this work, whose objective is to analyse the factors that inhibit students' involvement in an intellectual group work, it should be retained that this involvement is not always optimal to the point of causing a socio-cognitive conflict for all the members. This is because peer group exerts an influence, or rather a pressure, which neutralizes the motivation and participation of certain actors. This confirms the hypothesis that peer group exerts an influence that inhibits student's involvement in the work. Specifically, the work shows that the fact of relying on the group, the conflicts among group members, the arbitrary imposition of roles to group members and the recognition of one's intellectual incompetence in front of the group are factors responsible for the weak involvement of some students in peer group work. These are factors related to the different levels of social influence of individuals concerning their group work.

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It seems necessary that solutions be found to bring students to be effectively involved in collaborative work to benefit from its advantages, both intellectually and academically. In this context, rotating group leaders would be an asset to solve the thorny issue of immovable group leaders who can dictate their laws and perpetuate their influence. Rotating leaders would allow shy people to lead the group and for more active people to be led by their peers. It must be said that an actor who has responsibilities takes his work seriously and feels more integrated into the group.

The teacher could himself distribute the roles to the learners. The distribution of roles or power is a decisive factor in developing group members (Morin, 1996: 437). The group should then be reduced to a minimum of a few members. Similarly, it is advisable to give clear instructions and define the conditions related to the functioning of group work. For example, they should answer all the questions in the hall or during defence, and the grades should be based on the level of performance of each member. If learners know that they will be asked targeted and directed questions individually, they will avoid inventing avoidance strategies.

In the same vein, it is possible to introduce monitoring and coaching of students in working groups by teachers. Teachers could intervene not only in the forming of groups if necessary, but above all in the solving of conflicts in order to ensure the participation of all. Grading could, for example, be based on the level of contribution of the students. It is also up to the teachers to decide how the work is presented by designating group members and not leaving it to the students to share the parts to be presented as a contribution. In this perspective, it is crucial to introduce tutoring to improve student support, especially since teachers are sometimes very busy. According to MINESUP (2007), tutoring would allow for mutual assistance in learning. Tutoring concerns mainly first-year students and should be done in the form of "a support which will be implemented by students at the end of the first cycle (L3 and second cycle).

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