

**EXPLORING TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP  
LEARNING PEDAGOGY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
IN CENTRAL UGANDA**

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**DECLARATION**

I, Gloria Geria, hereby declare that this is my original work and has not been previously submitted for any academic award at any institution.

Signature .....

Date.....

**APPROVAL**

We as University supervisors confirm the work done by the candidate under our supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Samson Ayub Geria (RIP) and Druscilla Geria.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>CPD</b>	Continuous Professional Development
<b>Eng.</b>	English
<b>FFGD</b>	Female Focus Group
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>L.P.s</b>	Lesson Plans
<b>Math</b>	Mathematics
<b>MFGD</b>	Male Focus Group
<b>MOES</b>	Ministry of Education and Sports
<b>MUREC</b>	Mildmay Research Ethics Committee
<b>NAPE</b>	The National Assessment of Progress in Education
<b>NCDC</b>	National Curriculum Development Center
<b>P.5</b>	Primary Five
<b>PLE</b>	Primary Leaving Examinations
<b>PS</b>	Primary School
<b>PS1T</b>	Primary School 1 Teacher
<b>PS2T</b>	Primary School 2 Teacher
<b>SCI</b>	Science
<b>SEN</b>	Special Educational Needs
<b>SST</b>	Social Studies
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNCST</b>	Uganda National Council of Science and Technology
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>ZPD</b>	Zone of Proximal Development

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

<b>Collaborative learning</b>	An educational approach that emphasizes the importance of peer interaction, teamwork, and it involves learners working together towards a common goal.
<b>Group formation strategies</b>	Techniques teachers use to assemble learners into groups for collaborative learning, discussions, or activities.
<b>Group Learning</b>	An educational practice where learners work together in groups to explore a subject, solve problems, or complete tasks, enhancing their understanding through collaboration.
<b>In-class groups</b>	An instructional strategy used in educational settings to promote collaborative learning, teamwork, and active student engagement.
<b>In-class Learners' experiences</b>	The various interactions, feelings, and perceptions that learners have while participating in educational activities within a classroom setting.
<b>Teacher-practices</b>	Strategies and techniques that teachers use to facilitate learning, engage learners, and manage the classroom environment effectively.
<b>Strategies</b>	Strategies are the broader plans or approaches designed to achieve specific learning goals. They guide how a group will work together, focusing on overall methods to facilitate learning.
<b>Techniques</b>	Techniques, on the other hand, are the specific actions or activities used within those strategies. They are the practical steps or tools that help implement the strategy.

## ABSTRACT

This study explored the teachers' implementation of group learning pedagogy in primary schools in central Uganda, focusing on three core dimensions: the strategies teachers use to form groups, their practices in facilitating group learning, and learners' experiences and responses to the group learning process. Drawing on Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, Bandura's social learning theory, and Piaget's constructivist theory, the study framed group learning as a socially situated and cognitively enriching process that shapes both academic and interpersonal development. A qualitative case study design was employed, utilising interviews, focus group discussions, lesson observations, and lesson plan analyses to gain deep insights from both teachers and learners across government-aided and private primary schools. Findings reveal that teachers employed diverse group formation strategies, including mixed-ability, size-oriented, random, special needs and temporary groupings often influenced by classroom context, subject matter, and learners' needs. While group learning was perceived by teachers to enhance learner engagement, conceptual understanding, and peer collaboration, several implementation challenges were identified. These included difficulties in managing group dynamics, ensuring equitable participation, and addressing shortages of instructional materials. Teachers also expressed limited preparedness in designing structured group learning guidelines that align with learners' cognitive and social development needs. Learners generally reported positive experiences, citing improved confidence, quicker problem-solving, and stronger peer relationships. However, some noted frustrations related to dominance by certain peers, inconsistent group compositions, and lack of adequate learning materials. This study contributes to educational pedagogy by highlighting how contextual realities in Ugandan primary schools shape group learning practices. It reveals critical gaps in teacher capacity, resource allocation, and classroom organisation that influence the efficacy of group-based instruction. The study recommends targeted professional development programmes that build teachers' competencies in group learning strategies, increased government investment in teaching and learning materials to support group activities, and more flexible classroom arrangements to accommodate interactive pedagogy. Future research should prioritise longitudinal studies to track the lasting influence of group learning on learners' academic and social outcomes, and use quantitative methods to assess its impact on specific academic indicators such as literacy and numeracy performance. Cross-cultural and comparative studies across educational regions are also needed to contextualise group learning pedagogy more broadly. Additionally, in-depth investigations into how teacher training models specifically embed cooperative learning techniques would offer practical pathways for strengthening implementation. This research advances understanding of group learning as a dynamic and multifaceted instructional approach that not only fosters academic achievement but also cultivates essential life skills such as communication, cooperation, and social responsibility that are essential for the holistic development of learners in resource-constrained educational settings.

## **REFLECTIVE STATEMENT**

I joined the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK) in 1994 as a teacher educator, and because my students were experienced teachers seeking to upgrade from diploma to graduate status, my approach to teaching necessarily upgraded to that of a facilitator. After ten (10) years at ITEK as a teacher educator, I was appointed as the National Coordinator of the Child-to-Child programme (Uganda) in 2004.

Working with Child-to-Child exposed me to consultancy assignments with various Development Partners and local NGOs supporting education programmes. Consequently, I conceived a teaching model known as the M3 Model that is being used by teachers as a guide to support inclusive education and learner participation, especially in group learning. Since 2004, I have been training primary school teachers on the Child-to-Child methodology that primarily promotes the practice of learning in groups. Mityana district was one of my focus districts, where I trained teachers in both private and government-aided primary schools. The training targeted both in-service and pre-service teachers. My work as a trainer in the Child-to-Child methodology and as the National Coordinator of the programme has had a profound influence on my career and professional identity, hence influencing my focus on the concepts I addressed in my research.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the study titled “*Exploring Teachers’ Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda*”. Group learning pedagogy has attracted substantial attention within educational circles due to its ability to enhance learner interaction, foster collaboration, and leverage the diverse competencies of students. It is an educational approach that not only engages learners in collective learning processes but also empowers them to support each other in achieving shared educational goals and outcomes (Kaendler, Wiedmann, Rummel, & Spada, 2019).

Research by Ling, Ghazali, and Raman (2016) underscores the effectiveness of group learning, revealing that learners who engage in group-based activities tend to demonstrate improved academic achievements compared to those taught through traditional, teacher-centered methods. This study is anchored on the growing recognition of these benefits and seeks to explore the implementation of group learning pedagogy in primary schools in Mityana District. The chapter presents the background to the study, the problem statement, and the research questions that guide the study, the scope of the study, and the significance and justification for the study.

### **1.1 Background to the study**

The background to this study is structured around four key thematic areas: historical, theoretical, conceptual, and contextual perspectives. The historical perspective traces the evolution of group learning pedagogy in educational settings, highlighting its integration into contemporary pedagogical practices. The theoretical perspective examines

foundational theories such as Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which provide the theoretical framework supporting and justifying the use of group learning pedagogy. The conceptual perspective delves into key concepts like collaboration, interaction, and learner autonomy, emphasizing their importance in enhancing group learning. Finally, the contextual perspective focuses on the specific educational practices in selected primary schools in Mityana District in central Uganda, providing a localized understanding of the implementation of group learning pedagogy. This comprehensive approach set the stage for a deeper exploration of group learning pedagogy in the study.

### **1.1.1 Historical perspective**

The origins of group learning pedagogy find their roots in the enduring ideas of ancient Greek philosophers whose insights continue to inform modern educational practice. Socrates established the value of dialogic inquiry through his questioning method, demonstrating how knowledge emerges through collective discussion rather than one-directional teaching (Reiss, 2024). Plato's allegory of the cave illustrated the transformative power of collaborative learning, while Aristotle's conception of humans as social beings provided a philosophical basis for peer-based education (Hoffman, 2020; Debono, 2023). These classical foundations were significantly developed during the Enlightenment, an 18<sup>th</sup> century intellectual movement that emphasised reason, scientific inquiry, and progressive social values, particularly through Rousseau's advocacy for experiential and learner-centered learning, which represented a radical departure from traditional authoritarian instruction (Savruk & Kenan, 2021). While these early

contributions established important principles, the most impactful developments for contemporary classrooms emerged in later centuries.

The modern practice of group learning pedagogy took shape through practical educational innovations between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Joseph Lancaster's peer tutoring system and Andrew Bell's mutual instruction approach addressed the growing need for scalable education methods during industrialization (May et al., 2016). John Dewey's progressive education movement then elevated these practical methods by integrating democratic principles with collaborative learning, emphasizing real-world problem solving and social development (Reich et al., 2016). The mid-20th century brought empirical rigor to the field through the work of David and Roger Johnson, who identified and systematized key principles, including positive interdependence and individual accountability (Whitener, 2016). Robert Slavin's subsequent research on structured team learning approaches demonstrated measurable benefits in diverse classroom environments (Sharma & Saarsar, 2018), providing educators with evidence-based frameworks for implementation.

Despite these well-documented global developments, the application of group learning pedagogy in African educational contexts remains both understudied and underutilized. Contemporary research continues to validate its effectiveness for developing critical thinking, equitable participation, and deeper learning (Glazewski & Ertmer, 2020), yet Ugandan primary schools predominantly maintain teacher-centered instructional approaches (Care et al., 2017). This study aims to address this gap by exploring strategies employed in the implementation of group learning pedagogy within selected primary

schools in Uganda. The findings not only shed light on effective strategies for group formation but also reveal teachers' actual practices and offer a deeper understanding of learners' experiences. These insights are instrumental in optimizing the implementation of group learning pedagogy, thereby enhancing educational outcomes in primary schools across Uganda while connecting global pedagogical theory with local educational realities.

### **1.1.2 Theoretical perspective**

This study is anchored in two foundational theories that collectively illuminate the social dimensions of learning central to group pedagogy. Lev Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978) provides the cornerstone, particularly through its conceptualization of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the critical space between a learner's independent capabilities and their potential when supported by knowledgeable peers or teachers (Eun, 2019). Within group learning environments, the ZPD becomes dynamically operationalized as learners scaffold each other's understanding through collaborative tasks, dialogue, and shared problem-solving. This theoretical lens is complemented by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which elucidates how observation, imitation, and modeling within peer groups facilitate both academic and social development (Allan, 2017). When learners engage collectively, they not only internalize new knowledge but also acquire crucial behavioral competencies through reciprocal demonstration and feedback. In group settings, the inevitable cognitive conflicts that arise between peers become catalysts for deeper conceptual restructuring and growth.

Together, these theories form an interdependent framework that explains group learning's multidimensional efficacy. Vygotsky's ZPD clarifies the developmental mechanics of peer collaboration, while Bandura's observational learning principles account for the social-behavioral dimensions emerging from group dynamics. This theoretical synergy proves particularly relevant for primary education in Mityana District, where the social nature of learning aligns with communal cultural values yet requires structured pedagogical implementation. The theories collectively justify the research questions and validate why group learning transcends mere classroom technique to become a powerful mechanism for cognitive, social, and developmental advancement providing both a lens for analyzing current practices and a foundation for improving group learning implementation in Ugandan primary schools.

### **1.1.3 Conceptual perspective**

Group learning pedagogy refers to the art and science of teaching and learning in groups. It involves the various methods, strategies, and practices teachers use to facilitate effective group-based learning in the classroom. This pedagogy focuses on understanding how collaborative learning occurs, designing lessons that foster learner interaction, and employing teaching techniques that promote communication, cooperation, and mutual knowledge exchange among learners (Shah & Campus, 2021). Group learning itself is a learner-centred approach that emphasizes active participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility among learners. It encourages learners to work together in teams, participate in joint academic tasks, and contribute diverse perspectives to achieve common learning goals within a socially supportive environment (Kiran, 2020). In the

context of primary school education, group learning helps learners develop both academic competencies and vital social skills through peer interaction and cooperation. This approach is particularly significant in early education settings, where learners are not only acquiring foundational knowledge but also shaping social behaviours and interpersonal abilities (Kastl & Romeike, 2018).

The conceptual focus of this study centres on three core constructs: the strategies teachers use to form groups, the practices teachers adopt to implement group learning, and the nature of learners' participation in group learning environments. First, the strategies employed by teachers are central to the successful setup of group learning activities. These strategies refer to the deliberate approaches teachers use to organise learners into groups, taking into consideration various factors such as learners' academic abilities, gender, interests, learning styles, and interpersonal relationships (Trach et al., 2018). Teachers may form groups based on homogeneity or heterogeneity, randomly, or strategically depending on their objectives and the classroom context. These grouping strategies are significant because they influence group composition, dynamics, inclusivity, and ultimately, the effectiveness of group learning.

Second, teachers' practices in the implementation of group learning go beyond initial grouping strategies to include the actual instructional and managerial approaches they use during classroom delivery. These practices involve the strategies and techniques teachers use to structure and facilitate group activities, guide learner interaction, assign roles within groups, monitor progress, manage group conflicts, and assess both group and individual contributions. Teachers' practices are influenced by their pedagogical

knowledge, teaching experience, confidence, and professional beliefs about the value of group learning. Effective practices in group learning ensure that instructional objectives are met while also promoting learner autonomy, cooperation, and mutual accountability. Conceptualising teachers' practices in this way allows for a deeper understanding of how group learning pedagogy is applied in real classroom settings and how it contributes to learner outcomes.

Third, learner participation in group learning is a vital dimension of this study. This refers to how learners engage with peers during group activities, contribute to discussions, collaborate on tasks, and demonstrate social and cognitive involvement in group processes. Learner participation reflects the degree to which group learning methods are effective from the learners' perspective. It encompasses learners' motivation, level of interaction, communication, ability to self-regulate, and development of critical social and academic skills. Exploring this dimension provides valuable insights into how group learning practices influence learner behaviour, achievement, and inclusion (Cheng & Chau, 2016). It also helps identify areas where teaching strategies may need to be adjusted to foster deeper engagement and collaborative learning.

By focusing on teachers as active participants in the social construction of classroom life, the study provides insight into how teachers interpret and enact group learning pedagogy amidst contextual realities such as examination pressures, class size, and limited resources.

#### **1.1.4 Contextual perspective**

Within the Ugandan context, primary education follows a seven-year curriculum. Persistent challenges related to low learning outcomes have prompted a series of curricular reforms aimed at improving teaching and learning. The fifth post-independence curriculum of 2005 marked a significant reform, rolled out in three distinct cycles: the thematic curriculum (P.1–P.3), the transition curriculum (P.4), and the upper primary curriculum (P.5–P.7) (MOES, 2010). These reforms emphasized the importance of cooperative learning environments, with group learning identified as a central technique for meeting the objectives of primary education (Simon, 2022). More recently, the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic led to the introduction of the Abridged Curriculum in the 2021–2022 academic year. As a catch-up strategy, this curriculum explicitly promoted learner-centred methods, once again reaffirming the importance of group learning in accelerating learning recovery and addressing the gaps in learner achievement (NCDC, 2022).

In Uganda and many African countries, group learning has been advocated as a promising strategy to transform traditional teacher-centered methods into more dynamic learner-centered practices (Shaik, 2025). Despite its potential benefits, the successful integration of group learning strategies in African educational systems remains uneven, with varying degrees of success influenced by local challenges and contextual factors. These challenges include inadequate resources, large class sizes, limited teacher training, and socio-economic factors can affect both the teaching environment and learner engagement (Abugre, 2018; Christie et al., 2016; Ofei-Manu & Didham, 2018).

It should further be noted that although group learning has become prominent within Uganda's educational framework, critical aspects such as the methods teachers employ, their attitudes towards group learning, and learners' direct experiences remain underexplored. Kwarikunda et al. (2022) examined the general use of group learning in Ugandan classrooms but did not investigate these essential dimensions. This gap in knowledge, formed a central motivation for the present study. The researcher was particularly driven by the recognition that understanding how teachers implement the group learning pedagogy in terms of the strategies they adopt for group formation and usage, and the way learners experience such approaches is crucial for translating policy into meaningful classroom practice. Without such context-specific insights, group learning risks remaining a theoretical aspiration rather than a practical reality in many Ugandan schools.

Mityana District was selected as the focal area because it presents a compelling case for exploring these issues. The teachers in this district received CPD trainings in the usage of group learning from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), with support from UNICEF, during the thematic curriculum rollout between 2007 and 2010 and later through refresher trainings conducted in 2019–2021. The basis for these trainings is because research conducted across various African contexts has underscored the benefits of group learning, highlighting its capacity to improve learning outcomes, foster deeper understanding, and promote collaborative skills among learners (Christie et al., 2016; Ofei-Manu & Didham, 2018). Yet, despite these CPDs, the use of group learning pedagogies and learner-

centered teaching methodologies in general is still inadequate in both government-aided and private primary schools (Sekandi et al., 2019).

By addressing the gap in existing literature and responding to the urgent educational challenges evident in the district, this study seeks to generate insights that can inform policymakers, school administrators, and teachers. The ultimate goal is to contribute towards more effective strategies, policies, and practices that enhance the implementation of group learning in Ugandan primary schools. In doing so, the study aims to foster better teaching and learning practices, promote inclusivity, and improve learner outcomes. The lessons drawn from Mityana are expected to extend beyond the district, offering valuable guidance for improving group learning pedagogy across Uganda and ensuring that all learners, regardless of location or socio-economic background, can benefit from effective and engaging classroom practices.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Extensive global research has established group learning pedagogy as a transformative educational approach, demonstrating its capacity to foster collaboration, critical thinking, and deeper learning (Adom, Yeboah, & Ankrah, 2016). Rigorous studies by Dzemić-Kristiansen, Burner and Johnsen (2019) confirm that this approach significantly enhances academic performance while systematically developing essential twenty first century skills that include teamwork, creativity, and problem solving, competencies that are increasingly crucial for success in modern workplaces (Soini, Korhonen-Kurki & Asikainen, 2019; Petre, 2020). However, Uganda's primary schools' education context is characterized by cultural diversity, large class sizes, examination-oriented teaching, and

varying resource levels. This study, thus, sought to understand and provide insight into teachers' experiences of translating group learning pedagogy into practice amidst these challenges that also characterise primary schools in Mityana District in Central Uganda. Consequently, the study contributes to the body of knowledge in Sociology of Education by highlighting how teachers, as social actors, mediate between educational policy ideals and the lived social realities of classroom life.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda.

### **1.4 Objectives**

1. To examine the strategies employed by teachers in forming groups to promote group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana district.
2. To investigate the practices used by teachers in implementing group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana district.
3. To explore the experiences of learners in group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana district.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. Which strategies do teachers use when forming groups to enhance group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana District?
2. How do teachers implement group learning in classroom settings within selected primary schools in Mityana District?
3. What are the experiences of learners in group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana district?

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

This section provides an overview of the scope of the study, covering the geographical, content, and time aspects.

### **1.6.1 Geographical Scope**

This study was conducted in Mityana District, located in central Uganda, which provides a representative context for examining the implementation of group learning pedagogy in primary schools. The district lies approximately between latitudes 0.317° North and 0.700° North and longitudes 31.900° East and 32.450° East, covering both rural and peri-urban settings that reflect diverse educational experiences. Mityana shares its eastern border with Wakiso District, whose proximity to Kampala city offers schools access to relatively advanced educational resources and higher performing benchmarks. To the south, Mityana borders Mpigi District, where the influence of agriculture and peri-urban dynamics often shapes learner attendance and participation. The northern boundary is shared with Kiboga District, a largely rural area that mirrors Mityana's socioeconomic conditions, providing useful comparative insights. To the west, the district borders Kyankwanzi District, where ecological conservation priorities create distinct contrasts in resource allocation and community livelihood activities. This geographical context positions Mityana as an important site for understanding both the opportunities and challenges of applying group learning pedagogy within Uganda's broader education system.

The selection of Mityana District was purposive and justified by three key considerations. First, while neighboring Wakiso has been extensively studied in the area of group

learning due to its urban characteristics, Mityana district's teachers' implementation of group learning pedagogy represents an under-researched aspect yet it is a policy-relevant context where Uganda's competency-based curriculum reform can be critically examined (Nabirye & Bwengye, 2021). Secondly, the teachers in this district received extensive CPD training on the group learning methodology, which they hardly apply in the teaching and learning process (Kusemererwa, 2023). Thirdly, from a practical research perspective, Mityana's manageable geographical size and the establishment of local partnerships facilitated in-depth data collection within selected schools, aligning perfectly with the case study methodology.

### **1.6.2 Content Scope**

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. The study gained insights into the strategies employed by teachers, their practices, and the experiences of learners regarding group learning and how these constructs influence learning outcomes.

### **1.6.3 Time Scope**

The study covered the period from 2018 to 2024, reflecting a phase when the implementation of group learning pedagogy in Ugandan primary schools gained increasing attention. From 2018 onwards, schools grappled with the practical realities of applying group learning approaches in line with national curriculum reforms and the broader emphasis on the learner-centred pedagogy (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2020). During this period, teachers and learners encountered both opportunities and persistent

challenges, including limited teaching resources, uneven participation among learners, and varied facilitation methods by teachers (Mugisha & Ssenyonjo, 2022).

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to theory, practice, policy, and future research. Theoretically, it extends the body of knowledge on learner-centred pedagogies by applying Vygotsky's social constructivist theory and Bandura's social learning theory to a resource-constrained educational environment. In doing so, it enriches global discourse by demonstrating how social, cultural, and institutional factors shape the adoption and effectiveness of group learning strategies.

Practically, the study provides teachers and school administrators with evidence-based insights into group formation strategies, facilitation practices, and learner experiences. These findings can inform structured approaches to classroom practice that foster collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving while addressing challenges such as unequal participation and resource shortages.

At the policy level, the study generates timely evidence to support the competency-based curriculum reforms promoted by the National Curriculum Development Centre. The findings can inform teacher training programmes, professional development initiatives, and classroom management guidelines that strengthen the integration of group learning pedagogy. They also provide policymakers and education planners with data to guide more effective resource allocation and ensure that group learning practices are sustainable and scalable across different school contexts.

For future research, the study lays the groundwork for further investigations into group learning pedagogy. It highlights the need for longitudinal studies to assess long-term impacts, comparative research between rural and urban schools, and subject-specific studies that examine how group learning shapes literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Overall, the significance of this study rests in its potential to bridge theory and practice, inform national reforms, and foster more inclusive learner-centred classrooms.

By equipping learners with competencies such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and problem-solving, the study not only addresses immediate classroom challenges but also contributes to preparing Ugandan learners for meaningful participation in a rapidly changing global economy.

### **1.8 Justification of the Study**

This qualitative case study investigated the implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. The study is justified by the need to address a critical research gap on how group learning pedagogy is understood and practised in Ugandan classrooms, particularly in rural and peri-urban contexts where evidence remains limited. International research has established group learning as an effective approach for improving academic performance, fostering creativity, and building essential twenty first century skills. However, little is known about how these benefits translate into Ugandan primary schools where resources are scarce and teacher capacity to adopt learner centred methods is often constrained.

The study is further justified by national education policy directions that emphasise learner-centred instruction within the competency-based curriculum reforms. Despite these reforms, classroom practices in many districts continue to be dominated by teacher-centred methods, limiting opportunities for learners to develop collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. By examining both the enablers and challenges of group learning implementation, this study responds to the pressing need for evidence that can guide the Ministry of Education and Sports and other stakeholders in strengthening classroom pedagogy, professional development, and resource allocation.

The focus on primary five learners is particularly justified because this level represents a critical transition in the primary education cycle, where learners consolidate foundational competencies while preparing for the more demanding upper primary curriculum. Understanding the implementation of group learning at this stage provides valuable insights into how learner engagement and collaboration can be enhanced to improve academic outcomes and readiness for secondary education. The qualitative exploratory design was also appropriate as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the experiences of teachers and learners, capturing the complex realities of group learning implementation in context.

## **1.9 Chapter summary**

In conclusion, this chapter has provided an introduction to the study on the implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. Group learning has been recognised as a promising approach in

education, promoting interaction, collaboration, and effective utilisation of learners' competences. The chapter discussed the background to the study, highlighting the historical, theoretical, conceptual, and contextual perspectives of group learning. It identified the gap in understanding the strategies employed by teachers, their practices, and the experiences of learners regarding group learning in African education systems, specifically in Uganda. The chapter also outlined the significance and justification of the study.

The next chapter focuses on the literature review, which provided an overview of existing research and scholarly works related to group learning pedagogy in primary schools. The literature review explored studies conducted in various countries, highlighting the strategies employed by teachers, their practices, and the experiences of learners in group learning settings. It also examined the factors influencing the successful implementation of group learning and the outcomes associated with this teaching approach. The literature review served as a foundation for the research, informing the development of research questions and guiding the data collection and analysis processes.

Overall, the study contributed to the existing knowledge base by investigating the implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District. By exploring the strategies employed by teachers, examining their practices, and investigating learners' experiences, this research was to fill the research gap and provide valuable insights to inform policy and practice in the Ugandan education system.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences related to the implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. This chapter presents a review of relevant literature drawn from previous research on the three research questions of this study. To achieve this, Chapter Two offers a comprehensive theoretical overview of the key constructs necessary for addressing the research questions. It explores the strategies employed by teachers to form groups for learning, the practices of teachers regarding the implementation of group learning, and the experiences of learners with group learning.

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

The exploration of how children learn collaboratively has been a subject of scholarly interest for more than fifty years (Yang, 2023). Philosophers and educational theorists alike have long sought to establish the conditions under which group learning becomes most effective (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). This study employs a multi-theoretical approach anchored in two complementary perspectives: Lev Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978) and Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977). The use of both theories is deliberate and necessary because while Vygotsky emphasises the social and cultural nature of learning through interaction, Bandura highlights the importance of observation, modelling, and imitation, elements that are equally critical in group learning pedagogy. Taken together, these theories provide a more holistic framework for examining how collaborative learning can address the persistent challenges of Uganda's primary education system.

Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory is the primary lens guiding this study, with its emphasis on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which represents the space between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with guidance from more knowledgeable peers or adults (Eun, 2019). In group learning contexts, this theory highlights how learners progress when they engage in dialogue, scaffold one another's understanding, and jointly solve problems. Empirical evidence from Ugandan schools supports this application, as studies by Galukande (2015) and Kitembo et al. (2023) demonstrate that structured group learning grounded in Vygotskian principles improves performance, encourages learner participation, and fosters critical thinking. A limitation of this theory, however, is its focus on social processes without fully explaining how learners internalise behaviours observed within their peer group, particularly when competencies among learners are unevenly distributed (Ameri, 2020).

Bandura's Social Learning Theory is integrated as a complementary perspective to address this limitation. Bandura stresses that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and reinforcement, with self-efficacy playing a central role in motivating learners (Gray & MacBlain, 2015; Rumjaun & Narod, 2020). In group learning environments, learners acquire new strategies, language skills, and social competencies by observing and modelling peers' behaviours. Positive reinforcement, whether through teacher or peer feedback, strengthens engagement, builds confidence, and consolidates learning outcomes. For example, during a group science experiment, learners observing a classmate demonstrating a problem-solving approach are more likely to adopt and adapt the technique successfully.

To enhance the contextual relevance of this theoretical framework, the study integrates African ideological principles that inherently value communal learning and shared responsibility. Ubuntu, the philosophy that “I am because we are,” underscores the interconnectedness of learners and reinforces the idea that knowledge is co-constructed through collaboration, empathy, and mutual support. Harambee, a Kenyan concept of collective effort, aligns with group learning by emphasising that progress is achieved when individuals work together towards a common goal, reflecting the shared responsibilities embedded in classroom activities. Similarly, Ujamaa, the Tanzanian principle of cooperative economics, familiness, and social cohesion, supports the notion that learners thrive when education fosters collective problem solving and shared accountability. Integrating these indigenous ideologies into group learning pedagogy complements Vygotsky and Bandura by embedding culturally grounded values of cooperation, mutual respect, and social cohesion within the classroom, enhancing both cognitive and socio-emotional development.

The combined application of Vygotsky, Bandura, and African philosophical perspectives provides a robust framework for understanding group learning. Vygotsky explains how structured interaction and scaffolding facilitate cognitive development, Bandura clarifies how observation and reinforcement shape learner behaviours, and the African ideological principles contextualise these processes within culturally familiar communal values. This synergy directly informs the study’s research questions, guiding the examination of teacher strategies, learner participation, and the social and cognitive outcomes of group learning. By linking global and indigenous perspectives, the study can generate

contextually relevant insights for implementing effective group learning pedagogy in Ugandan primary schools, fostering active knowledge construction, collaboration, and socio-cultural competence.

This integrated theoretical framework allows the study to explore the dual dimensions of group learning: the pedagogical strategies that teachers employ and the observable behaviours, skill acquisition, and collaborative dispositions of learners. It provides a strong foundation for interpreting findings and developing contextually appropriate recommendations that enhance both academic outcomes and social cohesion in primary education.

## **2.2 Empirical Review of group learning pedagogy**

The principles of group learning are rooted in the works of various scholars, such as Van Schaik et al. (2019), which distinguish it from traditional instructional and teaching strategies. Group learning is increasingly recognised as a transformative instructional approach that has the potential to significantly enhance educational outcomes by fostering collaboration, interaction, and the co-construction of knowledge among learners. These strategies involve learners actively engaging in shared tasks, discussions, and problem-solving activities within small, collaborative groups. Such an environment not only enables learners to draw on their diverse perspectives and experiences but also facilitates the collective construction of knowledge, creating a dynamic and enriching learning space that promotes communication, cooperation, and mutual support (Johnson & Johnson, 2018). The inclusivity and engagement fostered by group learning pedagogy are especially vital in primary education, where the concurrent development of social,

cognitive, and academic skills is essential for fostering holistic growth (Farmer et al., 2019).

Despite the well-documented benefits of group learning pedagogy, substantial gaps remain in understanding its optimal implementation and effectiveness within primary school settings. A critical area that warrants further investigation is the specific instructional strategies that are employed to maximise the benefits of group learning. While commonly recommended strategies include assigning distinct roles and responsibilities, ensuring equal participation, fostering positive interdependence, and facilitating opportunities for peer feedback and reflection, there is an urgent need for deeper empirical research into the effectiveness of these strategies across various educational contexts (Benton et al., 2017). Understanding how these strategies function in different settings is vital for identifying potential limitations or challenges that may arise during implementation. Such insights are essential for educators and researchers aiming to refine instructional practices and elevate the overall quality of group learning experiences (Huston et al., 2018).

Another crucial aspect that demands attention in the empirical review of group learning is the critical role of teachers in shaping the dynamics and effectiveness of these learning experiences. Teachers are not only facilitators of group interactions but also play a critical role in guiding the learning process, yet there is a notable dearth of research on their practices, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the implementation of group learning (Pattison et al., 2018). Understanding teachers' perspectives is essential for comprehensively addressing the practical challenges they encounter in implementing

group learning, identifying the strategies they find most effective, and recognising the types of support they need to integrate group learning meaningfully into their pedagogical practices (Ryu et al., 2019). By examining teachers' insights, researchers and policymakers can uncover the common obstacles teachers face, including resource limitations, classroom management complexities, and diverse learner needs, all of which impact their ability to execute group learning effectively. Furthermore, investigating teachers' preferred strategies and the support mechanisms they value-such as professional development, collaborative planning time, and access to learning materials-enables the development of targeted interventions that enhance instructional efficacy and promote sustainable group learning practices.

Moreover, while group learning has the potential to significantly enhance collaboration, interaction, and the co-construction of knowledge among learners, the existing gaps in understanding its optimal implementation and effectiveness in primary schools must be addressed to fully harness their benefits. Investigating the specific instructional strategies employed in group learning, delving into teachers' perspectives, and identifying potential challenges in the implementation process are crucial steps toward enhancing the quality and impact of group learning experiences (Kaendler et al., 2015). The pursuit of empirical research and the application of evidence-based practices are essential for developing a more comprehensive understanding of group learning pedagogy and its implications for learner outcomes in primary education.

Additionally, group learning pedagogy is deeply rooted in several established theoretical frameworks that provide a strong foundation for its implementation. These frameworks

draw upon the social learning aspects of Bandura's theory, which emphasises the importance of peer interactions and modelling in the learning process (Rumjaun & Narod, 2020). Piaget's constructivist perspective further underscores the value of active engagement and the construction of knowledge within group settings. Meanwhile, Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) offers a conceptual framework for understanding how learners can achieve their full potential through cooperative efforts and guidance from more knowledgeable individuals (Parker et al., 2015). These theoretical perspectives collectively offer a strong rationale for the use of group learning, highlighting its capacity to enhance learner engagement, critical thinking skills, and overall academic achievement.

In summary, while the theoretical and practical advantages of group learning pedagogy are evident, the empirical literature underscores the need for further research to fully understand and optimise their implementation and impact in primary schools. Addressing these gaps through targeted research and the development of evidence-based strategies contributed to a more refined and effective application of group learning strategies, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for learners. This study sought to do further research with reference to how teachers utilise the group learning pedagogy with reference to group formation and utilisation of groups for group learning.

### **2.3 Strategies employed by teachers in forming groups to facilitate group learning**

Teachers are central to the success of group learning experiences in primary schools, as they organise the formation of groups that can greatly impact collaborative dynamics and learning outcomes (Rodríguez, Riaza & Gómez, 2017). Crafting effective groups entails

an organised strategy, considering factors such as learners' learning styles, personalities, and abilities to ensure diversity and balance within each group. This thoughtful formation is crucial for fostering an environment where learners can engage meaningfully with one another, exchange ideas, and construct knowledge collaboratively (Roberson, 2019). Numerous strategies exist to aid teachers in this process, each offering distinct advantages and challenges. This section provides an in-depth exploration of these strategies, supported by literature and research, to underscore their efficacy in nurturing group learning environments.

Smith and Jones (2019) advocate for the strategy of random group formation, where learners are assigned to groups without predefined criteria. This approach aims to foster diversity and prevent the formation of cliques, ultimately promoting a more inclusive learning environment. In primary schools across the UK, this method was shown to enhance collaboration among learners from diverse backgrounds and abilities, positively impacting academic performance (Brown et al., 2020). However, some scholars criticise this approach for failing to consider the unique needs and preferences of learners. Johnson (2018) and Thompson et al. (2021) argue that random grouping often leads to imbalanced group dynamics, as it may enable certain learners to dominate, resulting in unequal participation and diminished group cohesion. In a study on cooperative learning and Mathematics self-efficacy in senior secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria, Johnson et al. (2003) observed that while random grouping initially introduced diversity, it later led to the dominance of certain individuals, hindering active participation across the group. Similarly, Oyegoke (2019) highlighted in a study on primary school teachers in Oyo

State, Nigeria, that random grouping fails to recognise the advantages of intentionally heterogeneous groups that leverage diverse skills and perspectives, thereby enhancing peer interactions and collaborative learning.

Despite its limitations, the random grouping strategy continues to offer value in promoting inclusivity and diversity, especially when thoughtfully paired with structured group formation methods. Garcia et al. (2024) demonstrated that in Spanish primary schools, combining random grouping with mixed-ability strategies resulted in more balanced groups that encouraged equitable participation and peer learning. Similarly, Estefan, Selbin, and Macdonald (2023) observed that this hybrid approach helped mitigate the risk of marginalisation by ensuring that learners with varying academic strengths had equal opportunities to contribute and learn from each other. In a study by Mungai and Wanjohi (2021) in Kenyan public primary schools found that random group assignments, when used alongside teacher-guided facilitation, increased learner engagement and reduced social stratification within the classroom. These findings align with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which underscores the value of peer interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development, and with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which highlights the role of observation and peer modelling in shaping behaviour. Random grouping, when guided by structured teacher input, supports the kind of collaborative dialogue and modelling behaviours that allow learners to grow cognitively and socially.

Nonetheless, literature reveals a persistent gap in understanding the long-term academic and social effects of random group formation, particularly within primary school settings.

Brown and Palincsar (2018) acknowledged the short-term academic and interpersonal benefits of random grouping, such as increased engagement and exposure to diverse perspectives. However, they noted the scarcity of studies exploring how sustained use of this strategy impacts learners' collaborative skills, individual learning trajectories, or group cohesion over time. In Uganda, a study by Nanfuka and Kaggwa (2022) reported that although random grouping promoted initial excitement and broader peer interaction in rural classrooms, learners often struggled with unclear group roles and inconsistent performance over time, pointing to the need for more intentional scaffolding. These findings resonate with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasises the importance of cognitive conflict and guided interaction for meaningful learning, and they also highlight the limits of unguided group dynamics. The gap in longitudinal evidence suggests the importance of investigating how random grouping strategies can be structured over time to foster sustained academic growth and socio-emotional development, especially in resource-constrained, multicultural learning environments common in East African primary schools.

Another commonly used strategy for forming groups to facilitate group learning is the mixed-ability grouping strategy. As proposed by Johnson and Johnson (2018), mixed-ability grouping involves bringing together learners of varying abilities. This strategy is grounded in the principle that learners can benefit from one another through collaboration and peer teaching. Research conducted in European countries, such as Germany and France, has shown that mixed-ability grouping can lead to increased academic achievement and improved social skills among learners (Schmidt et al., 2017). However,

critics argue that this strategy can present challenges in managing group dynamics and ensuring active engagement from all learners. For instance, a study by Namli (2024) on Turkish Mathematics teachers' perspectives in middle school classrooms found that in mixed-ability groups, high-achieving learners often dominated discussions, limiting participation from their peers. Additionally, a study by Padmadewi and Artini (2019) in a primary school in Singaraja City, Indonesia, emphasised the need for additional support and scaffolding for lower-ability learners in mixed-ability groups to ensure they can fully benefit from the collaborative learning environment. Despite these challenges, mixed-ability grouping remains a widely used strategy in group learning settings, particularly for promoting peer learning and enhancing academic outcomes for all learners (Wilkinson & Penney, 2022).

The literature on mixed-ability grouping highlights notable short-term academic benefits, particularly in fostering peer support and exposure to diverse perspectives. However, there remains a significant gap regarding its long-term impact on learners' confidence, motivation, and knowledge retention, especially for both high- and low-achieving pupils. Brown and Palincsar (2018) acknowledge these early academic gains but note the limited evidence concerning how prolonged participation in mixed-ability groups influences learners' sustained engagement and development of self-efficacy. The challenge lies in ensuring that low-achieving learners receive sufficient support without making high-achieving peers feel under-utilised or burdened, raising critical questions about how best to scaffold interactions. This concern is echoed in a study by Namubiru and Lubaale (2020), who found that in Ugandan primary classrooms, low-achieving pupils in mixed-

ability groups often gained confidence through peer explanation and support, but high achievers sometimes experienced stagnation when not adequately challenged. This dynamic ties closely to Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learning flourishes when appropriate scaffolding enables learners to operate just beyond their current capabilities. In such contexts, the teacher's role in orchestrating meaningful interactions becomes essential to balancing learning gains across ability levels.

Further reinforcing this need for strategic group facilitation, a study by Ndung'u and Karugu (2021) in Kenya showed that while mixed-ability groupings promoted social cohesion, the absence of structured roles and differentiated tasks sometimes led to disengagement among stronger learners. This aligns with Piaget's Constructivist Theory, which posits that cognitive growth occurs when learners encounter challenges that prompt them to re-evaluate their assumptions. For high-achieving learners, repetitive explanations without cognitive stretch may limit the conflict needed for deeper learning. Bandura's Social Learning Theory also adds an important lens, suggesting that learners' self-efficacy can be shaped by the feedback and reinforcement received during peer interactions. When appropriately managed, mixed-ability groups allow learners to observe, model, and internalise effective problem-solving behaviours. However, without intentional structuring, these benefits may diminish over time. This underscores the importance of longitudinal research that investigates not only the outcomes of mixed-ability grouping but also the scaffolding mechanisms, such as task design, role distribution, and the teacher facilitation that optimise its benefits across the learner spectrum in diverse primary school contexts, particularly in East Africa.

Same-ability grouping, also a widely implemented strategy for forming groups in educational settings, organises learners based on their academic capabilities, grouping those with similar skills and knowledge levels (Hove, 2022). Proponents like Muijs and Reynolds (2017) argue that this method allows teachers to provide targeted instruction that is finely tuned to the group's collective skill level, thereby enhancing the potential for maximising learning outcomes. By clustering learners of comparable ability, teachers can better pace their instruction to align with the group's specific strengths and challenges, theoretically creating an environment that supports deepened understanding and skill development. Panhwar (2023) pointed out that research on same-ability grouping in various educational contexts, including Nigeria and Uganda, highlights both its potential benefits and the challenges it introduces. While this approach can enable focused instructional delivery, studies also reveal unintended consequences, particularly for lower-ability learners, who may experience negative psychological effects. For example, research by Okeke and Ugwu (2019) in Nigerian and Ugandan classrooms demonstrates that same-ability grouping can foster feelings of inferiority among lower-ability learners, as they may perceive themselves less favourably when comparing their group placement with that of peers in higher-ability groups. Such comparisons, as shown in a study by Adeyemi and Olatoye (2018) in Nigerian primary schools, can lead to reduced motivation and lowered self-esteem, as learners in lower-ability groups may feel they are held to diminished expectations, which in turn impacts their academic confidence and engagement.

Same-ability grouping, while often implemented to provide targeted instruction and streamline classroom management, presents several challenges that may hinder the development of collaborative learning and peer interaction. Research by Kayindu and Asiimwe (2020) in Ugandan primary schools indicates that this strategy can limit learners' exposure to diverse perspectives and problem-solving approaches, thereby reducing opportunities for mutual support and knowledge construction. This constraint is particularly concerning when viewed through Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasises the importance of interaction with more capable peers within the Zone of Proximal Development to stimulate cognitive growth. The lack of varied ability within same-ability groups may also curtail observational learning, a key component of Bandura's Social Learning Theory, as learners are less likely to model new behaviours or adopt different strategies in homogenous settings. Critics such as Clark (2019) warn that grouping learners by perceived ability can reinforce fixed mindsets and stereotypes, limiting growth and self-efficacy. Blanco-Varela et al. (2024) add that this approach may restrict the development of social skills and broader peer networks essential for personal and professional growth. Nevertheless, same-ability grouping continues to be valued in contexts that prioritise remedial or enrichment instruction, with proponents like Valls and Kyriakides (2013) highlighting its usefulness in addressing specific academic needs when implemented with clear instructional goals and ongoing assessment.

The literature on same-ability grouping reveals several gaps that merit further investigation. While research has identified motivational and self-esteem challenges for lower-ability learners, it is unclear how these challenges might impact learners' long-term

academic resilience and confidence. Furthermore, few studies address how teacher facilitation might mitigate potential negative effects associated with same-ability grouping, such as reinforcing stereotypes or limiting learners' exposure to diverse perspectives. Additionally, limited research has explored the influence of same-ability grouping on peer relationships and collaborative skill development in comparison to mixed-ability groups. Addressing these gaps could offer valuable insights into refining same-ability grouping practices, ensuring they not only support academic success but also foster holistic personal growth and interpersonal skills among learners.

The size-determined group formation strategy, which involves forming groups based on the specific number of learners needed for a particular task, is widely utilised in educational settings to create balanced, manageable groups conducive to effective collaboration. For example, if a task requires four participants, teachers assign four learners per group to optimise task execution. Research conducted at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria demonstrates that this approach can enhance group efficiency by ensuring balanced group sizes, which fosters better collaboration and communication among group members (Adewale et al., 2021). Additionally, a study by Bello and Ibrahim (2019) in Nigerian primary schools reveals that smaller, size-determined groups increase both participation and engagement, as they allow for more individualised attention and foster closer interactions. This focused group size appears to support an inclusive learning environment by ensuring all learners have opportunities to contribute meaningfully. In Uganda, similar findings were observed in a study conducted among pupils in Universal Primary Education schools by Namusoke and Rukundo (2022), which

showed that size-determined group formation encouraged equitable task distribution and a more unified group dynamic. The structured approach provided learners with defined roles and responsibilities, promoting accountability and overall productivity within the group.

While grouping learners by size can be an effective classroom management strategy that promotes order and facilitates collaboration, its implementation often presents challenges related to group composition and equity. Fareo (2020), in a study on inclusive education in Nigerian primary schools, observed that size-determined grouping frequently led to uneven distribution of learners with high academic ability, resulting in some groups being more capable than others. In such cases, high-ability learners were often burdened with a disproportionate share of responsibilities, which not only caused friction and frustration within the groups but also limited the collaborative spirit of the activity. These imbalances can undermine the very goals of group learning by fostering dominance, passivity, or disengagement among members, particularly when tasks are not clearly structured to ensure equitable participation. From a theoretical standpoint, this dynamic runs counter to the principles of Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasises mutual interaction and shared scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development. It also weakens the modelling and reinforcement potential highlighted in Bandura's Social Learning Theory, as uneven participation reduces opportunities for learners to learn from one another. Despite these drawbacks, size-determined grouping continues to be valued, particularly in large classes where it allows for quick organisation and manageable group oversight, as demonstrated by the Ujaama African philosophy of

togetherness. When paired with deliberate efforts to distribute abilities and personalities evenly, as noted by Astutik et al. (2024), this strategy can support both structure and meaningful peer learning.

The literature on size-determined group formation reveals several gaps that merit further investigation. First, while studies demonstrate its efficacy in managing participation and task distribution, there is limited insight into how teachers might better structure size-determined groups to account for learner abilities and personalities, preventing imbalance in group dynamics. Additionally, few studies have explored the long-term impacts of repeated participation in size-determined groups on learners' collaborative skills and task ownership. Research is also needed to understand the adaptability of size-determined grouping in classrooms with diverse learner needs, particularly in settings where inclusivity is prioritised, to evaluate how this approach impacts learners' overall development in collaboration, communication, and individual responsibility.

Temporary group formation, which involves creating groups for specific tasks or activities and then disbanding them upon completion, has become a notable approach in education, especially in European countries like Sweden and Norway, to foster cross-disciplinary learning and collaborative skills (Michaelsen, Knight & Fink, 2023). This strategy enables learners to engage with diverse peers on various tasks, promoting adaptability and encouraging a dynamic exchange of ideas. Research has demonstrated that temporary grouping effectively boosts learner motivation and engagement, as it exposes learners to different viewpoints and approaches across different tasks, thereby enriching their learning experience (Larsson & Pettersson, 2018). By participating in a

range of temporary groups, learners develop essential interpersonal skills and gain exposure to varied collaborative dynamics, which can be particularly beneficial in subjects requiring interdisciplinary approaches.

Despite its logistical flexibility and adaptability, temporary grouping has been criticised for its limited capacity to cultivate long-term relationships, trust, and sustained collaborative skills among learners. Miedema (2021) argues that because these groups are short-lived, they often lack the stability necessary for learners to form meaningful connections that underpin effective group learning. Similarly, Caulfield (2023) notes that the absence of continuity in group composition can result in shallow peer interactions, limiting the development of key competencies such as conflict resolution, cooperation, and mutual accountability. Nakibinge and Tumusiime (2022) observed in Ugandan primary classrooms that frequent changes in group membership hindered learners' ability to form productive working relationships, reducing both academic engagement and group cohesion. A related study by Wambua and Mutua (2021) in Kenya found that learners often struggled to build trust in temporarily formed groups, leading to inconsistent participation and reduced motivation during collaborative tasks. These findings underscore the theoretical tensions associated with temporary grouping. From a Vygotskian perspective, the lack of consistent peer interaction may inhibit the scaffolding process within the Zone of Proximal Development, as learners are denied the opportunity to build sustained collaborative relationships that support deeper cognitive development. Bandura's Social Learning Theory also highlights the importance of repeated exposure to peer behaviours for effective modelling and reinforcement, which is less likely to occur

in frequently shifting group structures. While temporary grouping offers practicality, especially in dynamic classroom environments, its educational effectiveness may depend on balancing flexibility with opportunities for repeated peer engagement that fosters trust, continuity, and deeper collaborative learning.

The existing literature on temporary group formation reveals several important gaps. Although temporary grouping can effectively boost engagement and exposure to diverse ideas, there is limited research on its impact on learners' long-term social and emotional development. Further investigation is required to determine how educators can balance the need for task-specific grouping with strategies that promote trust and sustained collaboration over time. Additionally, studies have yet to explore how temporary group formation impacts learners in diverse educational contexts outside of Europe, particularly in classrooms with varying resource levels or where relationship-building is a key part of the curriculum. These gaps underscore the need for further research on optimising temporary group formation to ensure it fully supports both immediate academic outcomes and the broader, long-term development of collaborative skills.

Temporary group formation, where groups are assembled for specific activities and then disbanded upon completion, is frequently utilized in European educational systems, particularly in Sweden and Norway, to enhance cross-disciplinary learning and foster collaborative skills. This approach enables learners to work with various peers on different tasks, which increases exposure to diverse perspectives and cultivates adaptability. Research has shown that temporary grouping can lead to higher levels of learner motivation and engagement by encouraging fresh social interactions and

providing learners with the chance to approach each task alongside different classmates (Larsson & Pettersson, 2018). In a study conducted in Swedish lower secondary schools, Bågenhammar (2008) found that temporary grouping helped broaden learners' understanding of a range of subjects, as well as refine their ability to function effectively in teams composed of diverse skill sets. This flexibility in grouping aligns with an educational aim of preparing learners for dynamic, interdisciplinary environments where versatility and collaborative competence are essential.

Nevertheless, this approach has been criticised by scholars who point out its limitations in nurturing long-term interpersonal relationships and trust among group members, which are fundamental for sustained collaboration and deeper learning outcomes. Olsen et al. (2020), in a study conducted in Norwegian schools, observed that although temporary grouping encouraged learners to adapt to a variety of working styles and perspectives, it often resulted in surface-level interactions with few opportunities for learners to form meaningful bonds. In a similar vein, Papachristou et al. (2022) reported that in primary schools across the United Kingdom, an over-reliance on temporary group formations could impede the development of consistent and trusting peer relationships that support continuous cognitive and social growth. Their findings advocate for a more balanced approach that combines temporary grouping with long-term structures, allowing learners to benefit from the richness of diverse peer engagements while also fostering the continuity required for deep, trust-based learning experiences.

The literature on temporary group formation reveals several gaps. Notably, there is limited exploration into the long-term impacts of temporary grouping on learners' social-

emotional development and sustained academic outcomes. Additionally, the majority of studies focus on European contexts, and further research is needed to assess how temporary grouping strategies function across diverse educational and cultural settings. Finally, there is little empirical insight into how best to balance temporary and long-term groupings to optimise both short-term engagement and long-term relational learning outcomes, highlighting an area ripe for further investigation to better support varied learning environments.

The special needs-support grouping strategy involves creating groups that integrate learners with special educational needs (SEN) alongside their typically developing peers, with the objective of fostering inclusivity, and ensuring tailored support for learners with SEN. This approach encourages social integration and enhances academic outcomes for learners with SEN, as evidenced by research in Uganda, where the strategy has been associated with increased social inclusion and academic achievement (Namukwaya et al., 2020). For instance, Devries et al. (2014) conducted a study in Ugandan primary schools and found that learners with special needs who engaged in mixed-ability groups exhibited improved self-confidence and academic performance compared to their peers in segregated environments. By participating in inclusive group settings, learners with SEN gain access to peer support and a collaborative atmosphere that fosters a sense of belonging and active engagement in the learning process.

Implementing special needs-support grouping in inclusive classrooms presents significant challenges, particularly in resource-constrained settings. This strategy, rooted in inclusive education and social constructivist theories, promotes collaborative learning through

social interaction and mutual support, aligning with Vygotsky's idea that learners thrive when supported within their zone of proximal development. It also demonstrates the African philosophy of Ubuntu, the philosophy that underscores the saying that, "I am because we are". Therefore, accentuating the interconnectedness of learners and reinforcing the idea that knowledge is co-constructed through collaboration, empathy, and mutual support. However, critics argue that integrating learners with special educational needs (SEN) alongside typically developing peers often places added demands on teachers who may lack specialised training or resources. Studies across several African contexts highlight these limitations. For instance, Naholo et al. (2022) found that teachers in Namibia's Oshana region were not adequately equipped to meet diverse learner needs, often resulting in unequal instructional attention. Similarly, Mirembe and Kiguli (2021) observed that while inclusive policies exist in Uganda, effective classroom implementation is undermined by limited professional development and insufficient learning materials. In Kenya, Njoroge and Wambugu (2019) reported that the absence of structured support systems and trained personnel negatively impacted the participation of learners with SEN in group tasks. Despite these obstacles, the special needs-support grouping strategy remains a promising approach to promoting inclusive and equitable learning. When implemented with adequate training, resources, and institutional backing, it fosters both academic and social growth for all learners by nurturing empathy, teamwork, and shared responsibility, as affirmed by Maciver et al. (2018).

The literature on special needs-support grouping reveals several key gaps. While existing studies underscore the benefits of integrating learners with SEN within mainstream classrooms, there is limited exploration of the specific teacher training programs or resources required to support such inclusion effectively. Additionally, most studies have focused on developed educational settings, with less attention given to resource-constrained environments where teachers face distinct challenges in meeting the needs of diverse learners. Furthermore, research has not yet thoroughly examined the long-term impacts of inclusive grouping on such learners' academic progression and social development, highlighting an area for future study. Expanding the understanding of these gaps could help educators and policymakers refine strategies for inclusive group learning, ensuring that learners with SEN receive consistent and impactful support in various educational settings.

The grouping cards strategy involves assigning learners to groups randomly by using cards marked with their names, colours, or numbers, and is commonly employed in primary schools to promote fairness and inclusivity in group formation. This method is especially prominent in Nigerian primary schools, where it has been shown to reduce teacher bias and favouritism while creating more equitable learning environments (Olaniyan & Adepoju, 2019). By randomising group composition, the technique introduces diversity across learners' backgrounds, academic abilities, and social profiles, thereby enhancing the potential for richer collaborative learning experiences. Mergiwati et al. (2024), in a study among Indonesian nursery schools, demonstrated that the use of grouping cards resulted in varied and balanced group structures, which enabled learners

to engage meaningfully with peers of differing strengths and viewpoints. Similarly, Kenyan and Ugandan studies have acknowledged the technique's contribution to equity in classrooms by fostering balanced peer interaction, particularly in schools where social hierarchies or teacher bias might influence group formation (Abbo & Wandera, 2021; Muthoni, 2020). Grounded in social learning theory and constructivist pedagogy, the grouping cards approach not only supports cognitive development through shared exploration and dialogue but also cultivates interpersonal skills and inclusivity, essential for holistic learner development.

However, critics argue that the technique may overlook individual learning styles or preferences, potentially affecting group cohesion and the effectiveness of collaborative learning. A study by Okafor and Nwachukwu (2018) in Nigerian secondary schools found that while grouping cards supported fairness, some learners expressed dissatisfaction when placed in groups that did not align with their personal strengths or learning styles, potentially reducing engagement and participation. Opeyemi (2023) also emphasises that pairing the grouping cards technique with complementary grouping approaches could improve group dynamics and make collaboration more effective, particularly in secondary school settings in Nigeria. Despite these critiques, the grouping card technique remains a popular choice, particularly in contexts where equitable treatment and transparency in group formation are critical (Kamau, 2020).

The literature highlights several gaps regarding the use of the grouping cards technique. First, there is limited exploration of how this method impacts younger learners' engagement and adaptability within diverse group settings, particularly in primary and

nursery education. Additionally, studies have yet to assess the long-term effectiveness of combining grouping cards technique with other strategies, especially in fostering skills beyond immediate group tasks. Lastly, while grouping cards ensure fairness, there is insufficient research on how this approach might better accommodate individual learning needs and preferences within diverse educational contexts. Addressing these gaps could help refine the technique, ensuring both fairness and enhanced learning outcomes in group-based activities.

The interest-based grouping strategy organises learners into groups based on their individual interests or preferences, with the primary goal of enhancing motivation and engagement. This approach allows learners to work on tasks or projects that align with their personal interests, fostering a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience. Studies conducted in European contexts, particularly in Finland and the Netherlands, indicate that interest-based grouping can result in increased enthusiasm for learning and heightened levels of participation (Korpershoek et al., 2016). By aligning educational tasks with learners' intrinsic motivations, this strategy encourages a proactive attitude toward learning, often leading to improved engagement.

For instance, Remes et al. (2018) conducted a study among in-service teachers in primary and secondary schools in Japan and Finland, revealing that learners grouped by interests displayed greater enthusiasm, took more initiative, and showed a stronger sense of ownership over their learning. This was especially evident in tasks where learners were given more autonomy, allowing them to explore subjects they were passionate about. Findings suggested that interest-based grouping not only bolstered academic engagement

but also fostered collaboration, as learners were more inclined to share ideas and work collectively on projects, they found personally relevant.

The literature, however, reveals certain gaps in understanding the broader applications and limitations of interest-based grouping. While the strategy is effective in increasing engagement, there is limited research on its long-term impact on learning outcomes, particularly across different educational levels and cultural contexts. Additionally, studies often overlook how interest-based grouping might affect the development of core competencies in areas that do not align with individual preferences, potentially limiting exposure to diverse learning experiences. Future research could explore how this strategy can be balanced with other grouping methods to ensure a comprehensive educational experience while maintaining high levels of motivation and engagement.

Interest-based grouping, by aligning group tasks with learners' intrinsic motivations, fosters a dynamic and learner-centered environment that actively promotes engagement. This strategy can transform the learning experience, encouraging learners to take ownership of their projects and contribute enthusiastically within a setting that reflects their interests. Studies such as those conducted by Walkington and Bernacki (2014) in Dutch middle and high schools demonstrate that interest-based grouping successfully heightens motivation, with learners showing increased dedication to tasks aligned with their preferences. However, this approach can sometimes result in homogenous groups that lack a diverse skill set or range of perspectives. In these instances, groups may miss the benefits of varied approaches to problem-solving and learning, potentially limiting overall group development and collaborative effectiveness.

Furthermore, research by Kayalar and Arı (2017) in Turkish primary schools highlights that interest-based grouping benefits significantly from added guidance and structured support from teachers. This ensures that groups remain goal-oriented and productive, as well as focused on core learning objectives. Without such a structure, there can be a risk of groups deviating from the intended educational outcomes, given the potential for varied interests to dominate. Nonetheless, interest-based grouping, when complemented with effective teacher oversight, remains an effective strategy to foster learner motivation and engagement in group learning settings (Pillai, 2022).

The literature identifies critical gaps in understanding how interest-based grouping can be balanced with academic rigour and diversity, particularly in varied educational settings. While studies suggest that this approach boosts learner motivation, the impact on academic performance across different subjects and cultural contexts is less understood. Additionally, the reliance on teacher intervention to maintain productivity signals a gap in fostering sustainable, self-directed learning within interest-based groups. Future research might explore integrating interest-based grouping with complementary strategies to enhance engagement while ensuring that group diversity enriches the learning experience, offering a more comprehensive educational framework.

Closely related to interest-based grouping is the peer-selected grouping strategy, which permits learners to choose their own group members, based on factors like friendship or compatibility. This approach is praised for empowering learners by giving them a sense of autonomy and encouraging cooperative learning environments. Studies in Nigerian primary schools demonstrate that peer-selected grouping can foster a sense of ownership,

autonomy, and responsibility, leading to higher levels of engagement and satisfaction in group work (Adeyemi & Olatoye, 2018). For example, Adesina and Afolabi (2020) found that primary learners who selected their group members showed increased motivation and were more invested in tasks, reinforcing the positive relationship between autonomy and engagement.

However, critics highlight potential drawbacks, particularly with the formation of homogeneous groups and the possible exclusion of certain learners. Research by Oni and Ojo (2019) in Nigerian primary schools revealed that peer-selected groups often consisted of existing friends, which can limit group diversity and unintentionally exclude learners outside of these social circles. This limitation is particularly pertinent in contexts where social cohesion and inclusion are prioritised in educational outcomes. Additionally, Fatokun and Alabi's (2019) study on Science learners in Nigerian public co-educational schools emphasised the importance of teacher guidance and support when implementing peer-selected grouping to ensure equitable participation opportunities for all learners.

Despite these challenges, the peer-selected grouping strategy remains valuable for promoting learner autonomy and fostering collaboration. However, the literature highlights gaps in evaluating its impact on inclusivity and balanced learning. Future research could examine how combining peer selection with strategies that ensure diversity may prevent exclusion, thereby maximising the benefits of learner autonomy without compromising inclusivity and educational equity (Colley, 2015).

The teacher-facilitated grouping strategy involves teachers actively orchestrating the group formation process, drawing on their understanding of learners' diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles. This targeted approach enables educators to create balanced groups that effectively support collaboration, cater to various learning preferences, and foster constructive interaction. Research in Uganda indicates that teacher-facilitated grouping often leads to more cohesive and productive groups, as teachers are in a position to provide ongoing support and adjust their strategies based on group dynamics. For example, Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2020) observed that Ugandan primary schools using teacher-led grouping experienced enhanced collaboration, as teachers tailored guidance and scaffolding to meet specific group needs. Similarly, Wakumire et al. (2022) found in their study of selected secondary schools in Mbale, Uganda, that groups formed with teacher facilitation exhibited higher engagement and active participation, resulting in a more inclusive and effective learning environment. This approach enables teachers to ensure that all learners contribute meaningfully, addressing skill disparities by strategically pairing learners with complementary strengths.

Nevertheless, critics of this approach argue that it may inadvertently limit learners' autonomy, as it reduces their ability to choose group members and shape the group work experience. Kiwanuka and Ssenyonga (2018) found that, in some cases, teacher-directed grouping led to learner dissatisfaction and disengagement, particularly when learners felt their preferences were disregarded, potentially undermining their investment in group tasks. Nakayenga and Kizito (2021) further emphasised the need to balance teacher

guidance and learner independence to foster both effective collaboration and a sense of agency among learners.

Despite these challenges, teacher-facilitated grouping remains a valuable strategy in primary schools for creating balanced, productive groups. However, the literature reveals gaps in understanding how to optimise this strategy to maximise learner autonomy while ensuring structured, supportive group formation. Future studies could explore how teachers can incorporate learner input into the grouping process to sustain both high engagement and autonomy, ultimately enhancing the overall efficacy of teacher-facilitated grouping.

Grouping strategies in primary schools, including mixed-ability and special needs-support grouping, are deeply informed by Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which underscores the importance of social interaction and collaboration as essential components of learning. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is especially relevant here, as it suggests that learners can achieve higher levels of understanding and skill development with guidance from more knowledgeable peers or adults. In Uganda, for example, mixed-ability grouping has been shown to enhance collaboration among learners of different academic proficiencies, leading to tangible improvements in academic performance (Brown et al., 2020). Through this grouping approach, learners benefit from the collective exchange of knowledge, which enables those in the ZPD to grasp concepts more effectively by observing and engaging with higher-achieving peers.

Similarly, in Nigeria, special needs-support grouping has demonstrated positive impacts on social inclusion and academic achievement for learners with special needs, reinforcing the inclusive potential of collaborative learning environments (Namukwaya et al., 2020). This grouping strategy not only provides these learners with critical social exposure but also allows them to work within their ZPD by engaging with peers who model diverse approaches to learning. Both mixed-ability and special needs-support grouping strategies facilitate scaffolded learning experiences, where learners actively construct knowledge through guided interactions, aligning with Vygotsky's assertion that cognitive development is closely tied to social processes.

However, while these approaches reflect Vygotsky's principles, there are gaps in understanding the specific mechanisms through which group composition affects learning outcomes. Further research could examine how varying group dynamics within these strategies influence individual engagement, learning progress, and the sustainability of collaborative skills beyond initial academic improvements.

Same-ability grouping and size-determined group formation align with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which highlights the significance of observation and modelling as pathways for learning within structured groups. By grouping learners of similar ability levels, same-ability grouping allows for peer modelling that is more closely aligned with each learner's current skills. However, research in Nigeria and Uganda has indicated potential downsides; for instance, same-ability grouping can foster feelings of inferiority among lower-ability learners, while higher-ability learners may experience limited challenges that stifle their academic growth (Okeke & Ugwu, 2019). Size-determined

group formation, which organises learners based on task requirements, has been noted for facilitating balanced groups that enhance effective collaboration and communication, as observed in Nigerian primary schools (Adewale et al., 2021).

Despite these advantages, critics argue that both strategies might not consistently achieve optimal balance in terms of individual abilities or personalities. For example, scholars such as Lo, Zeng and Hu (2017) suggest that size-determined groups can sometimes inadvertently group high-ability learners together, leading to imbalances in workload distribution and collaborative engagement. This highlights a need for flexible approaches that combine same-ability and size-determined grouping with other strategies to better support diverse learning needs.

Temporary group formation, which aligns with Piaget's emphasis on active engagement and the construction of knowledge, has demonstrated its potential to increase motivation and engagement among learners, particularly in European educational settings (Larsson & Pettersson, 2018). This approach supports learners in immersing themselves in varied group tasks, promoting cognitive growth through direct, hands-on experience. However, critics argue that temporary groups may hinder the development of long-term relationships and trust among group members, elements that are essential for sustained collaboration and deeper learning connections.

Therefore, theoretical frameworks like Piaget's Constructivist Theory give teachers useful information that helps them plan the use of temporary group formation to encourage meaningful collaborative learning in elementary schools. By understanding the

theoretical underpinnings of grouping strategies, educators can more effectively structure group learning to balance short-term engagement with long-term relationship-building, ultimately enriching the overall learning experience.

The group formation strategies that primary school teachers use to facilitate collaborative learning are anchored in foundational educational theories, such as Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory. These theories underscore the importance of social interaction, observation, modeling, and active engagement as critical factors in shaping meaningful and effective group learning environments (Kibuku, 2021). Teachers employ these grouping strategies to cultivate diverse, balanced groups that enhance inclusivity, foster collaboration, and optimize learning outcomes. For example, the random group formation strategy, advocated by scholars like Smith and Jones (2019), aims to promote diversity and inclusivity by avoiding the formation of cliques. However, critics argue that random grouping may lead to unequal participation or dominance by certain members over time, which can disrupt group cohesion and engagement (Johnson, 2018; Thompson et al., 2021). To address these challenges, Garcia et al. (2019) propose integrating mixed-ability grouping with random group formation to create a more balanced and inclusive learning environment. This approach ensures that learners of different abilities are evenly distributed, maximizing peer learning opportunities and supporting diverse perspectives within the group.

Despite the strengths of these group formation strategies, the literature reveals critical gaps in their application and outcomes in primary school settings. Current research has not sufficiently examined the long-term effects of combining random and mixed-ability

grouping strategies on sustained inclusivity and learning outcomes. Additionally, there is limited research on how these strategies impact learners with diverse cultural backgrounds or special educational needs, raising questions about their applicability in heterogeneous classrooms. Furthermore, while theoretical frameworks support these grouping strategies, practical challenges such as classroom management, teacher training, and resource limitations are rarely addressed in depth. Addressing these gaps could inform the development of more adaptive grouping methods, tailored to the diverse and dynamic needs of primary school learners, ultimately strengthening the role of group learning in fostering holistic educational development.

#### **2.4 Implementation of group learning**

The successful implementation of group learning pedagogy is closely tied to the alignment of teaching practices with curriculum goals, availability of instructional resources, and the capacity of teachers to facilitate collaborative activities (Johnson & Smith, 2019; Smith et al., 2018). In a U.S.-based study involving 120 elementary school teachers, Smith et al. (2018) found that integrating group learning into subject-based curriculum goals made the learning process more coherent and meaningful. Learners were better able to grasp concepts and retain knowledge when group tasks directly reinforced what was taught in the syllabus. Similarly, Johnson and Smith (2019), drawing on research conducted in 15 secondary schools across the UK, argued that the availability of materials, flexible classroom space, and adequate instructional time significantly affected learners' ability to engage meaningfully in group tasks. Without such structural

support, group learning becomes superficial, with learners often disengaging due to logistical challenges or poorly coordinated activities.

Emerging research from African contexts echoes these findings while shedding light on region-specific challenges and innovations. For example, Musoke and Isabirye (2021), in a study of primary schools in Uganda's Wakiso and Mukono districts, reported that while group learning was encouraged by the national curriculum, its implementation was inconsistent due to limited teacher training and overcrowded classrooms. In Rwanda, Uwitonze and Nizeyimana (2020) found that group learning contributed to improved learner participation and critical thinking in lower primary schools, but only when teachers received consistent support through in-service training and peer collaboration networks. Similarly, a study in Zimbabwe by Chikozho (2019) highlighted how limited access to teaching materials and large class sizes negatively impacted the structure and effectiveness of group tasks, with some teachers resorting to informal peer work that lacked clear pedagogical guidance. These regional studies underscore the need to consider local educational constraints and supports when evaluating group learning practices, as successful implementation is often dependent on context-specific enablers such as policy backing, infrastructure, and sustained teacher professional development.

The research collectively points to the critical role of structured support, both pedagogical and logistical, in the successful use of group learning pedagogy. They also align closely with the theoretical framework underpinning this study, which integrates Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Vygotsky's emphasis on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) underscores the

importance of guided group interaction, which is only effective when teachers are trained to scaffold learning appropriately. Bandura's theory reinforces the need for well-facilitated group environments where observation, modelling, and reinforcement foster peer learning. Thus, the literature affirms that successful group learning implementation is not only a matter of curriculum alignment or policy directives but also a function of how well learning environments support the cognitive and social processes that these foundational theories describe.

Despite the valuable insights these studies provide, gaps remain in understanding the contextual factors that affect the implementation of group learning across different education levels and cultural settings. Current literature lacks comprehensive exploration of how group learning implementation varies by regional educational policies, resource availability, and teacher preparedness, particularly in resource-constrained settings. Additionally, further research is needed to examine the long-term effects of teacher training on sustaining effective group learning and the role of teacher experience in adapting group strategies to diverse classroom needs. This gap highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing group learning implementation across varied educational contexts.

Effective implementation of group work in educational settings requires the deliberate provision of sufficient resources, including instructional time, learning materials, and adequate classroom space (Johnson and Smith, 2019; Amadi and Chukwu, 2021; Kamau et al., 2020; Sekandi et al., 2019). Johnson and Smith (2019), drawing on research across 60 secondary schools in the United Kingdom, observed that schools that prioritised

resource allocation for group learning experienced higher levels of learner engagement and academic progress. In Nigeria, Amadi and Chukwu (2021) observed that inadequate classroom space and shortages of instructional materials significantly limited group participation, as learners struggled to interact meaningfully in congested and poorly resourced environments. Kamau et al. (2020), working with secondary school teachers in Kenya, highlighted the importance of allocating sufficient instructional time for group work, noting that teachers who had dedicated time for planning and facilitation were better positioned to support learner collaboration. Sekandi et al. (2019), in a study involving primary schools in Uganda, echoed these challenges, emphasising that the lack of materials and overcrowded classrooms made it difficult to organise meaningful group tasks. In the context of Zambia, Chansa and Tembo (2020) pointed out that resource gaps not only affected learner interaction but also discouraged teachers from implementing group-based methods consistently.

Equally important to the success of group learning pedagogy is the quality of teacher training and ongoing professional development. Educators who are well trained in collaborative learning strategies are more confident in structuring group tasks, managing group dynamics, and supporting diverse learner needs (Brown and Jones, 2020; Adebayo and Okonkwo, 2021; Mugisha and Namulondo, 2022). Brown and Jones (2020) through a study in the United States, demonstrated that teachers who had received specialised training in group facilitation strategies fostered more productive peer interactions and greater learner involvement. In Nigeria, Adebayo and Okonkwo (2021) noted that professional development enabled teachers to create inclusive learning spaces where

group roles were clearly defined and all learners could participate. Mugisha and Namulondo (2022), focusing on Ugandan primary schools, highlighted how structured in-service training enhanced teachers' ability to promote collaborative learning through guided tasks, thereby strengthening learner engagement. In Zambia, Mulenga and Phiri (2021) observed that teachers with ongoing mentorship support were more likely to apply group-based strategies even in resource-constrained settings. Furthermore, Nsubuga (2022) and Kwame et al. (2023) stressed the importance of leadership support in creating time and opportunities for teachers to reflect, collaborate, and refine their group work practices.

These studies demonstrate that both material conditions and teacher preparedness are critical in shaping the quality of group learning experiences. When viewed through the lens of Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, the role of the teacher as a facilitator within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development becomes clearer, especially when teachers are well trained and adequately resourced. Bandura's Social Learning Theory also reinforces the idea that positive modelling and reinforcement within group settings are more likely to occur when teachers are confident and learners have the tools they need to engage actively. Taken together, these perspectives affirm that successful group learning requires not only pedagogical intention but also institutional commitment to building teacher capacity and resourcing collaborative learning environments.

However, gaps remain in the literature regarding the long-term impact of resource provision and training on sustaining group learning outcomes, especially in resource-constrained settings across Africa. Existing studies are limited in examining how factors

like administrative support, cultural attitudes, and teacher workload intersect to affect the consistency and efficacy of group learning. Future research should focus on evaluating sustainable resource allocation models and tailored training programs that address regional challenges, aiming to enhance group learning's overall success in diverse educational contexts.

Multiple scholars have explored the effective implementation of group learning within primary school classrooms, shedding light on best practices and challenges that influence its success (Baines et al., 2022; Kutnick & Grootenboer, 2003; Lamm & Reckwitz, 2013). Kutnick and Grootenboer (2003), in their study on primary school classrooms in Hong Kong, identified structured group tasks, explicit instruction on group work skills, and fostering positive interdependence among learners as fundamental strategies for promoting effective group work. Their research emphasized the importance of clearly defined roles within groups, which enabled learners to engage collaboratively and rely on each other's strengths, fostering both academic and social development.

Similarly, Baines et al. (2022) examined the implementation challenges of group work in UK primary classrooms, noting that successful group learning requires clear work instructions, consistent monitoring of group progress, and a supportive learning environment that encourages learner interaction. Their findings highlighted that without structured support, group activities could devolve into unequal participation, where some learners might dominate while others remained passive. Effective monitoring by teachers was crucial in maintaining balanced participation and guiding learners to achieve collective learning goals.

Moreover, the facilitation skills of teachers are vital to the productivity of group learning sessions. Lamm and Reckwitz (2013) stressed that teachers' use of probing questions, constructive feedback, and conceptual support helps stimulate purposeful discussions within groups. These facilitation techniques, as demonstrated in primary school settings, guide learners to articulate their thinking and engage in critical analysis, thus making group work more meaningful and enhancing learning outcomes. By encouraging open-ended questions and feedback, teachers help learners engage deeply with the content and contribute actively to group discussions, fostering both understanding and skill development.

However, while the literature provides a range of strategies for effective group work, it reveals gaps in understanding the adaptability of these methods across diverse educational contexts. Most studies, such as those conducted in Hong Kong and the UK, focus on structured, resource-rich environments, leaving a gap in evidence from low-resource settings where teacher support and material resources may be limited. Additionally, there is limited research on the long-term impacts of group learning facilitation skills on learner outcomes, particularly in classrooms with varied socio-cultural dynamics. Further studies could examine how group learning strategies adapt to resource-constrained settings, and these could equally assess the sustained effectiveness of teacher facilitation techniques in promoting equitable participation across diverse learning environments.

The literature on the effective implementation of group learning in primary school classrooms offers valuable insights into the practices teachers employ to facilitate group

learning in heterogeneous settings. Key practices include providing guidance on task composition to ensure meaningful engagement, fostering constructive interdependence among learners, differentiating instruction to meet diverse learning needs, and supporting purposeful interactions that encourage active participation and collaboration (Brown et al., 2020; Kutnick & Grootenboer, 2003; Baines et al., 2022). These strategies contribute significantly to understanding the complexities involved in implementing group learning effectively across varied classroom contexts and underscore the importance of structured support in creating inclusive, collaborative learning environments.

However, these studies primarily focus on general implementation strategies, often overlooking context-specific challenges, such as how resource limitations or large class sizes impact group learning effectiveness in different educational settings, particularly in low-resource schools. This study addresses these gaps by exploring the practical implementation of group learning in primary schools within Mityana District, Uganda, offering insights into how teachers navigate resource constraints, manage group dynamics in large classes, and adapt group learning strategies to local contexts. By addressing these gaps, the study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of group learning implementation, especially in environments where the traditional support structures may be limited, thus contributing to a more inclusive model of group learning.

Numerous studies have explored the implementation of group learning in inclusive classrooms, focusing on pedagogical practices that accommodate diverse learning needs while fostering meaningful collaboration among learners (Casserly et al., 2019; Keppens and Consuegra, 2019; Moya and Burke, 2023). In Australia, Moya and Burke (2023)

examined how primary school teachers design and perceive grouping strategies within inclusive classroom settings. Their research revealed that teacher-led scaffolding, consistent guidance, and targeted support mechanisms were instrumental in enhancing the quality of peer collaboration. By intentionally structuring group interactions, teachers were able to facilitate shared responsibilities among learners of differing abilities, promoting both social engagement and academic progress. This deliberate approach encouraged equitable participation, especially for learners who typically struggle with individual tasks, while also nurturing interpersonal skills such as patience, respect, and mutual support. Similarly, Casserly et al. (2019) explored the experiences of primary teachers working in multi-grade classrooms in the Philippines and observed that flexible grouping strategies, particularly a thoughtful balance between ability-based and mixed-ability arrangements played a crucial role in fostering inclusive learning environments. These practices provided differentiated levels of challenge and support that allowed all learners, including those with special educational needs, to contribute meaningfully to group tasks, thus promoting a culture of inclusion and cooperative learning.

Further insights from Keppens and Consuegra (2019), based on a study of Flemish-speaking primary schools in Belgium, and reinforced the importance of well-structured grouping strategies in fostering inclusive classroom cultures. Their research emphasized that the success of group learning in diverse settings depends not only on group composition but also on the teacher's professional capacity to foster collaboration through clear task design, inclusive classroom norms, and proactive support for interpersonal development. Teachers who maintained a strong professional vision were

more adept at managing group dynamics and ensuring that all learners remained engaged regardless of ability or background. However, despite the strengths of these international studies, a closer examination reveals limitations in their applicability to classrooms in lower-income contexts. Most of the reviewed literature assumes a baseline of institutional and material support that may not be available in resource-constrained environments. For instance, Otim and Nakabugo (2021), in their study of inclusive education practices in Ugandan primary schools, highlighted how overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching aids, and limited teacher training often undermine the potential of group learning. Learners with disabilities or those needing additional academic support were often sidelined during group tasks due to inadequate teacher facilitation and insufficient differentiation. Similarly, Kanyongo and Kanyimba (2020) in Zambia observed that while group work was conceptually embraced, it frequently failed to yield inclusive outcomes because teachers lacked the tools, time, and confidence to manage heterogeneity within groups effectively. These insights underscore the need for more contextually grounded approaches that critically examine how group learning can be adapted and sustained in settings marked by high learner-to-teacher ratios and constrained educational infrastructure.

Taken together, these studies affirm that effective group learning in inclusive classrooms is closely tied to the teacher's ability to manage learner diversity, cultivate a positive group climate, and design tasks that stimulate both cognitive and social growth. The importance of teacher facilitation aligns strongly with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which stresses the central role of the teacher in guiding learners through the Zone

of Proximal Development. In inclusive settings, this guidance becomes even more critical as learners may enter group tasks with widely varying abilities and experiences. Bandura's Social Learning Theory further reinforces the importance of collaborative learning environments, where observation, imitation, and reinforcement are key mechanisms for behavioural and cognitive development. The presence of diverse learners within a group amplifies the potential for modelling positive interaction and learning from one another. In inclusive classrooms, carefully structured group tasks provide the setting for such cognitive stimulation, as learners challenge, question, and build upon each other's ideas. Therefore, a theoretically grounded approach to group learning not only enhances academic outcomes but also serves as a pathway for building inclusive, participatory, and socially cohesive learning environments.

However, the literature reveals a notable gap in exploring the challenges and contextual constraints teachers face when implementing group learning in resource-limited inclusive settings, particularly in low- to middle-income countries. While these studies focus on inclusive strategies and teacher support within developed education systems, less is known about how educators in varied socioeconomic contexts manage group learning inclusivity under constraints such as high learner-to-teacher ratios or limited resources. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring how teachers in primary schools in Mityana district adapt grouping strategies to meet diverse learner needs in inclusive settings, adding insight into inclusive group learning practices in low-resource environments.

A growing body of literature examines the strategies teachers employ to facilitate group learning experiences beyond traditional classroom settings, often referred to as outdoor learning in primary schools. Studies such as Kelly et al. (2022), Larson et al. (2021), and Bennett and Andrews (2019) underscore the increasing recognition of outdoor learning as an effective approach to promoting inclusivity, collaboration, and hands-on engagement in learning. For instance, Kelly et al. (2022) conducted a study on promoting inclusion through outdoor learning in primary schools in the USA and Ireland, emphasizing that teachers need to prepare a wide array of teaching, learning, and assessment activities to implement outdoor group learning successfully. Larson et al. (2021), in a study involving primary schools in Canada, further identified that outdoor learning is most successful when aligned with curriculum goals and structured to foster teamwork, critical thinking, and environmental awareness.

Specific strategies often cited in outdoor group learning include field trips, project-based learning, and community service or outreach programs (Bennett & Andrews, 2019). Kelly et al. (2022) found that field trips, such as visits to local historical sites or Science centers, offer learners experiential learning opportunities that enhance their understanding of academic concepts and foster peer interaction. Project-based learning outside the classroom, as demonstrated by Nguyen et al. (2020) in a study on Australian primary schools, allows learners to work collaboratively on research projects, completing field tasks and presenting their findings, which enhances engagement and deepens learning. Community service and outreach programs, as discussed in studies by Taylor and Monroe (2020), provide meaningful group learning experiences by allowing learners to

plan and implement projects that serve their communities, reinforcing civic responsibility, teamwork, and communication skills. Teachers play a pivotal role in facilitating these programs by guiding learners in project organization, decision-making, and reflection, fostering a learning environment that encourages cooperation, empathy, and responsibility.

Despite the demonstrated benefits of outdoor group learning, gaps remain in understanding the specific impacts of these strategies on different learner demographics and educational contexts, especially in low-resource settings. While existing studies offer valuable insights into strategies for effective outdoor group learning, most focus on resource-abundant environments in high-income countries. Further research is needed to explore the implementation and outcomes of outdoor learning in diverse settings, particularly in low- to middle-income countries where access to resources may be limited. Additionally, there is a scarcity of research on the long-term impacts of outdoor learning on learners' academic and social development across various age groups and subjects. All these calls for future exploration in this area. This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the approaches used to implement outdoor group learning in Ugandan primary schools, shedding light on context-specific strategies and challenges in low-resource environments.

The literature provides valuable insights into the practical strategies that teachers use to implement group learning effectively in mixed-ability and diverse classrooms. These strategies include thoughtful task composition, the deliberate fostering of constructive interdependence, scaffolded instruction, and ongoing targeted support that encourages

meaningful peer interaction. Such approaches are particularly crucial in settings where learners come from varied backgrounds and possess differing academic needs, requiring teachers to balance group dynamics while ensuring inclusive participation. The evidence highlights that successful group learning depends not only on assigning learners to groups but also on designing purposeful, engaging tasks that promote shared responsibility and collaborative problem-solving. Extending this perspective, Kelly et al. (2022) examined how group learning strategies are adapted for non-traditional environments, particularly through outdoor learning in primary schools across the United States and Ireland. Their research emphasised the value of preparing diverse instructional and assessment activities that align with experiential, hands-on learning beyond the classroom. Teachers employed approaches such as field trips, project-based learning, and community-based service projects to cultivate collaboration in real-world contexts. Field trips, for instance, offered opportunities for learners to engage in joint observation, inquiry, and reflection, reinforcing their understanding through active exploration. Project-based learning tasks enabled learners to take ownership of research and presentations in teams, fostering accountability, deeper comprehension, and peer mentoring. Meanwhile, community service projects allowed learners to collaboratively plan and implement outreach activities, building not only academic knowledge but also social-emotional competencies such as empathy, communication, and responsible decision-making. These studies collectively affirm that group learning, whether within or beyond classroom walls, thrives when instruction is intentionally designed to support active, cooperative, and inclusive learner engagement.

Despite the breadth of these studies, a notable gap remains in understanding how teachers adapt these group learning strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners in low-resource settings or in primary schools located in culturally distinct environments. Existing research primarily focuses on educational settings in high-income countries, where there is abundance of resources, leaving a gap in the literature regarding how group learning strategies are implemented and experienced in under-resourced or rural schools. Furthermore, the long-term impacts of group learning on academic and social development across different age levels and subjects have not been adequately addressed through research. This study aims to address these gaps by examining group learning implementation strategies in Ugandan primary schools, with a focus on adapting practices to accommodate the specific challenges and opportunities presented in low-resource, culturally diverse educational contexts.

## **2.5 Learner Experiences of Group Learning**

This section delves into the literature surrounding how learners experience group learning within the context of primary schools. The reviewed literature is presented in relation to the aspects of group learning that are liked by the learners and those that they dislike.

### **2.5.1 Learners' Positive Attitudes towards Group Learning**

Research shows that primary school learners often hold positive attitudes towards group learning, citing increased motivation, enjoyment, and meaningful engagement in classroom activities (Almulla, 2023; Khan et al., 2020; Mohammed, 2016). In a study conducted in India, Khan et al. (2020) found that learners particularly appreciated group work in Mathematics, where tasks such as problem-solving and peer tutoring created a

sense of shared responsibility and made lessons more engaging. Similarly, Almulla (2023), investigating project-based learning in Saudi Arabian primary and secondary schools, revealed that learners found group activities enjoyable and enriching due to the opportunities they provided for building communication and collaboration skills. Learners reported that working together made them feel more confident and supported, especially when tackling complex assignments. In Ethiopia, Mohammed (2016) also observed that learners enjoyed the interactive nature of group tasks, which allowed them to participate more actively, share ideas freely, and build a sense of belonging within the classroom. These experiences of increased involvement and peer cooperation often translated into deeper conceptual understanding and higher levels of learner satisfaction.

Similar patterns emerged in East Africa. A study by Nabirye and Bwengye (2021) in Ugandan primary schools found that learners were highly motivated by group activities, particularly during English Composition and Social Studies discussions, where peer exchange helped them to articulate ideas more clearly and learn from classmates with stronger verbal skills. Learners described group learning as a safe space to ask questions without fear of ridicule, fostering a more inclusive environment. Similarly, in Kenya, Mwangi and Ndirangu (2020) observed that Grade Five learners expressed enthusiasm for group work in science lessons, where they performed simple experiments and demonstrations. Many reported that working in groups boosted their confidence and that observing peers' success encouraged active participation. These findings align with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which highlights the role of peer interaction and scaffolding in extending individual learning. Bandura's Social Learning Theory also

explains how learners develop confidence through observing and modelling peer behaviour. However, while the literature underscores emotional and social benefits, it often lacks a deeper analysis of the cognitive mechanisms that drive learning in group settings. In addition, factors such as teacher facilitation, group composition, and resource constraints like overcrowded classrooms and limited materials are often under-examined. A more critical, theory-informed investigation is necessary to unpack how group learning influences both cognitive and social engagement, particularly in diverse and under-resourced school contexts.

Despite these encouraging findings, the literature reveals gaps in understanding the broader impacts of group learning on different educational outcomes across cultural and socioeconomic settings. Much of the research, while insightful, focuses on high- to middle-income countries, with limited data from low-income or rural educational settings where resources for facilitating effective group work may be scarce. Additionally, the long-term impact of group learning on academic achievement and skill development beyond immediate engagement has yet to be adequately explored across various subjects and age groups. This study aims to address these gaps by investigating learners' attitudes toward group learning in Ugandan primary schools, examining both short-term and potential long-term outcomes in a low-resource context.

Research across diverse contexts demonstrates that learners appreciate group learning for its positive influence on communication skills and peer engagement (Huber and Seidel, 2019; Gillies and Boyle, 2010; Liu et al., 2020). In Germany, Huber and Seidel (2019) found that primary and secondary school learners gained confidence in articulating their

thoughts during group tasks in Mathematics and language arts, with collaborative settings enabling more effective communication and deeper conceptual understanding. Similarly, Gillies and Boyle (2010), in their study of learners aged 11 to 14 in Brisbane, Australia, reported that learners valued the opportunity to express mathematical reasoning more clearly and refine their communication in peer-led interactions. However, such findings should be interpreted with caution, as they reflect experiences in relatively well-resourced educational environments. In lower-resourced settings, such as those found in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the translation of these benefits may be influenced by class size, teacher capacity, and learning materials. For example, a study by Musasizi and Mugagga (2022) in Ugandan primary schools highlighted how group learning improved classroom talk among learners, particularly during oral comprehension tasks in English lessons. Yet the same study pointed out that overcrowded classrooms and limited teacher guidance often restricted deeper interaction. In Kenya, Mutweleli and Githui (2018) reported that while group learning in Mathematics enhanced learner communication and confidence, some learners remained passive due to unclear task roles and peer dominance. These cases suggest that the communicative gains of group learning are not automatic but depend heavily on instructional quality and facilitative teaching strategies.

Beyond enhancing communication, group learning is also recognised for strengthening learners' social relationships and peer networks (Gillies and Boyle, 2010; Huber and Seidel, 2019; Liu et al., 2020). Huber and Seidel's (2019) findings suggested that the sense of community created through group work improved classroom cohesion, with learners feeling more supported and less isolated. Liu, Hsieh, and Cho (2020), in a study

of Chinese primary schools, similarly highlighted that project-based group learning fostered collaboration, mutual respect, and a shared sense of responsibility among peers. In East Africa, Nabirye and Bwengye (2021) documented that learners in Ugandan primary schools appreciated group activities during Social Studies and Science for enabling them to make new friends and learn from each other in a non-threatening environment. However, these social benefits are not universally realised. In contexts where group composition is not thoughtfully managed, learners may experience social exclusion or feel overshadowed by more dominant group members, as noted in Otieno's (2017) study of Kenyan rural schools. Theoretically, these findings resonate with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which posits that learning is socially mediated and that meaningful peer interaction can foster development within the learner's zone of proximal development. Nonetheless, the success of group learning in building social capital depends on more than just placing learners in groups, it requires deliberate facilitation to ensure inclusivity, equality of participation, and responsiveness to classroom diversity.

However, the literature reveals gaps regarding how these benefits vary across different subjects, education levels, and cultural contexts, particularly in resource-limited settings where classroom dynamics and resources may affect the efficacy of group learning. Moreover, there is limited research on the long-term impact of these enhanced communication and social skills in academic and professional settings. Addressing these gaps, the current study explores how group learning influences communication and social

networking in Ugandan primary school settings, providing insights into both the immediate and extended outcomes of these experiences.

Evidence from various studies affirms that learners value group learning primarily for its role in enhancing collaborative skills, a key competency in modern education. For example, in a study conducted in Hong Kong, Kong and Lai (2018) explored the experiences of learners aged 11 to 14 in computer studies and found that group work was especially appreciated for enabling peer engagement and collaborative problem-solving. These learners viewed teamwork not just as a classroom activity but as a means of learning to interact effectively, negotiate meaning, and build solutions collectively. Similarly, Khairuddin et al. (2023) observed among Pakistani primary school learners that group-based physical education activities fostered high levels of peer support, helping students jointly overcome challenges and achieve shared goals. This finding demonstrates that group learning can build cooperative competencies even in traditionally individualistic or physically oriented subjects like physical education. In the East African context, studies such as that of Nanyonjo and Musoke (2020) in Uganda have illustrated how collaboration in group projects, particularly in upper primary science and social studies classes, led to improved engagement and helped learners understand complex topics through peer explanation and cooperative task management.

Further support for the value of group learning in enhancing collaboration comes from Xiao-Fan Lin et al. (2019), whose study in China emphasized the importance of teacher-guided peer interactions in science, where learners appreciated mutual support and cooperative task completion. These benefits were not limited to academic gains but

extended to building interpersonal trust and empathy among learners. Similarly, Seraj and Rahman (2015), studying classrooms in Bangladesh, highlighted the effectiveness of dialogic teaching and structured pair work in encouraging learners to co-construct knowledge within supportive group settings. Within Africa, Kimamo and Githae (2021) found that in Kenyan public schools, learners engaged in group-based assignments in English and Mathematics developed stronger team-based learning attitudes and demonstrated higher resilience when tackling difficult questions. These examples show that when structured appropriately, group learning fosters not just academic collaboration but also emotional intelligence and social accountability. Drawing from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the development of collaborative skills through group learning reflects the principle of learning as a social process, where knowledge is constructed through mediated interactions within the zone of proximal development. This theoretical lens reinforces the pedagogical value of group learning as an approach that aligns with both developmental psychology and contemporary curriculum demands.

The literature, however, reveals several gaps, notably a lack of focus on the specific mechanisms through which collaborative skills develop within different subjects and age groups. Additionally, while the benefits are documented across varying educational contexts, there is limited research on how different resource settings may impact the effectiveness of group learning in fostering collaborative skills. Addressing these gaps, the current study seeks to explore how group learning contributes to collaborative skill development in Ugandan primary schools, adding nuanced understanding to the existing body of research.

Research consistently indicates that learners highly value group learning for its capacity to deepen subject comprehension and broaden cognitive engagement across disciplines (Gillies & Boyle, 2010; Shouib & Aslam, 2024). Shouib and Aslam's (2024) study in Pakistan, focusing on Mathematics performance among primary school learners, revealed that group learning significantly boosted academic achievement by creating a space for diverse ideas, collaborative problem-solving, and peer-to-peer explanation. Learners appreciated the dynamic exchange of thoughts, which enabled them to grasp complex mathematical concepts more effectively than when working in isolation. The study further showed that group activities provided opportunities for immediate feedback and clarification, making the learning process more interactive and meaningful. In Uganda, similar outcomes have been noted in studies such as Mugisha and Ssenyonjo (2022), where learners in upper primary schools demonstrated improved understanding and retention of mathematical content when engaged in structured group tasks. These collaborative experiences not only foster academic improvement but also help develop higher-order thinking skills as learners are encouraged to articulate reasoning, challenge assumptions, and build upon one another's contributions.

In addition to cognitive gains, learners have reported enhanced confidence, particularly in language learning environments, as a key benefit of group learning (Nilsson, 2020). In Sweden, Nilsson found that young learners in English classes who engaged in group-based oral activities displayed greater self-assurance and enjoyment compared to those working independently. Group work served as a safe space for learners to rehearse language, refine their vocabulary, and build fluency before presenting to the wider class.

These benefits are echoed in East African contexts, where language teachers in Kenyan and Ugandan schools have observed that group discussions and peer storytelling sessions help shy or struggling learners find their voice, improve pronunciation, and engage more confidently in class (Wandera & Nanyanzi, 2021). Such experiences demonstrate that group learning not only advances academic mastery but also nurtures socio-emotional growth by enhancing self-esteem, reducing performance anxiety, and encouraging interpersonal support. These outcomes align with inclusive pedagogical principles that promote learner agency and cooperative engagement as essential components of quality education.

While these studies provide insights into the positive effects of group learning on learners' knowledge, confidence, and critical thinking, there are notable gaps in the literature. Most research has focused on settings outside Africa, limiting the applicability of these findings to African contexts, particularly within Uganda's educational system. Additionally, the literature is primarily quantitative, with limited qualitative analysis that explores learners' subjective experiences and insights into the factors shaping their attitudes toward group learning. Addressing these gaps, the current study aims to investigate group learning's influence on Ugandan primary school learners, providing a culturally relevant perspective that could inform more effective, localized group learning strategies.

### **2.5.2 Learners' Negative Attitude towards Group Learners**

Studies from various global contexts have highlighted that negative learner attitudes toward group learning often stem from challenges related to unequal participation,

internal conflicts, and incompatible working styles among group members. For instance, Nguyen and Nguyen (2018), in their study of Vietnamese middle school learners, found that group work was often unpopular among some learners because of recurring issues such as dominant personalities, non-contributing members, and interpersonal friction. When certain individuals monopolised group discussions or consistently failed to complete their share of tasks, others felt frustrated, overburdened, and disengaged. Similarly, Carter (2019), researching middle school settings in the United States, observed that many learners developed resentment toward group tasks when their peers were uncooperative or lacked task commitment. These problems were compounded by differences in work ethic, learning pace, or task interpretation, which often led to conflict, misunderstandings, and strained peer relationships. Johnson et al. (2020) argue that such issues are not merely behavioural but are linked to the structural design of group tasks and the absence of embedded accountability frameworks, which are essential components in fostering meaningful collaborative learning.

Other scholars have emphasised the emotional and motivational consequences of such group dynamics, suggesting that they can significantly reduce learner engagement. For example, Lee and Tseng (2021), in a study conducted among Taiwanese high school learners, found that dissatisfaction emerged when learners perceived either an imbalance of power or minimal contribution from peers. Such perceptions often led to feelings of being undervalued, ignored, or sidelined, particularly for those who were either more introverted or perceived as less competent. Ahmed and Hassan (2022), studying secondary school learners in Egypt, reported that when group members failed to share responsibilities equitably, learners lost trust in the group process and frequently opted out

of group participation altogether. These studies underscore the importance of teacher facilitation in group learning settings, as the presence of clearly defined roles, equitable task structures, and guided peer interaction significantly mitigates conflict. However, much of this literature tends to concentrate on older learners in more structured secondary or high school environments, often within Asian, North American, or Middle Eastern contexts. This narrow focus has left gaps in understanding how younger learners particularly in African primary school settings experience and respond to group learning challenges.

Despite the growing promotion of learner-centred methods in East African classrooms, literature remains limited on how primary school learners in Uganda, Kenya, or Tanzania navigate the complexities of group learning. Existing studies often lack theoretical grounding and rarely address contextual variables such as large class sizes, teacher workload, cultural attitudes towards peer learning, or the role of school leadership. As a result, policy and curriculum reforms are sometimes introduced without a clear understanding of how learners actually perceive and experience group-based tasks. Group learning is frequently presented as inherently beneficial, yet issues like unequal participation, unresolved peer tensions, and poorly structured tasks can reinforce disengagement and social exclusion. In the absence of robust, regionally grounded evidence, educators and policymakers risk applying foreign models that may not align with the lived realities of local classrooms. This study challenges that assumption by arguing that while group learning holds potential, its success in African primary schools depends on careful adaptation, cultural relevance, and sustained empirical inquiry.

## 2.6 Research Design Literature

Existing research on group learning in primary schools across Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrates considerable methodological limitations that often constrain the richness and applicability of findings. A significant number of studies continue to rely predominantly on quantitative survey instruments, which prioritise numerical indicators such as frequency of group activities or learners' self-reported perceptions (Ngussa & Mbuti, 2017; Oduolowu & Oyedade, 2019). While such tools may provide useful summaries, they rarely capture the nuanced, context-specific processes that shape how group learning unfolds in classrooms. Particularly in countries like Uganda and Kenya, where classrooms are marked by large learner populations, diverse ability levels, and limited resources, these quantitative approaches fail to illuminate the social, cultural, and instructional dynamics that define everyday group learning experiences. Moreover, the uncritical adoption of standardised instruments developed in Euro-American contexts often compromises construct validity, as they may not align with local educational values or learner realities (Alubale, 2020).

Even in studies claiming a mixed-method orientation, qualitative components are frequently superficial or treated as secondary to quantitative findings. Common limitations include brief interviews, narrowly focused focus group discussions, or overly descriptive observations that do not critically engage with the lived experiences of learners and teachers (Tindyebwa, 2018; Waswa & Kiboss, 2021). As a result, critical dimensions of group learning—such as negotiation of roles, power dynamics within groups, emotional responses to collaborative tasks, and teacher mediation strategies—are

often left under-explored. Furthermore, insufficient attention is paid to methodological rigour, including sampling logic, triangulation of data sources, and researcher reflexivity. These gaps hinder the ability of such studies to generate insights that are both empirically grounded and pedagogically transformative. In many cases, the findings remain disconnected from classroom realities, thus limiting their contribution to teacher practice, curriculum development, or policy design.

In light of these gaps, this study adopts a qualitative case study design, which is better positioned to investigate complex educational phenomena within their natural settings. This design enables in-depth exploration of how group learning is implemented, mediated, and experienced in two contrasting school contexts. Rather than aiming for generalisation, the study seeks analytical depth through purposive sampling and methodological triangulation. By employing semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, the research places emphasis on lived experiences and the meaning-making processes of participants. It recognises group learning as a socially situated pedagogical process that cannot be sufficiently understood through numerical indicators alone. This approach intentionally resists the reductionism of previous methodologies, opting instead for a flexible, contextually responsive, and interpretive framework capable of revealing insights that are locally relevant and educationally actionable.

## **2.7 Summary**

In conclusion, group learning pedagogy in primary schools emerges as a dynamic, learner-centered approach that requires careful planning, intentional implementation, and continuous reflection. Anchored in well-established educational theories, including Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory, this pedagogy is deeply informed by the cognitive and social dimensions of learning. Vygotsky highlights the significance of social interaction and the Zone of Proximal Development in scaffolding learner growth. Bandura emphasizes the role of observational learning and peer modelling, and discovery in knowledge construction. Collectively, these theories underscore the value of collaborative processes, learner interaction, and shared meaning-making as core drivers of both cognitive development and social learning in primary education settings.

The empirical literature reinforces the promise of group learning when it is thoughtfully aligned with curriculum goals, supported by sufficient resources, and guided by competent teachers who can skillfully facilitate cooperative learning environments. Strategies such as designing well-structured tasks, encouraging mutual accountability among learners, and fostering a positive classroom climate are widely recognized as foundational elements for success. Group learning has been shown to promote academic improvement, increase learner motivation, and nurture essential social skills such as communication, empathy, and teamwork. However, the review also identifies persistent challenges, including unequal participation, interpersonal tensions, and variability in learner commitment, which can hinder the effectiveness of group learning. Moreover, the

limited availability of longitudinal studies presents a gap in understanding the sustained impact of group learning on academic outcomes, social development, and learner resilience, particularly in under-resourced school environments.

Moving forward, there is a need for more context-sensitive and evidence-driven adaptations of group learning pedagogy that go beyond theoretical endorsement to address practical realities in diverse classroom environments. It is important to recognize that the success of group learning is not guaranteed by design alone but is shaped by factors such as teacher preparedness, learner diversity, institutional support, and cultural expectations. Without critical engagement with these contextual variables, group learning risks becoming an idealized solution that fails to deliver equitable outcomes across different educational landscapes. Therefore, a more grounded, reflective, and inclusive approach is essential to maximize the transformative potential of group learning while ensuring that it meets the diverse needs of all learners.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the research methodology employed in this study. It provides a structured account of the research process, detailing the research design, study location, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, research instruments, measurement, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis, and ethical considerations. By thoroughly examining each of these components, this chapter aims to offer a clear understanding of the methodological framework adopted to address the research questions. By systematically presenting these components, the chapter ensures methodological transparency and rigour, offering readers a clear understanding of how the study was conducted to address the research questions.

### **3.1 Research Philosophy**

This study was guided by the interpretivist philosophical paradigm, which regards knowledge as subjective and reality as relative or fluid. Philosophical traditions emphasise selectivity in research methods to counter the assumption that all disciplines must employ a single process of inquiry (Munene et al., 2019; Odour, 2010; Umanailo, 2019). Within the qualitative domain, Creswell (2013), Adom et al. (2016), and Kim (2005) identify multiple methodological designs aligned with constructivist and interpretivist paradigms, with phenomenology standing out as especially relevant to this study. Interpretivism, influenced strongly by hermeneutics and phenomenology, underscores the centrality of participants lived experiences, interpretations, and

perceptions of their world (Shisanya, 2019). In this study, the interpretivist stance was essential for exploring the experiences of implementing group learning pedagogy in selected Ugandan primary schools, since teachers view strategies of group formation differently, teachers experience implementation of group learning differently, and learners experience group learning differently. This illustrates that there is no single about group learning but rather multiple realities shaped by individual and contextual factors.

Ontologically, interpretivism is rooted in relativism, which assumes that there are multiple, equally valid realities rather than one objective truth (Chilisa, 2020; Denzin & Lincoln, 2023). Phenomenologists argue for the importance of considering participants' subjective life-worlds as the foundation for understanding social phenomena (Imiere, 2021; Lynch & Smith, 2011). This orientation was particularly suitable for the present study because teachers' strategies of group formation and learners' experiences of group learning were diverse, shaped by school environment, social background, and prior exposure to learner-centred pedagogies. These differences reinforced the idea that participants do not simply reproduce a single fixed reality but instead reveal authentic interpretations of their lived experiences. The study, therefore, established variation across the two schools as evidence of multiple truths about group learning, resisting the reduction of findings into a single generalized account.

Epistemologically, interpretivism and constructivism emphasise that meaning is co-created through interaction between the researcher and the participants (Mertens, 2021; Lincoln & Guba, 2023). Phenomenology in particular stresses the revelation of meaning

and understanding over the generation of theory (Nutter, 2015). In this study, meaning was generated through multiple methods of data collection, including interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and document reviews. By engaging with the subjective accounts of teachers and learners, the researcher facilitated a process where multiple perspectives could be articulated and valued, thereby capturing both commonalities and contrasts in their experiences of group learning. The researcher's role was interpretive and reflexive, drawing out the meanings embedded in participants' narratives while remaining sensitive to context and culture.

Finally, the axiological dimension of the interpretivist paradigm was reflected in valuing the voices, emotions, and ethical standpoints of participants throughout the study. Recognising that the researcher's own values could shape the inquiry, reflexivity was maintained to mitigate bias and ensure honest representation of participants' realities (Tracy, 2022; Birt et al., 2023). By adopting an interpretivist and constructivist lens, the study situated knowledge as subjective, reality as relative, and meaning as constructed through interaction. This stance provided the necessary philosophical grounding for exploring teachers' and learners' lived experiences of group learning pedagogy, positioning each participant as a unique contributor to the collective understanding of the phenomenon.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to examine the implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. A qualitative approach was adopted because of its intensive and in-

depth nature, allowing the researcher to take into account the phenomenon as a whole and describe it as it exists (Ahakwa, Atinga, & Adom, 2021; Vijay & Bhattacharya, 2020). Phenomenology was chosen for its emphasis on exploring lived experiences and uncovering how individuals construct meaning in their interactions with the world (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mohajan, 2022). This made it particularly suitable for the study, which sought to capture how teachers and learners in diverse school settings experienced the implementation of group learning pedagogy in practice. By foregrounding the voices of participants, the phenomenological approach ensured that group learning was not viewed as a uniform process, but as one shaped by context, perception, and lived reality.

Phenomenology has its roots in philosophy and is recognised as a genuine way of representing the realities participants encounter in their lives, including issues often taken for granted (Padilla-Díaz, 2018; Shisanya, 2019; Yuksel & Yildirim, 2020). In education, this approach has proven particularly effective in illuminating the subjective experiences of both teachers and learners. For instance, Abakpa, Igbojinwaekwu, and Umeano (2019) and Ponce (2020) highlight that phenomenology provides access to rich insights into how individuals interpret their professional and learning environments. In the context of this study, phenomenology was relevant because teachers view strategies of group formation differently, teachers experience implementation of group learning differently, and learners experience group learning differently. These variations affirmed the ontological position that there is no single truth about group learning, but rather multiple realities that need to be uncovered through participants' lived experiences.

In practical terms, the phenomenological design supported the use of multiple data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews with teachers, focus group discussions with learners, and document reviews. These methods made it possible to explore both the observable practices of group learning and the meanings participants ascribed to those practices. The design further facilitated prolonged engagement and iterative reflection, allowing the researcher to trace how group work strategies unfolded, why certain approaches were adopted, and how learners and teachers interpreted their experiences within specific institutional and socio-cultural contexts. In this way, the phenomenological approach enabled the study to go beyond description and towards understanding the deeper meanings embedded in the participants' narratives.

Reflexivity was central to this design. The researcher acknowledged personal values, assumptions, and prior experiences related to group learning pedagogy, and actively reflected on how these could influence the interpretation of data. Strategies such as maintaining reflective journals, reviewing analytic decisions, and peer debriefing were used to enhance transparency and credibility. These practices ensured that the findings authentically reflected participants' lived experiences rather than being overshadowed by the researcher's own perspectives. By embedding reflexivity within the phenomenological framework, the study upheld trustworthiness while remaining sensitive to the contextual realities of Mityana's primary schools (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2018; Tracy, 2022; Birt et al., 2023).

### **3.3 Location of the Study**

This study was conducted in Mityana District, located in Central Uganda. The selection of Mityana as the study site was informed by a combination of educational, contextual, and policy-related factors that made the district an ideal setting for exploring the implementation of group learning pedagogy. Mityana District comprises both government-aided and private primary schools, making it representative of the broader educational landscape in Uganda (Mityana District Education Department, 2022). The district is largely semi-rural, and schools often operate under resource-constrained conditions. These features provided a fertile environment for investigating how group learning strategies are experienced and applied in practice, particularly in diverse and dynamic educational contexts.

Several factors underpinned the choice of Mityana. First, the district has faced repeated educational challenges, including frequent withholding or cancellation of Primary Leaving Examination results due to suspected malpractice in 2015, 2018, and 2020 (MoES, 2021; Namanya, 2019). These incidents point to deeper systemic and pedagogical issues that require an in-depth exploration of instructional approaches, such as group learning. Second, there is a noticeable gap in research-based interventions aimed at improving primary school performance in Mityana. Despite being included in national education programmes, the district has not benefited from sustained academic research to guide local pedagogical reforms (Kusemererwa, 2023; NAPE Report, 2023). Third, although continuous professional development trainings on learner-centred group learning approaches, including child-to-child methodologies, have been rolled out in the

district, evidence indicates that teachers rarely implement these strategies effectively (Kibalama, 2018; NCDC, 2019). Practical constraints such as overcrowded classrooms, insufficient instructional materials, and limited follow-up support often undermine the adoption of these techniques (MoES, 2021).

To gain a focused yet diverse understanding of group learning implementation, two primary schools in Mityana District were purposively selected for this study, comprising one government-aided school and one privately owned school. This selection aligns with the qualitative case study design, which prioritises depth over breadth to enable rich, contextualised exploration of participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2022). Including both a public and a private school allowed the researcher to capture varying institutional realities, including differences in management structures, teacher-student ratios, resource availability, and pedagogical autonomy. This comparative approach facilitated meaningful insights into how institutional context influences the experiences of teachers and learners in implementing group learning pedagogy.

The decision to focus on only two schools was also guided by the need for in-depth engagement with participants and sustained observation, which would not have been feasible with a larger sample, given the time and logistical limitations of the study. This smaller sample allowed for detailed examination of classroom practices, in-depth discussions with teachers and learners, and exploration of how group learning strategies were enacted in each unique school context. Additionally, both selected schools had previously participated in teacher professional development programmes related to group learning, yet anecdotal evidence suggested differences in the actual application of these

strategies. This contrast provided an opportunity to unpack contextual enablers and barriers within each school, generating nuanced evidence to inform targeted educational support and policy refinement at both district and national levels.

### **3.3 Target Population**

The target population consisted of primary school teachers and learners drawn from two purposively selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. This population was carefully chosen to capture rich and diverse insights into the implementation of group learning strategies, particularly from those directly involved in its practice (MoES, 2021; Namanya, 2019). Including both teachers and learners allowed for a multi-perspective understanding of how group learning unfolds in real classroom settings. Yuksel and Yildirim (2015) explain that a researcher selects participants by discretion depending on how they perceive the phenomenon being investigated.

### **3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

The final sample that was accessible for this study comprised eight primary school teachers and twenty-four learners drawn from two purposively selected schools in Mityana District, one government-aided (Primary School One, PS1) and one privately managed (Primary School Two, PS2). Initially, the target population consisted of eighty-two participants, namely twelve teachers and seventy learners across the two schools. The final sample size was determined through iterative data collection and analysis, guided by the principle of data saturation, which occurs when additional data no longer yields new insights or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020). This

qualitative sampling approach aligns with exploratory research approach, where the richness and depth of data are prioritised over numerical representativeness.

**Table 3.1:** Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

<b>Category</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Accessed</b>	<b>Sampling Technique</b>
<b>Teachers (PS1)</b>	6	4	Purposive sampling
<b>Teachers (PS2)</b>	6	4	Purposive sampling
<b>Learners (PS1)</b>	38	12	Stratified purposive sampling
<b>Learners (PS2)</b>	32	12	Stratified purposive sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>32</b>	

The learner participants consisted of thirty-two pupils in Primary Five, evenly divided by gender, with sixteen boys and sixteen girls. This grade level was intentionally chosen because learners at this stage are developmentally ready for collaborative tasks and higher-order thinking, making them suitable for examining group learning dynamics (Groccia, 2018; Vygotsky, 1978). Within each school, two focus group discussions were conducted, one for boys and one for girls, each consisting of six learners. Gendered segmentation facilitated open and culturally sensitive discussions, thereby enhancing the validity of the responses.

The selection of the two schools was guided by specific scientific parameters to ensure a rigorous and evidence-based approach. These parameters included school type (government-aided versus private), historical academic performance (as indicated by Primary Leaving Examination results), pupil–teacher ratios, availability of teaching and learning resources, prior exposure to group learning or learner-centred pedagogies, and participation in professional development programmes related to collaborative teaching. The government-aided school was selected because it exemplified the challenges of high

pupil–teacher ratios, limited access to instructional materials, and inconsistent implementation of learner-centred strategies. In contrast, the privately managed school was chosen for its smaller class sizes, greater teacher autonomy, and relatively better resource availability, providing a context for examining how institutional support and resource access influence the adoption of group learning. By applying these parameters, the study ensured that both schools represented contrasting but complementary contexts, allowing for a systematic exploration of factors shaping the implementation and experiences of group learning pedagogy.

By purposively selecting schools that differed in governance, resource levels, and pedagogical environment based on these scientific parameters, the study ensured a strong methodological basis for comparing and contrasting group learning implementation. This approach enabled the researcher to capture the interplay of contextual, institutional, and instructional factors shaping the experiences of both teachers and learners. The sampling strategy, therefore, provided rich, diverse, and relevant data while remaining feasible in terms of time, access, and data management, supporting a comprehensive understanding of group learning pedagogy in Mityana District primary schools (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives regarding the implementation of group learning strategies in primary schools, this qualitative study employed a variety of data collection methods and instruments. Interviews served as the primary data collection method, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants'

insights. Additionally, other methods such as observations, focus group discussions, and document analysis were utilized to enhance data triangulation and ensure a comprehensive analysis of the study. Triangulation involves using multiple methods or data sources to corroborate findings and enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Denzin, 2017). This approach contributed to a comprehensive examination of the research topic and facilitated a more robust interpretation of the collected data.

### **3.5.1 Data Collection Methods**

This qualitative study employed a range of data collection methods, including in-depth interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and document analysis, to gain comprehensive insights into the implementation of group learning strategies in primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. These methods enabled a thorough exploration of teachers' experiences, motivations, and challenges, providing a well-rounded understanding of group learning's impact. In-depth interviews with primary school teachers formed the primary data collection approach, with each session lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes in line with Christian, Kelly, and Bugallo (2021), allowing for rich and detailed dialogue. Data saturation was achieved through an iterative process, whereby interviews and focus group discussions continued until new data no longer produced novel themes or insights. The researcher systematically analysed each round of data as it was collected, comparing emerging codes and categories across participants to identify recurring patterns and confirm that all relevant perspectives had been captured. This approach ensured that the data collected was both comprehensive and

robust, aligning with the principles of saturation as outlined by Cridland et al. (2016), and enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

Observations enabled the researcher to witness group learning dynamics in real time, offering insights into teacher facilitation strategies and learner interactions. Focus group discussions with learners provided a platform to share their collective experiences and perceptions, illuminating the impact of group learning on learner engagement and collaboration. In conducting these discussions, the researcher maintained sensitivity to learners' voices by creating a supportive and non-intimidating environment, encouraging free expression while avoiding leading questions or undue influence. Document analysis added context by reviewing school records, lesson plans, and curriculum documents, which shed light on the alignment between group learning practices and institutional guidelines.

The observation method was essential in capturing real-time data during planned group learning sessions and classroom interactions. A detailed observation protocol was developed to systematically document critical aspects of the sessions, including the implementation process, learner engagement, and teacher facilitation. Field notes were precisely recorded, providing contextual details that enriched the qualitative data. To minimise the impact of the researcher's presence, observations were conducted by maintaining a non-intrusive role in the classroom, where the researcher deliberately refrained from influencing or participating in group activities. This ensured that teachers and learners continued with their routines naturally, allowing authentic behaviours and practices to emerge. This approach aligns with Farine's (2015) emphasis on the

importance of observations in unraveling the complexities and interactions within educational settings.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with learners to further enrich the study's data. Each group comprised 8 to 10 learners, with four FGDs held, each lasting 60 to 90 minutes. This structure aligns with Guest, Namey, and McKenna's (2017) recommendation that data saturation in qualitative research is often achieved within three to six focus groups. The use of FGDs allowed for an in-depth exploration of learners' experiences and perspectives on group learning, capturing a broad range of views while ensuring data saturation. This approach contributed valuable insights into the complexities of implementing group learning in primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda, by directly engaging learners in discussions that highlighted their interactions, challenges, and benefits of group learning.

Document analysis complemented the data gathered from interviews, observations, and FGDs by reviewing relevant documents, such as teachers' lesson plans. This method provided insights into group formation strategies and classroom practices, offering additional context to support findings from other data sources (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The use of document analysis facilitated a deeper understanding of how group learning was implemented and adapted in selected primary schools. By integrating these qualitative methods, the study captured a comprehensive range of perspectives from teachers and learners, enriching the understanding of group learning implementation and supporting a robust qualitative analysis.

### **3.5.2 Data Collection Instruments**

To facilitate systematic data collection through the selected methods, this study utilised a set of carefully developed qualitative research instruments. These included an in-depth interview guide, an observation protocol, a focus group discussion (FGD) guide, and a document analysis checklist. The development of these instruments was grounded in a thorough review of existing literature on group learning pedagogy, ensuring that the tools were aligned with the study's objectives and reflected best practices in educational research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The in-depth interview guide was designed as a semi-structured tool to elicit rich, detailed responses from primary school teachers about their experiences, strategies, and challenges in implementing group learning (see Appendix A). The guide featured open-ended questions informed by themes that emerged during the literature review. Semi-structured interviews allow for both consistency across respondents and flexibility for deeper exploration (Roberts, 2020). Similarly, the observation protocol was developed to systematically document real-time classroom dynamics during group learning activities. It focused on elements such as teacher facilitation, learner engagement, group composition, and task execution (Sileyew, 2019), and is included in Appendix D.

The FGD guide used with learner participants (Appendix B) contained structured prompts and probing questions to encourage open dialogue about their group learning experiences. FGDs, especially when guided appropriately, are effective in capturing collective viewpoints, exploring social interactions, and generating diverse perspectives (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). In addition, a document analysis checklist (Appendix C) was

crafted to examine lesson plans, teaching guides, and school policy documents. This tool helped identify how group learning strategies were planned and aligned with curriculum goals, thereby offering contextual triangulation (Hancock, Algozzine & Lim, 2021).

To ensure the quality, reliability, and clarity of these instruments, a pilot study was conducted in one public and one private primary school within Mityana District that were not part of the final sample. The pilot study aimed to test the suitability, sequencing, and clarity of questions in the interview and FGD guides, the usability of the observation protocol, and the relevance of the document analysis checklist. Pilot feedback highlighted ambiguities in some interview and FGD prompts, which were subsequently refined for improved flow and comprehension. The observation tool was adjusted to better capture non-verbal learner behaviour, while the document checklist was expanded to include curriculum references. According to van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), pilot studies are essential for identifying practical and methodological issues early in the research process, thus enhancing instrument validity.

Furthermore, the instruments were reviewed by two experienced qualitative researchers and one education specialist for content and face validity. Their feedback contributed to the refinement of language, the alignment of tools with research objectives, and the cultural appropriateness of question framing, strengthening the credibility and trustworthiness of the tools (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The use of these rigorously developed and validated instruments ensured consistency across data collection activities and supported a comprehensive, multi-perspective

exploration of the implementation of group learning strategies in primary schools in Mityana District. Drawing from established qualitative research standards, these tools enabled the capture of nuanced, context-specific insights from both teachers and learners (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **3.6 Measurement**

In qualitative research, measurement does not seek to quantify variables but rather to ensure the depth, authenticity, and integrity of the data collected. Instead of traditional statistical notions of validity and reliability, qualitative studies emphasise concepts such as trustworthiness and credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Houghton et al., 2021). This section introduces the approach used in this study to assess data quality, foregrounding methodological rigour and ethical responsibility in faithfully representing participants' voices. Since the data collection instruments were administered in English, a language understood by all participants, particular care was taken to ensure linguistic clarity and cultural relevance. The emphasis on trustworthiness involved deliberate strategies applied throughout the research process to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These four dimensions form the cornerstone of quality assurance in qualitative inquiry and are further elaborated in the subsections below.

#### **3.6.1 Credibility**

To strengthen credibility in this qualitative case study, a set of deliberate and methodologically sound strategies were applied. Credibility in qualitative research reflects the extent to which findings are accurate and trustworthy from the perspective of participants and their context (Houghton et al., 2021). At the centre of this process was

the careful design, testing, and refinement of the data collection instruments, including the interview guide, focus group discussion guide, observation checklist, and documentary review checklist. Before being formally deployed, these tools were pilot tested in two primary schools within Mityana District that shared comparable demographic, administrative, and learning characteristics with the schools selected for the main study. The pilot sites, while outside the main study, provided a realistic testing ground for assessing instrument clarity, contextual appropriateness, and operational effectiveness. Recent scholarship underlines the importance of piloting instruments in exploratory school-based research to strengthen their clarity and contextual sensitivity (Ssekamatte et al., 2023; Agyeman & Opoku, 2022). During the pilot phase, small groups of teachers and learners were engaged in simulated interviews and focus group discussions. Their feedback revealed specific areas needing refinement. For example, some interview questions were initially too abstract or repetitive, while certain prompts in the focus group guide confused younger participants. Revisions were undertaken to simplify language, sequence questions more logically, and ensure that prompts facilitated open yet focused dialogue. The observation checklist was similarly refined to replace overly broad categories with more precise indicators, while the documentary review guide was adjusted to capture school-level documentation practices more accurately. These revisions ensured that all instruments were contextually responsive, logically structured, and aligned with the research aim of exploring group learning in Ugandan primary schools. By prioritising piloting and revision, the study strengthened the instruments' ability to capture teacher and learner experiences comprehensively. This

iterative process directly enhanced the credibility of the findings, ensuring that data collected genuinely reflected the realities within the participating school environments.

### **3.6.2 Confirmability**

The researcher adopted reflexivity and triangulation of methods to reduce the effect of investigator bias. This technique enhanced authenticity as it involved describing and explaining the situation or contexts as truthfully as possible while taking a personal view from a stance. The major technique for establishing confirmability can be through audits of the research processes and findings (Kakuru, 2019; Hsieh & Shannon, 2018).

### **3.6.3 Dependability**

The aspect of dependability was enhanced by ensuring the consistency of the study's processes, from conception, data collection, interpretation, and report writing as a strategy. Dependability is being able to account for changes in the design of the study and the changing conditions surrounding what is studied (Kakuru, 2019; Hsieh & Shannon, 2018). The multiple interviews enabled probing, refocusing, and refining of the questions, tailoring them to the research objectives. The multiple interviews were an opportunity for gradual improvement and refining of specific questions (Babbie, 2018; Malmqvist et al., 2020; Pritchard & Whiting, 2019).

### **3.6.4 Transferability**

The researcher provided data sets and explanations that were rich enough to enable other researchers to make judgments about the findings of the study and their applicability to different settings or contexts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2018; Yuksel & Yildirim, 2018). This was done through providing the data sources to enhance the transferability of research

findings. As a way of validating the data, classroom observation of teachers, interviews with teachers, and sampled learners was a form of triangulation to validate whether it yielded similar findings.

### **3.7 Data Collection and Procedure**

Upon approval of the research proposal by the Directorate of Graduate Training and Research at Kyambogo University, the researcher prepared the data collection instruments, which were subsequently submitted to the Mildmay Research Ethics Committee (MUREC) for formal approval prior to their deployment. The data collection was conducted site by site in three distinct phases (detailed in Appendix 18), each aligned with specific research questions and designed to capture participants' lived experiences in implementing group learning pedagogy. This phased approach facilitated systematic engagement with both teachers and learners, consistent with the interpretivist and phenomenological underpinnings of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2021; Yin, 2018).

In the first phase, classroom observation and semi-structured interviews were employed to obtain detailed insights into the strategies teachers used to facilitate group learning and the underlying constructivist principles guiding their practice. Observations focused on real-time teacher-learner interactions, group formation strategies, collaborative dynamics, and facilitation techniques. Each selected participant was then engaged in a twenty minute one on one interview to probe their perspectives and experiences regarding the observed practices. This combination of observation and interview allowed for triangulation of data and ensured that the researcher captured both observable behaviours

and the subjective meanings participants attributed to their actions (Abdu et al., 2022; Ssekamate et al., 2023).

The second phase involved repeated classroom observations—three per setting—to examine learners’ engagement in group learning activities, teacher facilitation, and classroom management practices. These observations focused on how learners collaborated, the allocation of roles within groups, and how teachers provided scaffolding and feedback during lessons. Immediately following each observation, interviews were conducted with participants to explore the intentions and rationales behind observed behaviours, ensuring that interpretations reflected participants lived realities (Korstjens & Moser, 2021; Nyumba et al., 2019).

The third phase was conducted within the schools to assess non-classroom-based support, including mentoring, guidance, and facilitation of learners’ professional and social development. Observation and interviews were used to capture how teachers provided guidance, the nature of peer interactions, and strategies for fostering collaborative problem solving beyond structured lessons. Across all phases, in depth one-on-one interviews were conducted. Notes were taken during the interviews, complemented by the use of an electronic pocket recorder to ensure precise documentation and facilitate detailed content analysis. Multiple serial interviews with each participant were undertaken to verify data accuracy, allow iterative probing of emerging themes, and achieve saturation, consistent with qualitative phenomenological research standards (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2021; Abakpa et al., 2019).

Observations were recorded using a video camera and audio recorder to capture both verbal and non-verbal interactions. The researcher employed a combination of wide lens, timeline, and seating arrangement techniques tailored to the observational instruments, enabling comprehensive data collection before, during, and after group learning sessions. These strategies ensured that the complex dynamics of teacher facilitation and learner engagement were systematically documented, preserving the richness of participants' lived experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2023; Houghton et al., 2021).

Following data collection, all materials such as, audio and video recordings and field notes were carefully organized and prepared for transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. The triangulated approach enabled cross verification of findings from interviews, observations, and documents, strengthening both the credibility and confirmability of the study (Ssekamatte et al., 2023; Amin et al., 2020). The final data were compiled, analyzed, and interpreted to generate findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Dissemination of results through publication in peer reviewed journals, such as the East African Nature and Science Organization. A summary of the study's findings will also be shared with participating schools and stakeholders to enhance practical applicability and contribute to continuous improvement in group learning pedagogy.

### **3.8 Data Processing and Analysis**

In this qualitative case study, data processing and analysis were central to transforming participants' narratives into meaningful interpretations aligned with the study's purpose. A manual thematic analysis approach, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase

framework, was adopted. Unlike computer-assisted analysis, manual thematic analysis involves the researcher personally engaging with the data by repeatedly reading transcripts, coding, and clustering themes without relying on software tools. This process enhanced closeness to the data and fostered a more nuanced interpretation of participants' perspectives while still following the systematic principles of thematic analysis. This method provided the flexibility to identify patterned meanings across a diverse data set while capturing the depth and nuance of participants lived experiences. Data sources included semi structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. All recordings were transcribed verbatim, anonymised, and stored securely to ensure ethical integrity and traceability.

Manual analysis was chosen over software-assisted methods to enhance the researcher's immersion in the data and foster a more intuitive and context-sensitive understanding of participants' responses. This decision aligns with Nowell et al. (2017), who emphasise that close, iterative engagement with transcripts is particularly valuable in exploratory qualitative studies. The analysis was also guided by the research questions and objectives, ensuring that interpretations were not only inductively grounded in the data but also meaningfully connected to the study's overarching aim of exploring group learning strategies in Ugandan primary schools.

The analysis began with systematic data organisation and preparation. Each transcript was assigned a unique identifier incorporating the source, collection date, and participant code (e.g., PS1T1, PS2T3, MFGD PS1#1), facilitating easy retrieval and ensuring confidentiality. Organising data both chronologically and thematically enabled smoother

transitions between research questions and supported the auditability of the process, as highlighted by Adkins and Chauvin (2020). A meticulous cleaning process followed, during which transcripts were reviewed line by line against audio recordings. Discrepancies or ambiguous expressions were clarified using field notes or brief follow-ups with participants. This step was critical to ensuring data accuracy and reliability, forming a strong foundation for trustworthy analysis (Keller et al., 2017).

The thematic analysis proceeded through Braun and Clarke's six phases: familiarisation with the data, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and reporting. Initial familiarisation involved repeated reading of transcripts, allowing the researcher to internalise the data and note emerging patterns. This was followed by line-by-line manual coding using an inductive approach, allowing codes and themes to emerge organically from the data rather than being imposed a priori. At the same time, the interpretation process was guided by the conceptual orientation of the study and by existing pedagogical literature, so that emergent insights could be situated within broader theoretical perspectives on group learning.

Codes were clustered to form preliminary themes, which were then reviewed and refined. For example, from teacher interviews, a theme titled "Random Group Formation Strategy" emerged. PS1T2 noted, "For impromptu discussions in Mathematics, I employ the random group formation strategy. It is a spontaneous way to get learners to share their thoughts and aid problem-solving approaches within small groups." Likewise, PS2T4 stated, "Using random group formation encourages learners to work with different peers each time, breaking down social barriers." Another recurring theme was "Mixed Ability

Grouping," which captured how teachers supported inclusive learning. PS1T4 observed, "In the teaching of SST, when less proficient learners are grouped with those who perform better, they tend to show improvement."

The themes were reviewed for internal coherence and external distinctiveness. Some were refined or collapsed during this iterative process to ensure clarity and relevance. The fifth stage involved clearly defining and naming each theme, establishing the overarching narrative about how group learning strategies were implemented across the studied schools. Braun and Clarke (2021) stress that well-defined themes contribute to a focused and meaningful analysis.

The final stage entailed producing the analytical report, which weaved together these themes to address the study objectives. Participant quotes were incorporated to preserve their voices and illustrate thematic insights. For instance, a learner's reflection on enjoying peer learning helped illuminate the theme of enhanced engagement through group work. The interpretation of findings was further guided by a combination of deductive alignment to research objectives and inductive openness to new insights, creating a balanced analytical approach. Situating the findings within relevant literature ensured that the analysis went beyond description to provide interpretive depth, linking classroom realities in Mityana to broader debates on learner-centred pedagogy.

To ensure analytical rigour and trustworthiness, the researcher employed reflexivity, peer debriefing, and member validation. Reflective journaling enabled the researcher to critically assess how personal perspectives might influence interpretations. Feedback

from two experienced qualitative researchers through peer debriefing helped sharpen the coding framework and refine emerging themes. Member checking was also conducted by sharing preliminary findings with selected participants to verify the accuracy of interpretations. These practices enhanced the study's credibility, dependability, and confirmability, in line with recommendations by Nowell et al. (2017) and Birt et al. (2016).

In conclusion, the data analysis process was both structured and responsive, grounded in established qualitative methodologies while remaining sensitive to the unique context of the study. The integration of inductive coding with deductive alignment to research objectives and literature provided a clear framework for guiding both analysis and interpretation. The resulting thematic framework offers a rich and trustworthy account of how group learning strategies are understood and practised in Ugandan primary schools, making a valuable contribution to the discourse on learner-centred pedagogy in resource-constrained settings.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical practice was a central procedural and methodological consideration in this study, reflecting constructivist principles of respect, relational accountability, and participatory dignity (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2021). Given the involvement of minors and teacher-learner interactions, ethical compliance guided all stages of the research, from planning and approvals to data collection and dissemination. The study adhered to the ethical requirements outlined in the Kyambogo University Guidelines for Writing Graduate Theses and Dissertations (KYU, 2018) and was guided

by the National Guidelines for Research Involving Humans as Research Participants (UNCST, 2018). These frameworks provided a foundation for ensuring that the research procedures respected participants' rights, dignity, and welfare throughout the study.

The research followed a multi-tiered ethical approval process. Initial endorsement was obtained from the Graduate School and the Directorate of Research and Training at Kyambogo University, followed by approval from Mildmay Research Ethics Committee (MUREC). After securing MUREC clearance, the study was formally registered with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), the national body responsible for regulating human-subject research in Uganda. This multi-level approval ensured adherence to institutional and national standards, while facilitating formal engagement with selected schools in Mityana District. The timing of data collection was deliberately aligned with the receipt of all necessary approvals, ensuring compliance and addressing potential irregularities in multi-body authorization timelines.

Procedurally, all adult participants provided informed consent preceding participation, receiving detailed explanations of the study objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence (UNCST, 2018). For learner participants, parental or guardian consent was obtained in writing preceding engagement, followed by verbal assent from learners using age-appropriate and culturally sensitive language (Alderson & Morrow, 2020; KYU, 2018). This dual consent-approach recognised learners as active participants, respecting their agency while safeguarding their rights. Power asymmetries were addressed by conducting focus group discussions in neutral, child-friendly spaces, and ensuring that no

school administrators were present, thereby creating an environment conducive to open and honest dialogue.

Child safeguarding procedures were embedded in the research design, including pre-established referral pathways in the unlikely event of disclosures of harm, ensuring adherence to the principles of do no harm and acting in the best interest of the child. Confidentiality and data security were maintained through pseudonymisation of participants, secure storage of digital and physical data, and controlled access, in accordance with MUREC and UNCST guidelines (Kafle, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 2018). Data will be retained securely for five years following the study and subsequently destroyed, reinforcing both ethical compliance and the trustworthiness of the study.

By integrating procedural rigor with reflexivity and adherence to national and institutional ethical standards, the study ensured that participants were engaged in a safe, respectful, and participatory environment. Ethical considerations were therefore not merely formalities but integral to the research methodology, enhancing the credibility, confirmability, and overall quality of the findings while aligning with the interpretivist and constructivist philosophical underpinnings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative case study on the experiences and implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. The chapter presents findings according to the research questions that guided the study. The research questions sought to provide insights into the strategies employed by teachers to form groups used to promote group learning, the implementation of group learning by teachers, and the experiences of learners in participating in group learning activities. Information on the demographic characteristics of the study participants is also presented in this chapter.

### **4.1 Participants' Demographic Information**

This case study was conducted in two distinctly different primary schools within Mityana District: one government-aided (PS1) and one privately owned (PS2). The purposive selection of these two schools was guided by the need to capture diverse perspectives and contextual realities surrounding the implementation of group learning pedagogy. The inclusion of a government-aided school ensured representation of a typical public institution operating under standard government support and policies, while the private school offered insights from a setting with relatively more autonomy in instructional practices and resource management. Selecting one school from each category allowed for comparative analysis across school types without overwhelming the scope of the qualitative case study.

A total of eight teachers participated in the study, with four from each school. These teachers were selected based on their active involvement in classroom instruction across core subjects including Mathematics, English, Social Studies (SST), and Science. The sample included five male and three female teachers with varied teaching experience and qualifications, ranging from two to 18 years and from Grade III Certificates to Diplomas in Primary Education. This diversity enriched the study by providing a broad spectrum of pedagogical approaches and reflections on group learning practices. Thirty-two lesson plans from the participating teachers were also reviewed to support triangulation of the interview and focus group data.

Each teacher was assigned a unique alphanumeric identifier reflecting their school and sequence of selection (e.g., PS1T1 for the first teacher in the government-aided school, and PS2T4 for the fourth teacher in the private school as seen in Table 4.1). These codes served as essential anchors during the coding and analysis phase of the study. They enabled systematic tracking of responses, maintained participant anonymity, and facilitated clear connections between emerging themes and the perspectives of individual teachers.

To further support the thematic analysis, a combination of teacher interview data and transcripts from focus group discussions with learners was coded. Learner group data were coded according to the school and group type: MFGD denoted Male Focus Group Discussion, while FFGD denoted Female Focus Group Discussion (e.g., MFGD PS1 #1 refers to the first male focus group in the government-aided school). These identifiers were consistently applied throughout the analysis process.

The initial phase of coding involved open coding, where the researcher carefully read through the transcripts and developed preliminary codes directly from the data, such as "random grouping," "role-play activity," and "changing group composition." For example, the theme "*The random group formation strategy*" emerged from PS1T2's statement: "*Randomly grouping learners helps me to quickly form groups... For impromptu discussions in Mathematics, I employ the random group formation strategy. It's a spontaneous way to get learners to share their thoughts and aid problem-solving approaches within small groups, fostering a dynamic learning environment*" (June, 2024).

Another prominent theme, "*The mixed-ability group formation strategy*," was coded based on responses like that of PS1T4 who stated: "*In the teaching of SST, when less proficient learners are grouped with those who perform better, they tend to show improvement*" (June, 2024).

Following open coding, the researcher proceeded to axial coding by clustering related codes into broader categories that aligned with the study's objectives. Selective coding was then used to integrate these categories into core themes that formed the analytical backbone of Chapter Four. The consistency in using identifiers (PS1T1, PS2T3, etc.) facilitated a coherent and transparent analytical process, enabling readers to trace thematic development back to specific participants.

The table below presents the demographic details of the teacher participants:

**Table 4.1 : Demographics of Teachers**

<b>GOVERNMENT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL (PS1)</b>					
	<b>Category</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Highest qualification</b>
<b>PS1T1</b>	Teacher	Eng.	F	15 years	Diploma in Primary Education
<b>PS1T2</b>	Teacher	Math	M	18 years	Diploma in Primary Education
<b>PS1T3</b>	Teacher	SCI	F	3 years	Grade III Certificate
<b>PS1T4</b>	Teacher	SST	M	6 years	Grade III Certificate
<b>PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOL (PS2)</b>					
<b>PS2T1</b>	Teacher	Eng.	M	5 years	Diploma in Primary Education
<b>PS2T2</b>	Teacher	SST	M	5 years	Grade III Certificate
<b>PS2T3</b>	Teacher	SCI	F	2 years	Grade III Certificate
<b>PS2T4</b>	Teacher	Math	M	2 years	Diploma in Primary Education

Table 4.2 presents the demographic profile of the learner participants involved in the study. A total of twenty-four (24) learners participated, with equal gender representation across the two selected schools. Specifically, each school contributed twelve (12) learners, evenly divided into two focus group discussions, one for male learners and one for female learners. This gender-balanced selection aimed to ensure the inclusion of both male and female voices in the exploration of group learning experiences.

In the government-aided primary school (PS1), learners were organised into MFGD PS1 #1 (Male Focus Group Discussion) and FFGD PS1 #1 (Female Focus Group Discussion), while in the private primary school (PS2), the groups were coded as MFGD PS2 #2 and FFGD PS2 #2, respectively. All learners were in Primary Five, which was strategically

selected based on the participants' capacity to engage meaningfully in discussions and articulate their classroom experiences regarding group learning pedagogy.

The use of school-based pseudonyms such as *MFGD PS1 #1* and *FFGD PS2 #2* served both ethical and analytical purposes. Ethically, pseudonyms protected the identities of the participants. Analytically, these codes allowed for easy reference and distinction between focus group contributions across schools and gender during data interpretation. This structure ensured a coherent presentation of the learners' voices in the finding's chapters, while also enabling cross-comparison between government-aided and private school contexts.

The equal representation of gender, school type, and grade level provided a balanced foundation for analysing similarities and differences in learners' group learning experiences. It also allowed for a fair and comparative understanding of how contextual and institutional factors influenced learner engagement in group-based learning activities.

**Table 4.2:** Demographics by learners

<b>Government-aided Primary School (PS1)</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Class</b>
MFGD PS1 #1	Learner	M	PS 1	Primary 5
FFGD PS1 #1	Learner	F	PS 1	Primary 5
<b>Private Primary School (PS2)</b>				
MFGD PS2 #2	Learner	M	PS 2	Primary 5
FFGD PS2 #2	Learner	F	PS 2	Primary 5

#### **4.1.1 Response Rate**

All thirty-two (32) participants initially identified for this study took part fully in the data collection process. This included both the twenty-four (24) learners and the eight (8) teachers who were purposively sampled. The complete response rate represents a notable

achievement in qualitative research, as it reflects the participants' strong engagement with and interest in the research topic. Their willingness to participate and share detailed experiences signified the study's relevance and resonance with their professional and educational contexts. The full participation of all targeted learners and teachers ensured that diverse perspectives across school types, gender, and roles were adequately captured. This comprehensive engagement enabled the researcher to gather a wide range of insights regarding the implementation and experiences of group learning pedagogy. It also strengthened the representativeness of the findings within the chosen case study settings.

Importantly, data saturation was achieved within the sample size outlined in the research proposal. This point was reached when no new themes, patterns, or perspectives were emerging from the focus group discussions and individual interviews, despite continued data collection. As Morse (2019) and Saunders et al. (2018) observe, saturation is a key indicator of qualitative sufficiency, demonstrating that the data set is rich, comprehensive, and capable of supporting credible analysis and interpretation. Achieving saturation confirmed that the data collected was not only robust but also adequate to address the study objectives.

The high response rate and clear attainment of data saturation contributed significantly to the depth, quality, and completeness of the findings. These conditions provided a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the lived experiences of both learners and teachers involved in group learning in the selected schools.

## **4.2 Strategies teachers employ in forming groups**

This section presents findings on strategies teachers used to form groups for learning. Strategies in the context of this study's research question one referred to the techniques that teachers applied in the formation of the groups they used to promote group learning. Teachers' interviews, the lesson plans analysis, and the lesson observation findings revealed various strategies teachers used to form groups for group learning in their lessons. These included random group formation, mixed-ability grouping, same-ability grouping, size-determined group formation, temporary group formation, special needs-support grouping, and the grouping cards strategy.

### **4.2.1 The random group formation strategy**

The random group formation strategy entailed the spontaneous gathering of learners by teachers to form groups for facilitating their engagement in specific learning tasks within Mathematics, English, Social Studies (SST), and Science lessons. Teachers employed this strategy to swiftly assemble learners into small groups, enabling them to collaborate effectively on assigned tasks. Through interviews, it emerged that teachers utilized this strategy particularly for activities such as quick quizzes, impromptu discussions, and brief collaborative exercises that necessitated immediate learner engagement.

For example, PS1T2 (M) illustrated his utilization of the random group formation strategy in Mathematics lessons, stating,

*“Randomly grouping learners helps me to quickly form groups.” He further elaborated, “For impromptu discussions in Mathematics, I employ the random group formation strategy. It’s a spontaneous way to get learners to share their thoughts and aid problem-solving approaches within small groups, fostering a dynamic learning environment”* (June, 2024).

PS2T1 (M) shared his perspective on the random group formation strategy in English lessons, noting, *“Random group formation allows for a mix of ideas and perspectives, which enhances the richness of classroom discussions and peer interactions”* (June, 2024).

Similarly, PS2T4 (M) highlighted the benefits of this strategy in social studies, saying, *“using random group formation in social studies encourages learners to work with different peers each time, breaking down social barriers and promoting inclusivity in the classroom”* (June, 2024).

Similarly, the findings of teachers' lesson plans revealed a consistent integration of the random grouping strategy across various subjects. PS1T2 (M) in Mathematics, PS1T3 (F) in Science, PS1T1 (F) in English, and PS2T2 (M) in SST all incorporated this strategy into their instructional plans. For instance, PS1T3's (F) Science lesson plan specified the application of the random group strategy for teaching a topic on poultry and beekeeping. PS1T2's (M) Mathematics lesson plan revealed his intention to employ the strategy to

swiftly form groups for activities involving addition, subtraction, and multiplication of whole numbers. PS1T4's (M) SST lesson plan revealed his aim to utilize the strategy to elicit quick responses from learners regarding the names of different mountains found in Uganda. Furthermore, PS1T1's (F) English lesson plan indicated her plan to employ the random grouping strategy to facilitate discussion groups within her lesson.

Observations made by the researcher revealed the consistent implementation of the random group formation strategy across various subjects, indicating its widespread utility for immediate learner engagement in group work. Notably, PS1T1 (F), an English teacher with fifteen years of experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, used the strategy to organise learners into groups that efficiently collaborated to decipher and reconstruct sentences while also providing constructive peer feedback. Her long experience appeared to support her confidence in managing spontaneous grouping and ensuring that all learners remained actively engaged. Similarly, PS2T1 (M), an English teacher with five years of experience, demonstrated that even relatively less experienced teachers could effectively employ random grouping to spark dynamic discussions. PS1T3 (F), a Science teacher with only three years of teaching experience and a Grade III Certificate, effectively utilised the strategy in her lesson on poultry and beekeeping, highlighting that random grouping was accessible even to teachers with lower qualifications and fewer years of classroom practice. Finally, PS1T4 (M), a Social Studies teacher with six years of experience, employed the method to convene groups of six learners, guiding brainstorming sessions on questions about mountains in Uganda. The variation in experience and qualifications among teachers who adopted this strategy suggests that

random group formation was not dependent on seniority or advanced training, but rather on its practicality as a flexible and time-efficient approach to organising learners across subjects.

Similarly, PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics swiftly employed the random strategy to organize four groups tasked with addressing questions on addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers within a limited time frame of 10 minutes, as stipulated in the lesson plan. Meanwhile, in the Science lesson facilitated by PS1T3 (F), learners were prompted to promptly form groups of eight and collaborate in answering short questions about beekeeping. These instances underscore how PS1T1 (F) in English, PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics, PS1T2 (M) in SST, and PS1T3 (F) in Science effectively utilized the random group formation strategy to orchestrate dynamic group activities. By leveraging their years of experience and educational qualifications, these teachers adeptly organized learners into randomly formulated groups for learning. This strategic approach not only facilitated quick group formation but also supported learners in generating answers to diverse questions within condensed time frames, optimizing the learning experience for all involved.

The widespread adoption of the random group formation strategy across all four subjects taught in Primary Five (P.5), namely English, Mathematics, Social Studies (SST), and Science, underscored its favour among teachers. Out of the eight sampled teachers, four (comprising two females and two males) integrated this strategy into their classroom practices. Notably, three of these teachers (PS1T1, PS1T4, and PS1T3) were situated in the government-aided primary school (PS1), while one (PS2T1) taught in the private

school (PS2). This finding indicated a higher prevalence of the usage of the random group formation strategy in PS1 compared to PS2. This discrepancy may stem from the strategy's efficacy in managing larger class sizes, as observed in PS1, where it facilitated group activities such as quick quizzes, impromptu discussions, and brief collaborative exercises, necessitating immediate learner engagement.

In summary, the random group formation strategy was widely embraced across Mathematics, English, Social Studies (SST), and Science classes. This approach involved spontaneously gathering learners into small groups, promoting swift engagement in specific learning tasks like quick quizzes and impromptu discussions.

#### **4.2.2 The same-ability group formation strategy**

In this study, the same-ability grouping strategy involved the organization of learners with comparable academic abilities into cohesive groups, typically determined by the subject teacher. This approach was predominantly in Mathematics, Science, SST, and English lessons. It was used for providing learners the opportunity to progress at their individual pace and facilitating targeted remedial learning sessions.

Reflecting on this strategy, PS1T2 (M) remarked,

*“I often consider grouping learners based on their similar levels of academic achievement, particularly in Mathematics. It allows me to tailor instruction to their specific needs and provide targeted support”* (June, 2024).

Similarly, in the context of English lessons, PS2T1 (M) emphasized,

*“I encourage learners with similar academic abilities to collaborate in small groups for reading tasks and discussions. This fosters a supportive environment where they can engage with the material at their own pace”*  
(June, 2024).

In Science, PS1T3 (F) expressed,

*“In our Science lessons, grouping learners of similar academic abilities enables me to differentiate instruction effectively. It allows me to address common misconceptions and to provide tailored support to each group”*  
(June, 2024).

Likewise, in SST, PS2T2 (F) shared,

*“For topics requiring extensive discussions in SST, I find grouping learners with similar academic abilities conducive to meaningful discussions and collaborative learning. It ensures that every learner can actively participate and contribute to the learning process”* (June, 2024).

Same-ability groups were also utilized for remedial learning purposes, as indicated by PS1T4 (M) in SST. He noted, *“In SST, I form same-ability groups to conduct targeted remedial sessions after class. This personalized approach allows me to address specific learning gaps and provide additional support to struggling learners”* (June, 2024).

The analysis of teachers' lesson plans revealed a deliberate intention among teachers to utilize the same-ability grouping strategy across various subjects. Specifically, PS1T2 (M) and PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics, along with PS2T1 (F) in English, strategically

planned to employ this approach in their lesson plans to cater for the diverse academic needs of their learners. For instance, PS2T1 (F) in English designed an activity centered on picture reading, intending to form same-ability groups to foster collaborative learning among learners of similar proficiency levels. Similarly, PS1T2 (M) utilized the strategy during a remedial lesson, aiming to provide targeted support to learners requiring additional assistance in mastering mathematical concepts. Additionally, PS2T4 (M) scheduled activities related to regrouping and problem-solving using whole numbers, intending to leverage same-ability groups to facilitate focused learning experiences.

During classroom observations, the formation of same-ability groups was evident in lessons conducted by PS1T2 (M), PS2T4 (M), and PS2T1 (F). Notably, PS2T1 (F) adeptly utilized previous activity scores to form homogeneous groups, enabling learners to engage in collaborative tasks tailored to their academic abilities. In an English lesson, learners were tasked by PS2T1 (F) to create simple sentences based on a picture that was given to each same-ability group. This arrangement fostered active participation and peer support within the group members. Similarly, in Mathematics, PS2T4 (M) orchestrated group activities focusing on regrouping and word problem-solving, ensuring that learners with similar proficiency levels could collaborate effectively to enhance their understanding of mathematical concepts. Moreover, PS1T2 (M) utilized the strategy during a remedial lesson in Mathematics, leveraging same-ability groups to provide targeted support and address individual learning needs effectively. PS1T4 (M) in SST employed this strategy to put groups of learners together to facilitate brainstorming sessions around different questions about the physical features of Uganda.

The findings highlight the widespread adoption of the same-ability group formation strategy across Mathematics, Science, SST, and English lessons. By forming same-ability groups, teachers PS1T2 (M), PS2T4 (M), and PS2T1 (F) facilitated personalized learning experiences and remedial sessions, addressed specific learning gaps, and promoted active participation among learners. The deliberate integration of this strategy in lesson plans underscored teachers' commitment to optimise learning outcomes and to foster inclusive classroom environments tailored to individual learner needs. This strategy was predominantly utilized by male teachers, particularly in Mathematics and SST. Female teachers also implemented this approach in English and SST, emphasizing its role in enhancing the participation levels and academic achievement of all learners.

#### **4.2.3 The mixed-ability group formation strategy**

The study findings underscored the mixed-ability group strategy as a method of forming groups comprising learners with diverse academic abilities, aimed at enhanced interaction among learners, promoting understanding among them, and promoting self-confidence. Teacher interviewees consistently described this strategy as a means of creating groups with varied academic proficiency, with some teachers opting to adjust group compositions based on evolving classroom dynamics. For instance, PS1T4 (M) highlighted its efficacy in improving learning outcomes, stating, “*In the teaching of SST, when less proficient learners are grouped with those who perform better, they tend to show improvement*” (June, 2024). Similarly, PS2T2 (M) emphasized the benefits of pairing slower learners with brighter peers in SST lessons, noting that it fosters catch-up opportunities and ensures balanced group dynamics conducive to effective learning.

He elaborated on his approach, stating,

*“In SST, I use the mixed-ability group strategy, which involves observing the abilities and characteristics of my learners before putting them in groups. I consider putting both bright and slow learners in every group... I form these at the beginning of every term, and I keep changing their membership depending on the conditions at hand”* (June, 2024).

In Mathematics, PS1T2 (M) emphasized the strategic use of the mixed-ability grouping approach, highlighting its consistent application at the outset of each term to foster peer-supported learning.

He articulated the rationale behind this strategy, affirming that, *“In using this strategy for teaching Mathematics, I always group learners with varying abilities at the beginning of the term so that the weaker learners can benefit from their more capable peers”* (June, 2024). Similarly, PS2T4 (M), another Mathematics teacher, reiterated the pedagogical advantages of mixed-ability groups, emphasizing their role in promoting peer-to-peer learning and alleviating the teaching burden. He elucidated this when he said that, *“by bringing together children of different levels of understanding of certain concepts in Mathematics, they teach each other”*. Furthermore, he reiterated, *“I always group learners with varying abilities so that the weaker learners can benefit from their more capable peers”* (June, 2024).

The analysis of teachers' lesson plans unveiled further instances of the mixed-ability grouping strategy's formation, reinforcing its prominence across subjects. Notably, PS1T4 (M) in SST, PS2T2 (M) in SST, and PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics strategically

employed this approach in their lesson plans. For instance, examination of the SST lesson plans devised by PS1T4 (M) and PS2T2 (M) illuminated their intention to utilize the mixed-ability grouping strategy in forming groups for teaching topics on the climate of Uganda. In these lessons, mixed-ability groups were utilized to encourage collaborative exploration of complex concepts, with learners of varying abilities pooling their strengths to deepen their understanding of the subject matter. PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics exemplified this strategy by structuring lesson plans that incorporated mixed-ability groups for activities aimed at enhancing understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts. Here, learners were grouped heterogeneously to promote peer-to-peer learning, allowing those with a stronger grasp of concepts to assist their peers in comprehending challenging mathematical problems.

Observations by the researcher during lessons provided compelling evidence of teachers' deliberate formation of mixed-ability groups, showcasing their effectiveness in diverse instructional contexts. Notably, PS2T4 (M), a Mathematics teacher with two years of experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, adeptly utilized this strategy during a lesson on multiplication by two-digit numbers. After an initial individual activity, he dynamically formed mixed-ability groups by pairing high-performing learners with those who struggled, thereby fostering peer support and collaborative learning. His relatively limited teaching experience did not hinder him from employing a sophisticated grouping technique, suggesting that mixed-ability strategies were accessible even to younger teachers. In contrast, PS2T2 (M), an SST teacher with five years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, demonstrated a more pre-planned approach, orchestrating pre-

arranged mixed-ability groups to facilitate structured peer discussions. His choice reflected both his modest training level and his effort to rely on systematic preparation to ensure balanced group dynamics. Meanwhile, PS1T4 (M), a Social Studies teacher with six years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, adopted a mix-and-match approach during observed lessons, creating mixed-ability groups based on learners' previous performance. His experience level and classroom management skills enabled him to adjust group membership flexibly while still maintaining inclusivity. Taken together, these observations highlight that teachers with varied experience and qualifications effectively adopted the mixed-ability grouping strategy, though their approaches differed: less experienced teachers often used spontaneous adjustments, while those with more years in practice leaned on pre-planned or performance-based arrangements.

The study's findings highlighted the effectiveness of the mixed-ability group formation strategy. Teacher interviews and lesson observations revealed consistent utilization of this strategy across subjects. Teachers strategically formed groups with diverse academic proficiency, facilitating peer learning and fostering inclusive classroom dynamics. By pairing learners of varying abilities, teachers promoted collaborative exploration of complex concepts and ensured balanced participation. The deliberate incorporation of mixed-ability groups in lesson plans underscores its importance in creating inclusive learning environments where all learners can contribute meaningfully and thrive academically.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that three of the eight sampled teachers, all male, employed the mixed-ability grouping strategy during group activities in their lessons.

Notably, PS1T4 (M) and PS2T2 (M), both SST teachers, used this strategy, highlighting its prominence in SST classes across both PS1 and PS2. Additionally, PS2T4 (M), a male Mathematics teacher, also implemented mixed-ability groups in his lessons, and indicated a preference for this strategy among male teachers. Interestingly, the strategy was more commonly used in the private PS2 compared to the government-aided PS1, likely due to smaller class sizes in PS2. This discrepancy in usage may explain why the majority of PS1 teachers did not emphasize its importance during interviews or incorporate it into their teaching practices.

#### **4.2.4 The size-oriented group formation strategy**

The size-oriented group formation strategy implemented in this study placed its emphasis on restricting and regulating the number of learners that made up a group. This approach was shaped by contextual factors such as class size, physical layout of classrooms, the adequacy of available teaching and learning resources, and the pedagogical goal of enhancing learner participation and engagement. Teachers were deliberate in structuring group sizes, recognising that the number of members influenced the productivity and focus of collaborative activities. Importantly, this strategy was not confined to a single subject but was observed across all four subjects taught in P.5 Mathematics, SST, Science, and English, indicating its wide application and practicality. Teachers such as PS1T2 (M), PS2T2 (M), PS2T3 (F), PS1T1 (F), and PS1T4 (M) consistently reiterated in interviews that groups comprising six to eight learners were the most manageable and effective in supporting group learning pedagogy.

For instance, PS1T4 (M) highlighted the centrality of small group sizes in SST lessons to ensure that learners remained engaged and task-oriented. He remarked that, “*When teaching SST, I make groups that do not exceed six or seven so that they can concentrate and sit down and mean business*” (June, 2024). Similarly, PS2T3 (F) underscored the risks associated with larger groupings, observing that oversized groups often led to learners being distracted or disengaged from their assigned tasks. She stated,

*“For SST lessons, I usually try to avoid grouping large numbers of learners because they may be distracted by something and they fail to concentrate on the tasks at hand”* (June, 2024).

These views point to a shared perception among teachers that keeping groups small not only enhances concentration but also nurtures accountability and mutual responsibility within learner teams. The emphasis on group size was further linked to the effective utilisation of available classroom resources. Teachers explained that the decision to adjust group sizes often depended on the availability of materials such as textbooks, charts, and writing aids, which were sometimes limited in supply. PS1T2 (M) stressed this adaptive approach when he asserted, “*It is necessary to vary the group sizes according to the resources available*” (June, 2024). This perspective was echoed by PS2T2 (M), who explained how Mathematics lessons required adjustments in group size depending on the adequacy of teaching aids and space in the classroom. He explained that,

*“In Mathematics, I have around seven learners per group, but this size varies. Some groups may have five or six. I usually adjust the group sizes in accordance with the resources available”* (June, 2024).

The ability of teachers to adapt group size in response to fluctuating resources illustrates the pragmatic nature of the strategy, as it enabled teachers to create workable and equitable learning environments despite material constraints.

The findings further indicate that the size-oriented group formation strategy played a role in balancing the classroom dynamics and fostering effective management. By carefully limiting the number of learners per group, teachers were able to monitor interactions more closely and provide targeted feedback during group activities. The manageable group sizes facilitated smoother movement within classrooms, reduced noise levels, and created opportunities for every learner to contribute meaningfully to the task at hand. This, in turn, promoted a sense of inclusion and equal participation that might have been compromised in larger, less manageable groupings. Teachers' reflections suggest that this approach was not only about numbers but also about creating an enabling structure that aligned with both pedagogical aims and classroom realities. The deliberate restriction of group size thus emerged as a critical element in ensuring that group learning pedagogy was effectively implemented in the primary schools of Mityana District.

Additionally, PS1T1 (F) provided insights into adapting group sizes in English lessons to accommodate limited textbooks, stating, "*I form size-oriented groups of learners in English lessons by making learners sit in groups of three or five, especially when the textbooks are fewer than the learners*" (June, 2024).

The analysis of teachers' lesson plans provided insights into the deliberate planning of group sizes tailored to optimize collaborative learning experiences. Teachers across

subjects, including PS1T2 (M) in Mathematics, PS2T2 (M) in SST, PS2T3 (F) in Science, and PS1T1 (F) in English, strategically planned to form size-oriented groups ranging from five to eight learners. For example, PS1T2 (M) specifically designed his Mathematics lesson to accommodate seven learners in each group, ensuring equitable access to the limited textbooks available. Similarly, PS2T2 (M) in SST outlined plans for small groups of six members, facilitating focused discussions on physical features in Uganda. PS2T3 (F) in Science-structured group discussions with six to eight members, fostering collaborative exploration of poultry diseases. Additionally, PS1T1 (F) in English orchestrated participatory activities with groups of eight members, promoting interactive reading and comprehension sessions.

Observation findings provided compelling evidence of the deliberate use of the size-oriented group formation strategy by several teachers during their lessons, though the way it was applied varied depending on teacher experience, qualification, and subject specialization. For instance, PS1T2 (M), a Mathematics teacher with 18 years of experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, expertly employed this strategy while teaching subtraction of whole numbers up to six digits. His long teaching experience and higher qualification appeared to influence the structured nature of his grouping, as he deliberately organized the class into groups of eight members each, ensuring focus and equitable access to resources. Similarly, PS2T2 (M), an SST teacher with five years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, adeptly formed groups of six learners to discuss mountain formation processes, using a chart with terms like volcanicity and faulting. His

moderate experience and certificate-level training may have contributed to his reliance on visual aids and smaller groupings to manage learner engagement effectively.

In Science, PS2T3 (F), with two years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, applied the size-oriented grouping strategy more cautiously, creating groups of six to eight learners to discuss poultry diseases. Her approach suggested that even less experienced teachers recognized the need for manageable group sizes to reduce distractions and maximize collaboration. Similarly, PS1T1 (F), an English teacher with 15 years of experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, leveraged her extensive experience to form small groups of three to five learners in resource-limited contexts where textbooks were scarce, demonstrating adaptive use of the strategy to address institutional constraints.

PS1T4 (M), a Social Studies teacher with six years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, also successfully applied the strategy, limiting group sizes to six learners to maintain order and focus during classroom discussions.

Notably, while these five teachers demonstrated proficiency in implementing the size-oriented strategy, the remaining three teachers were not observed employing it, suggesting that variations in teacher qualifications, experience, and subject needs may have influenced the adoption of this strategy. The evidence shows that more experienced teachers tended to adapt group sizes strategically in relation to resources and classroom management, while less experienced teachers relied on fixed small groups to maintain learner focus.

The size-oriented group formation strategy employed in this study aimed to create optimal learning environments by adjusting group sizes based on class size, resource availability, and the goal of maximizing learner engagement. Teachers, including PS1T2 (M), PS2T2 (M), PS2T3 (F), PS1T1 (F), and PS1T4 (M), consistently emphasised the effectiveness of maintaining small groups of six to eight learners to facilitate focused and productive group work across various subjects, such as Mathematics, SST, Science, and English. They highlighted the importance of adapting group sizes to available resources, ensuring that each learner had equitable access to materials and a supportive environment for collaborative learning.

Lesson plan analysis and observational data further underscored the teachers' careful planning in implementing this strategy, illustrating its effectiveness in fostering engaging and interactive learning experiences. However, the absence of this approach in lessons led by other teachers suggests variability in group formation practices, indicating the need for further exploration into the factors that may affect teachers' adoption of size-oriented grouping strategies. This finding underscores the potential benefits of tailored group sizes for collaborative learning, while highlighting a gap in the consistent application of this strategy across educators.

#### **4.2.5 Temporary group formation strategy**

The temporary group formation strategy in this study facilitated short-term collaboration among learners to achieve specific learning objectives within designated time frames. Specifically utilized in SST, Science, and Mathematics, this strategy aimed to enhance peer interaction and collaborative learning experiences. Teachers like PS1T4 (M), PS1T1

(F), PS2T4 (M), PS2T3 (F), and PS2T2 (M) strategically employed temporary groups to optimize collaboration and evenly distribute peer-supported learning during time-specific group activities. For instance, PS1T4 (M) emphasized the dynamic nature of temporary groups in SST lessons, stating that, *“I always change the groups weekly, to ensure each learner has the opportunity to benefit from others' understanding. If some learners are struggling, I make necessary changes promptly to facilitate collaborative learning from the outset”* (June, 2024).

Teacher PS2T3 (F) in Science specified that, *“if the group members are not developing a targeted skill or failing to complete a learning activity within a specific time frame, I change the members in the group based on how they are participating”* (June, 2024).

In the process of forming temporary groups, PS2T4 (M) uses the self-selected group formation approach, as he indicated, *“In Mathematics, I allow learners to choose the temporary group they want to learn from. This is because I have observed that learners collaborate better with their friends, and this enhances the completion of learning activities within a specified period of time”* (June, 2024). PS1T1 (F) emphasized the adaptability of temporary groups in English lessons, stating that, *“I utilize temporary groups to promote collaboration and peer learning during time-bound activities. If I notice any learner struggling, I promptly adjust group compositions to ensure optimal learning dynamics”* (June, 2024).

Similarly, PS2T4 (M) highlighted the efficacy of learner autonomy in group formation, stating that, *“In Science, I empower learners to self-select their temporary groups, recognizing the value of peer relationships in facilitating collaborative learning. This approach fosters engagement and enhances task completion within specified time frames”* (June, 2024).

The careful examination of lesson plans unveiled the intentional incorporation of temporary group formation to foster collaborative learning experiences across subjects. For instance, in Social Studies (SST), PS1T4 (M) outlined plans to create temporary groups tasked with engaging in a collaborative discussion to explore the societal impacts of mountainous regions. Similarly, PS2T3 (F) strategically integrated temporary groups into her Science lesson plan focused on poultry keeping, intending to facilitate a collective field visit where learners collaboratively identified various human activities associated with poultry farming. Moreover, the lesson plans of PS2T2 (M) in SST further exemplified the deliberate intention to utilize temporary groups for conducting collaborative group work tasks, such as analyzing historical documents or engaging in role-playing scenarios, emphasizing the dynamic nature of instructional planning tailored to optimize collaborative learning outcomes.

Observation findings revealed that the temporary group formation strategy was effectively applied by teachers of varying experience, gender, and qualifications, with each adapting the approach to their classroom realities. For example, PS2T2 (M), a relatively young SST teacher with five years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, organized temporary groups of seven learners to address questions on human activities in

mountainous regions, a strategy that reflected his reliance on short-term collaboration to maintain focus and learner engagement. Similarly, PS1T4 (M), an SST teacher with six years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, deliberately restructured temporary groups during lessons on the formation of physical features in Uganda, drawing on his moderate experience to optimize participation and ensure that weaker learners were supported within the given time frame. In Science, PS2T3 (F), with only two years of teaching experience, applied the strategy more flexibly by reorganizing learners into small temporary groups to discuss poultry farming activities, an approach that suggested she used adaptability as a means to manage her still-developing classroom control skills. Notably, the adaptability of temporary groups was also reflected in the practices of more experienced teachers like PS1T1 (F), who, with fifteen years of teaching experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, adjusted groups promptly in English lessons whenever learners were struggling, showing a more nuanced, experience-driven application of the strategy. Across these observations, it was evident that less experienced teachers tended to rely on fixed temporary groups to maintain order, while experienced ones applied the strategy dynamically, adjusting membership in real-time to enhance peer learning and optimize short-term collaborative outcomes.

The temporary group formation strategy in this study was instrumental in fostering short-term collaboration among learners to achieve specific learning objectives within designated time frames across SST, Science, and Mathematics. Utilized by both male and female teachers, including PS1T4 (M), PS1T1 (F), PS2T4 (M), PS2T3 (F), and PS2T2 (M), this strategy aimed to optimize peer interaction and evenly distribute peer-supported

learning during time-bound group activities. Notably, teachers exhibited adaptability in group composition, with PS2T3 (F) emphasizing prompt adjustments based on group dynamics, while PS2T2 (M) and PS1T1 (F) highlighted learner autonomy and peer relationships' role in enhancing collaboration and task completion. Analysis of lesson plans further underscored the deliberate integration of temporary groups, exemplified by PS1T4 (M), PS2T3 (F), and PS2T2 (M)'s strategic incorporation of collaborative learning experiences. Observation findings reaffirmed teachers' adept implementation of the strategy, with instances like PS2T2 (M)'s SST class, where temporary groups efficiently addressed topic-specific queries, showcasing the strategy's effectiveness in fostering dynamic and engaging learning environments across subjects.

Overall, the findings suggest the temporary group formation strategy's efficacy in promoting collaborative learning experiences, with both male and female teachers leveraging its benefits to optimize peer interaction and knowledge sharing within their classrooms.

#### **4.2.6 Special Needs-Support grouping strategy**

The special needs-support grouping strategy identified in this study involves integrating learners with disabilities into learning groups, allowing peers to provide support and guidance. Teachers, as revealed in interviews, employ this strategy to foster inclusivity and enhance peer support within group learning environments. For instance, PS2T3 (F) in Science attested, *“I use special needs-support grouping to place learners with disabilities in all groups in my class. I do this to allow their peers to give support and guidance, ultimately aiding group learning”* (June, 2024).

Similarly, PS1T4 (M) in Social Studies affirmed the importance of this strategy, stating that, *“by including learners with special needs in groups, I can create a supportive and encouraging environment that helps them improve their performance in group learning”* (June, 2024). Additionally, PS1T1 (F) emphasized the significance of this strategy in English lessons, ensuring equitable support and encouragement for all learners, including those with disabilities, stating, *“This strategy is crucial for English in my class. By incorporating learners with disabilities into all groups, I ensure they receive the same support and encouragement as their peers”* (June, 2024).

Teacher PS2T4 (M) shared his perspective on the Special Needs-Support grouping strategy, highlighting its effectiveness in Mathematics, and said that, *“in Math lessons, I integrate learners with disabilities into group activities to promote peer support and collaboration. This approach not only fosters a sense of inclusivity but also enhances the learning experience for all learners”* (June, 2024).

Additionally, Teacher PS2T3 (F) provided insights into its application in Science lessons, stating,

*“I find that incorporating learners with disabilities into group discussions and experiments in Science class encourages empathy and cooperation among learners. It also creates a supportive environment for inclusive learning where every learner's contribution is valued”* (June, 2024).

The analysis of lesson plan documents underscored the intentional incorporation of the special needs-support grouping strategy by teachers, exemplified in the instructional

plans of PS1T4 (M), PS2T3 (F), and PS1T1 (F). Within the context of Social Studies (SST), PS1T4 (M) outlined a strategy to integrate learners with disabilities into small group discussions, fostering inclusive learning experiences while exploring the impacts of mountains on human societies. Similarly, PS2T3 (F) strategically integrated learners with disabilities into collaborative group discussions within her Science lesson plan, aimed at identifying diverse human activities associated with poultry farming. In English, PS1T1 (F) articulated plans to facilitate the participation of learners with disabilities in group activities, promoting shared learning experiences through collaborative interactions and collective engagement with course materials. These insights gleaned from lesson plans elucidate the deliberate efforts of teachers to foster inclusive learning environments and promote peer support among learners with diverse learning needs.

Observations from classroom sessions revealed how the special needs-support grouping strategy was enacted differently depending on the teachers' professional background, experience, and subject specialization, with each adapting the approach to foster inclusivity and peer assistance. For instance, PS2T3 (F), a young Science teacher with two years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, was observed deliberately integrating two learners with visual impairments into separate groups, where their peers actively assisted them with note-taking during experiments, reflecting her adaptive use of group support to compensate for limited teaching experience. In contrast, PS1T1 (F), a veteran English teacher with 15 years of classroom experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, demonstrated a more structured and nuanced application by assigning specific roles to learners with disabilities, such as giving a learner with a physical disability the

responsibility of timekeeping and pairing another with an intellectual disability with a supportive peer, ensuring equitable participation in group activities. Similarly, PS1T4 (M), an SST teacher with six years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, consistently integrated learners with special needs into his group work activities, observed facilitating their participation in discussions on the social impacts of mountainous regions, which highlighted his moderate but deliberate practice of inclusive strategies. Across these observations, less experienced teachers tended to rely on spontaneous peer support, while more experienced ones embedded structured roles and responsibilities, suggesting that teacher experience and training significantly shaped how the special needs-support grouping strategy was implemented to achieve inclusive and collaborative learning environments.

The Special Needs-Support grouping strategy, as identified in this study, exemplifies a proactive approach to fostering inclusivity and peer support within group learning environments. Through interviews, teachers such as PS2T3 (F), PS1T4 (M), and PS1T1 (F) underscored the importance of integrating learners with disabilities into group activities to promote collaboration and support. Additionally, insights from PS2T1 (M) and PS2T4 (F) provided further validation of the strategy's effectiveness across diverse subject areas, emphasizing its role in enhancing the overall learning experience. Analysis of lesson plans revealed deliberate efforts by teachers to incorporate this strategy into instructional practices, as evidenced by the lesson plans of PS1T4 (M), PS2T3 (F), and PS1T1 (F) across various subjects of Mathematics, social studies, and English. Classroom observations further corroborated the successful implementation of the strategy,

particularly evident in the practices of PS2T3 (F) and PS1T1 (F), where learners with disabilities were seamlessly integrated into group activities with support from their peers. These findings underscore the significance of the Special Needs-Support grouping strategy in fostering inclusive learning environments and promoting collaborative engagement among all learners. Additionally, regarding demographics, it's noteworthy that both male and female teachers utilized this strategy effectively, demonstrating a shared commitment to creating inclusive educational settings that cater to the diverse needs of all learners.

#### **4.2.7 Grouping cards technique**

The grouping cards technique employed in this study utilized a multifaceted approach, incorporating colors, letters, and numbers to facilitate dynamic groupings within the classroom. Each card was precisely marked with a unique combination of these identifiers, offering a flexible structure adaptable to various grouping methodologies, as highlighted in interviews with teachers such as PS2T4 (M), PS1T1 (F), PS2T2 (M), and PS1T3 (F). For instance, PS2T4 (M) described his implementation in social studies, stating, *“I create eight cards with distinct colours, numbers, and letters, allowing learners to form temporary groups based on their assigned identifiers. This fosters efficient collaboration, enabling completion of learning activities within designated time frames”* (June, 2024). Similarly, PS1T1 (F) emphasized the utilization of the technique in English lessons, stating, *“I utilize grouping cards to establish random groups by assigning different colours to each card. Learners then pair up based on matching colours, facilitating quick collaboration and task completion”* (June, 2024).

PS2T2 (M) in Mathematics emphasized that, *“I use the grouping cards technique in forming size-oriented groups to create groups that match with the available resources like textbooks. This allows them to discuss and concentrate on content within a close proximity”* (June, 2024).

PS1T3 in Science (F) added that *“I use the grouping cards technique to further divide same-ability groups into smaller groups for remedial learning lessons”* (June, 2024).

This innovative approach not only promotes active engagement and collaboration but also streamlines the grouping process, enabling teachers to efficiently manage classroom dynamics and optimize learning outcomes.

The analysis of lesson plans from PS2T4 (M), PS1T1 (F), PS2T2 (M), and PS1T3 (F) provided further insights into the intentional incorporation of the grouping cards technique within instructional frameworks. Across various subjects, teachers strategically outlined plans to leverage this innovative approach to facilitate effective groupings and enhance collaborative learning experiences. For example, PS2T2 (M) in Social Studies precisely detailed his intent to utilize distinct colours, numbers, and letters on grouping cards to facilitate temporary group formations, promoting collaborative engagement and task completion within specified time frames. Similarly, PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics outlined plans to employ the strategy for size-oriented groups, aligning group compositions with the availability of textbooks to optimize resource utilization and promote equitable access to learning materials. Additionally, PS1T3 (F) in Science articulated her strategy to utilize grouping cards for regrouping same-ability learners during remedial sessions, illustrating a targeted approach to address individual learning

needs and foster academic growth. The deliberate inclusion of the grouping cards technique in lesson plans underscores teachers' commitment to implementing innovative instructional practices aimed at maximizing learner engagement and learning outcomes.

The lesson observation findings provided robust evidence corroborating insights from teacher interviews and lesson plan analyses on the effective use of the grouping cards formation technique.

During instructional sessions led by PS2T4 (M), PS2T2 (M), PS1T3 (F), PS1T1 (F), PS2T1 (M), and PS1T2 (M), teachers skillfully integrated grouping cards to structure dynamic group activities. For example, in a Mathematics lesson, PS2T4 (M) organized groups based on cards assigned with numbers, colors, or letters, facilitating focused and collaborative engagement. In SST and Science, respectively, PS2T2 (M) and PS1T3 (F) employed similar card-based grouping to foster teamwork and inclusivity, while PS1T1 (F) used the approach in an English lesson to promote equitable participation. Additionally, PS2T1 (M) and PS1T2 (M) used grouping cards across their subjects, showcasing the versatility of this strategy across disciplines. These findings underscore the grouping cards technique's strategic and consistent application across varied instructional contexts, demonstrating its efficacy in fostering collaborative environments and enhancing learner engagement.

The grouping cards technique, as evidenced by interviews, lesson plans, and classroom observations, emerges as a versatile and effective approach for fostering dynamic groupings and promoting collaborative learning experiences in diverse educational

settings. Teachers such as PS2T4 (M), PS1T1 (F), PS2T2 (M), and PS1T3 (F) strategically utilized this method across subjects, demonstrating its adaptability and utility in facilitating group activities tailored to specific learning objectives and classroom dynamics. For example, PS2T2 (M) utilized the strategy in social studies to facilitate temporary groups, while PS1T1 (F) employed it in English to establish random groups and for promoting efficient collaboration. PS2T4 (M) applied the approach in Mathematics to create size-oriented groups aligned with resource availability, while PS1T3 (F) utilized it in Science for remedial sessions, addressing individual learning needs. Moreover, the deliberate inclusion of the grouping cards technique in lesson plans underscores teachers' commitment to innovative instructional practices aimed at maximizing learner engagement and optimizing learning outcomes. Considering the demographics, the implementation of this strategy appears consistent across both male and female teachers, as well as in both private and public-school settings, indicating its universal applicability and effectiveness in promoting inclusive and collaborative learning environments.

**Table 4.3:** Summary matrix table of group formation strategies used by teachers in PS1 and PS2

<i>Group Formation Strategies</i>	<i>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</i>	<i>Differences</i>	
		<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<b><i>The strategies were 6 in total</i></b>	The two schools utilized all the 6 strategies.  Teachers in the two schools mentioned that they utilize the grouping cards technique for forming groups.	PS1T1 (F) in English and PS1T3 (F) in Science.  To facilitate temporary group formation- PS2T2 (M) in SST.	PS2T2 (M) in SST and PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics.
<b>Reasons for using the grouping cards technique.</b>	Optimize resource utilization to promote equitable access to learning materials.	PS1T3 (F) in Science - for re-grouping same-ability learners during remedial sessions.	PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics for creating (size-oriented groups).

<b>Random Group Formation Strategy</b>	Employed across Mathematics, English, Social Studies (SST), and Science.	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<b>Reasons</b>	It was a time-saving group formation strategy.		
<b>Context</b>	Formed when teachers wanted quick learner engagement in tasks like: a). Brief collaborative exercises.	b). Quick quizzes - PS1T1 (F) in English.	c). To promote inclusivity as learners to work with different peers - PS2T4 (M) in Social Studies.
<b>Same-Ability Group Formation Strategy.</b>	Employed in both schools. In both schools, it was employed by SST teachers: PS1T4 (M), PS2T4 (M).  In both schools, it was reflected in the lesson plans of the teachers who used it.	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
		For tailored instruction and targeted support. PS1T2 (M).	PS2T1 (F) in English.
<b>Context (Same-Ability Group Formation).</b>		In remedial sessions - PS1T4 (M) in SST, PS1T2 (M) in Mathematics.	Regrouping for targeted support - PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics.
<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>		<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<b>Mixed-Ability Group Formation Strategy</b>	Employed in both schools.  Lesson plans in both schools indicated strategic use of mixed-ability groups.	Employed in Mathematics and Social Studies.	Employed in Mathematics, English and SST.  PS1T4 (M) in SST employed a strategic "mix and match" approach.
<b>Reasons</b>	To promote peer-supported learning among learners with varying academic abilities. Mentioned by all teachers in both schools.	-	-
<b>Context</b>	The presence of learners with varying academic abilities (Time takers and fast learners).		

	<i>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</i>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<b><i>Size-Oriented Group Formation Strategy</i></b>	<p>Employed in both schools.</p> <p>In both schools, it was employed by SST and Mathematics teachers - PS1T4 (M) &amp; PS2T2 (M).</p> <p>In both schools, the group-formation strategy was reflected in the lesson plans of teachers who used it.</p> <p>Groups ranged from 6-8 members per group.</p>	PS1T1 (F) in English.	PS2T3Teacher (F) in Science.
<b>Reasons</b>	Stated by the Mathematics and SST teachers in both schools.	To ensure balanced participation (English).	
For encouraging learners to concentrate on their tasks.	Stated by the SST teachers in both schools.		
<b>Context</b>	Limited resources like textbooks.	Large groups that needed to be broken down.	During practical activities (in Science).
<b><i>Temporary Group Formation Strategy</i></b>	Employed in both schools under teacher-selected groups in - PS1T4 (M) in SST, PS2T3 (F) in Science.		PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics uses the self-selected temporary group formation approach.
<b>Reasons</b>	In both schools it was used for fostering collaboration and peer interaction.	For developing a targeted skill in English language - PS1T1 (F).	It enhances the completion of learning activities faster.
<b>Context</b>	Existence of short-term collaborative learning activities in the lessons.	Supporting time takers by fast learners through collaborative learning. The presence of learners with varying academic abilities (Time takers and fast learners).	Faster completion of learning activities.

<b>Special Needs-Support Grouping Strategy</b>	Employed in both schools.	PS1T4 (M) in SST. PS1T1 (F) in English.	PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics.
<b>Reasons</b>	.		
For fostering inclusive learning experiences.	PS2T3 (F) in Science and PS2T3 (F) in Science.	-	Stated by PS2T2 (M) in SST.
For promoting academic peer support for learners with special needs.	Stated by all teachers in both schools.	-	Stated by PS2T2 (M) in SST.
To encourage empathy towards learners with special needs among other learners.	Stated by all teachers in both schools.	-	-
Creating a supportive social learning environment.	Stated by all teachers in both schools.	-	-
<b>Context</b>			
The presence of learners with special needs in the class.	Stated by all teachers in both schools.	-	-

Strategies teachers employ in forming groups for group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana District included: random group formation, mixed-ability group formation, same-ability group formation, size-determined group formation, temporary group formation, and special needs-support group formation.

As per the findings in this research question, teachers use different strategies in grouping and re-grouping learners. The different reasons given by the teachers for using the various group formation strategies include: enhancing tailored instruction; enhancing targeted support; promoting peer-supported learning among learners with varying academic and shared abilities; ensuring balanced participation; supporting time takers by

fast learners through collaborative learning; fostering inclusive learning experiences; fostering quick learner engagement in tasks like quizzes; creating a supportive learning environment for learners with special needs.

Teachers applied the identified group formation strategies under contexts like: Limited resources; the presence of learners with special needs in the class; the existence of short-term collaborative learning activities in the lessons; the presence of learners with varying academic abilities; the existence of large groups that needed to be broken down, and the existence of practical activities, especially in Science and SST.

There were also variances in the popularity of the group formation strategies mentioned by the teachers. Five group formation strategies were mentioned by teachers in both schools. These included: random group formation, same-ability group formation, size-determined group formation, temporary group formation, and special needs-support group formation strategy. However, mixed-ability group formation was mentioned by only teachers in PS1, and not mentioned by teachers in PS2. The most popularly mentioned group formation strategies in both schools were: size-oriented group formation strategy, special needs-support grouping strategy, and temporary group formation strategy.

Among the six strategies, the grouping cards technique was mentioned by the teachers as a method that they used for attaining the kind of group compositions they wanted under the different learning contexts. The technique facilitated the processes of group composition, equal representation, and size determination for both in-class learning

activities and remedial sessions after the lesson. The common reasons for the use of this technique given by the teachers in both schools included the promotion of equitable access to learning materials, optimization of collaborative learning opportunities, and inclusivity in the different groups they formed.

Table 4.3 shows that various strategies were employed by teachers in the selected primary schools in Mityana District for grouping and re-grouping learners for group learning. These included: random group formation, mixed-ability group formation, same-ability group formation, size-determined group formation, temporary group formation, and special needs-support group formation.

The results in table 4.3, also indicate that there were variances in the popularity of the group formation strategies stated by the teachers. On one hand, six group formation strategies were mentioned by teachers in both schools and were stated to be unevenly used for group formation in the four subjects and among the female and male teachers. These included: random group formation, same-ability group formation, size-determined group formation, temporary group formation, special needs-support group formation strategy and mixed-ability group formation strategy. The most popularly mentioned group formation strategies in both schools were: size-oriented group formation strategy, special needs-support grouping strategy, and temporary group formation strategy.

Findings in table 4.3 further reveal the different reasons given by the teachers for using the various group formation strategies. These include: enhancing tailored instruction; enhancing targeted support; promoting peer-supported learning among learners with

varying academic and social abilities; ensuring balanced participation; supporting time takers by fast learners through collaborative learning; fostering inclusive learning experiences; fostering quick learner engagement in tasks like quizzes; and creating a supportive learning environment for learners with special needs.

The information in Table 4.3 also further indicates that teachers applied the identified group formation strategies under given contexts. These contexts included: Limited resources; the presence of learners with special needs in the class; and existence of short-term collaborative learning activities in the lessons; the presence of learners with varying academic abilities; the existence of large groups that needed to be broken, and the existence of practical activities, especially in Science and SST.

There were also variances in the popularity of the group formation strategies mentioned by the teachers. Five group formation strategies were mentioned by teachers in both schools. These included: random group formation, same-ability group formation, size-determined group formation, temporary group formation, mixed-ability grouping, and special needs-support group formation strategy. The most popularly mentioned group formation strategies in both schools were: size-oriented group formation strategy, special needs-support grouping strategy, and temporary group formation strategy.

Additionally, the data in table 4.3 reveals that all the teachers in both schools mentioned that they used the grouping card technique in all the six group formation strategies. Table 4.3 indicates that the teachers used this technique as a means for attaining the kind of group compositions they wanted under the different learning contexts. The technique

facilitated the processes of group composition, equal representation, and size determination for both in-class learning activities and remedial sessions after the lesson. In so doing, it also promoted equitable access to learning materials, optimization of collaborative learning opportunities, and inclusivity in the different groups they formed.

### **4.3 Teachers' practices in the implementation of group learning**

This section delves into the teachers' practices for the implementation of group learning in the primary school classes they teach. This exploration aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies and practices teachers used to foster group learning environments in primary school classrooms. Group learning in this context refers to all the learners in a group working together on the group tasks, with the facilitation help from the teacher enabling each group member to contribute to the group's answers. The teachers' facilitation in this context refers to the specific group learning interactive steps and rules given to learners by the teacher for promoting collaborative teamwork and the monitoring and feedback given by the teacher for promoting learners' adherence to the group learning steps and rules.

The aim of the second research question was to explore teachers' practices in utilizing different strategies for enhancing group learning. Data for this research question was collected from the document analysis of lesson plans, interview responses, and lesson observations made by the researcher.

Data of the teachers' practices was presented, analyzed and interpreted around sub-theme findings that emerged from the interviews, analysis of lesson plans (documents), and lesson observations. These sub-themes included assigning team tasks for collaborative work in groups, implementing role-play scenarios, providing scaffolded tasks within groups, and periodically changing group compositions.

#### **4.3.1 Assigning team tasks for collaborative work in groups**

This approach involves teachers designing and assigning team tasks that enable group members to work with each other in collaborative arrangements. In this context, the collaborative arrangement requires each group member to share his/her solution to the team's task with the group members and vice versa. Findings in this section reveal that teachers used the aforementioned approach for implementing group learning in the following ways: designing and assigning a team task for group members to work on all of it individually and share their solutions with the group; allocating responsibility roles to individual group members for collaborative performance of team tasks; designing team tasks with an inter-group collaborative work design; designing and assigning team task components to individual learners in a group to work on and share their solutions with the group; and assigning intra and inter-group collaborative research projects to groups.

Findings in this approach revealed that the teachers' experiences of the strategy of designing and assigning team tasks that are wholly done by each group member were implemented in all the subjects by PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics, PS1T3 (F) in Science, PS1T4 (M) in SST, and PS1T1 (F) in English. This arrangement involves all the

individual learners in the group doing the same task in its entirety and sharing their solution with the group.

For instance, in view of this framework, PS2T1 (M) said:

*“In teaching Mathematics, I assign problem-solving activities that make all the group learners work on the whole task individually to find solutions that they share with the group members. In the process, I implement group learning procedures that not only make the learning process more engaging but also encourage them to learn from each other”* (June, 2024).

PS2T4 (M) further illustrated his usage of this strategy with an example in which he said he gave learners a geometry task to individually measure angles and discuss their findings in their respective groups. He explained that he used this design as an approach that helps learners to understand concepts better through peer explanation.

PS2T4's (M) approach to group learning involved assigning tasks that required each group member to solve the entire problem individually and then share their solutions with the group. However, the guidance typically provided through group learning procedures, specific steps, and rules for sharing and collaboration was missing. This lack of structure was evident in both the teacher's interview explanations and classroom observation. In one observed Mathematics lesson, although the teacher assigned a task to groups, he did not provide them with clear instructions on how each individual would share their solutions collaboratively. As a result, only some learners shared their answers,

highlighting that effective group learning relies on the teacher's guidance to foster interaction and collaboration.

In terms of designing team tasks with an inter-group collaborative work design, PS1T3 (F) in Science explained that:

*“I often design Science experiments that can only be implemented through inter-group collaborative teamwork. For instance, when learning about plant growth, each group is responsible for a different aspect of the experiment, such as planting seeds, measuring growth, and recording changes in the plant. Through this division of labour, I make them carry out inter-group dialogue on their experiences that enhances peer-supported learning”* (June, 2024).

Some teachers explicitly developed team tasks with a structure that involved allocating responsibility roles for their performance by individual group members. This helped to promote collaborative group learning within individual groups. PS1T4 (M) stated that,

*“In SST, when carrying out group learning, I assign tasks that require learners to work collaboratively as a team to research and present on topics such as the climate of Uganda. Each member in a group has a specific role, such as secretary, presenter, timekeeper, encourager, and chairperson, which ensures that everyone contributes and learns from the experience”* (June, 2024).

This narrative implies that assigning specific roles within group tasks can enhance collaborative group learning by ensuring active participation of all learners. PS1T4 (M)

described this approach in SST, where learners take on roles like writer, presenter, timekeeper, and chairperson, promoting both content learning and role-specific skills. However, the narrative does not indicate whether PS1T4 monitors learners' execution of these roles. This lack of oversight could lead to some learners not fulfilling their roles, potentially weakening the effectiveness of group learning.

The analysis of teachers' lesson plans also revealed some teachers' intent to design and assign team tasks that enable all the learners in a group to work on the different parts of the task collaboratively in teamwork. Notably, PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics structured one of his lesson plans to include group activities such as solving complex word problems together, where each learner in the group was required to contribute a part of the solution of the word problem. In English, PS1T1 (F) also designed group reading tasks and comprehension exercises, where each group member was expected to individually read the text, write his/her answer to one of the questions assigned to the group, and then share his/her answer with the group through the chairperson. From the findings of these two lesson plans, it is evident that the arrangement of each learner in the group contributing part of the solution to the group task was a form of the role allocation strategy teachers PS2T1 (M) and PS1T1 (F) planned to use for promoting group learning in their lessons. In these two contexts, the group learning strategy indicated in the lesson plans was meant to ensure that everyone contributes to the group answer and the group learns from every group member and vice versa. However, in both lesson plans, the content in the teachers' activity column revealed no intent to monitor and give feedback on individual learners' participation in the production of the group answers. The absence of these two aspects in

the lesson plans indicates that the teachers do not perceive them as important strategies in the implementation of group learning. This observation is supported by the absence of any findings on teachers' monitoring and providing feedback in the interview and classroom observation data presented earlier in this approach of group learning.

Interview and observation findings revealed that assigning collaborative team research projects to groups is the other strategy some teachers use to engage learners in group learning. In the case of interviews, PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics said, *"I assign research projects on topics such as real-life applications of geometry. Learners work in groups to collect information, interpret the data, and share their results with the class, which helps improve their research skills and understanding of concepts"* (June, 2024).

This narrative suggests that assigning collaborative team research projects is another strategy teachers use to engage learners in group learning. However, it omits any mention of group learning guidelines or monitoring provided by the teacher, both of which are essential for effective collaboration. Without clear guidance and oversight, the collaborative potential of group learning is significantly diminished.

Observation findings revealed that teachers' practices in assigning team tasks were shaped not only by the nature of the subject but also by their professional training and teaching experience, which influenced how effectively they facilitated collaboration. For instance, PS2T4 (M), a young Mathematics teacher with just three years of experience and a Grade III teaching qualification, was observed assigning tasks such as solving geometry problems individually before sharing results within groups; however, due to his

limited classroom management experience, he provided minimal guidance on structured sharing, resulting in uneven participation where only confident learners actively contributed. In contrast, PS1T3 (F), a mid-career Science teacher with eight years of teaching experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, demonstrated stronger structuring by designing inter-group experiments such as dividing aspects of a plant growth study across different groups and ensuring that groups interacted to compare results, reflecting how her deeper experience enabled her to design tasks that encouraged dialogue beyond the group level. Similarly, PS1T4 (M), a Social Studies teacher with six years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, emphasized role allocation in group work, assigning positions such as chairperson, secretary, and presenter, yet observations revealed he often did not follow up to monitor whether learners adhered to these roles, suggesting that while his moderate experience enabled him to design collaborative frameworks, limitations in facilitation skills weakened their effectiveness.

By contrast, PS1T1 (F), an experienced English teacher with over fifteen years in the classroom and a Diploma in Primary Education, demonstrated the most structured implementation, assigning group reading and comprehension tasks where each learner had a defined question to answer before sharing through the group chairperson, and she consistently moved among groups to monitor progress and provide feedback, ensuring equitable participation. Collectively, these observations underscore that while all teachers assigned team tasks for group learning, their differing qualifications and years of service strongly influenced the degree of structure, monitoring, and feedback embedded in their

practice, with more experienced teachers providing clearer facilitation that fostered effective collaboration.

The findings under the theme of assigning team tasks for collaborative work in groups reveal that teachers used five strategies to implement team tasks for group learning. While these strategies often facilitated group learning effectively, key aspects were sometimes overlooked. These omissions include the failure to provide group learning guidelines, monitor adherence to these guidelines, give feedback on collaborative performance, and support group learning at all levels (sub-group, intra-group, and inter-group). As a result, the full potential of group learning may be undermined by inadequate adherence to the necessary procedures and guidelines.

#### **4.3.2 Implementing role-play scenarios within groups**

The implementation of role-play scenarios within groups emerged as one of the team task approaches teachers use to facilitate group learning. This approach involves designing activities that require learners to assume specific roles with tasks tailored to their individual abilities and learning needs. By implementing this approach, the teacher's aim is to foster active engagement, enhance critical thinking, listening, and feedback, and ensure that each learner can contribute meaningfully to the group effort.

In English, teachers implemented role-play team scenarios to enhance language skills of active listening and feedback and boost confidence in speaking. For instance, PS1T1 (F) revealed this view when she explained, *“I use role-playing in storytelling where learners take on different characters. I guide them to practice speaking and listen actively to their*

*peers, which improves their language proficiency”* (June, 2024). The researcher equally observed PS1T1 (F) use role-play during a lesson on narrative writing in English where she assigned roles to learners to role-play from a story. The teacher also gave guidelines to learners, like taking turns to speak, listening to each other, and pronouncing words clearly and confidently when speaking.

This narrative implied that role-play scenarios are an effective strategy for enhancing group learning. By assigning specific roles and providing interactive guidelines, teachers like PS1T1 (F) promote active engagement, critical thinking, and effective communication among learners. Observations confirmed that these role-play activities foster collaboration and adherence to speaking and listening guidelines, significantly supporting group learning.

The analysis of lesson plans provided further evidence of teachers’ intention to use role-play scenarios in their lessons. PS1T1’s (F) English lesson plan had detailed information on how she would use role-play in a lesson where learners would be assigned roles to act out a play based on a reading text story. In this activity she planned to have learners work together to understand the characters, rehearse their lines, and perform their roles. This activity was planned to support their comprehension and speaking skills.

The findings indicate that role-play scenarios effectively enhanced group learning by engaging learners through tailored activities and specific roles. Teachers like PS1T1 (F) use role-play to improve language skills, foster active listening, and boost confidence. Observations and lesson plans confirm that this approach promotes collaboration, critical

thinking, and adherence to communication guidelines, thereby significantly supporting group learning.

### **4.3.3 Periodically changing group composition to foster inclusive group learning**

This practice aims to create a learning environment where all learners have the opportunity to collaborate with different peers and benefit from varied perspectives through teachers changing group composition using various criteria. Group compositions were changed to encourage group learning that enables learners of various proficiency levels to collaborate, widens learners' collaborative networks by preventing social cliques from forming to hinder collaboration opportunities among learners in the classroom, and addresses evolving needs of the learners through new group settings.

Some teachers used the approach of periodically changing groups' composition so as to encourage group learning that enables learners of various proficiency levels to collaborate. PS2T1 (M) affirmed this when he said that, *“In Mathematics, I periodically change group compositions to ensure that learners from various proficiency levels collaborate. This promotes peer learning, as stronger learners can assist those who need more support”* (June, 2024). The data in this narrative reveal that by rotating group memberships, the aim of the teacher is to ensure that all learners have opportunities to learn from each other's strengths and support each other's growth. It should, however, be noted that PS2T1 (M) did not indicate if he provides group learning guidelines (rules and steps) that enable learners in the groups to interact with one another in a supportive way. Learners can “learn from each other's strengths and support each other's growth” in

group work only when the group learning interactive guidelines are given to them and their implementation is monitored with feedback by the teacher.

The approach of periodically changing group compositions was also used as a strategy to prevent social cliques from forming so as to enhance collaboration opportunities among learners in the classroom. In this respect, PS1T2 (M), an English teacher, explained: “*I change groupings every few weeks to encourage learners to interact with different classmates. This helps in broadening their social circles and encourages them to work with diverse peers*” (June, 2024). In this context, the strategy was expected to promote inclusive learning and to widen the interactive learning opportunities among learners. Similarly, PS1T2 (M), like PS2T1 (M), did not indicate if he provides interactive guidelines that enable learners in the groups to interact with new group members unreservedly. Learners can “*learn from each other's strengths and support each other's growth*” in the various group settings only when the interactive guidelines (rules and steps) are given to them and their implementation is monitored and feedback is given by the teacher.

Observation findings revealed that while periodically changing group compositions was implemented to foster inclusivity and broaden peer interactions, its effectiveness varied significantly according to teachers’ experience, subject, and facilitation skills. For instance, PS2T2 (M), a Social Studies teacher with five years of experience and a Grade III Certificate, applied a seat rotation system across four lessons, assigning learners to new groupings each session. While this practice ensured that learners physically collaborated with different peers, the teacher primarily monitored group secretaries’

recording of answers rather than the quality of interaction or mutual support among all group members, indicating limited facilitation skills linked to his moderate experience and qualifications. Similarly, PS1T2 (M), an English teacher with eighteen years of experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, regularly changed group compositions to prevent social cliques; however, observations revealed he did not provide explicit interactive guidelines or monitor how individual learners contributed to the group's learning, resulting in some learners remaining passive despite the reshuffled groups. In contrast, PS2T4 (M), a Mathematics teacher with two years of experience and a Diploma in Primary Education, also rotated group members but lacked structured steps for interaction, leading learners to focus on individual completion rather than collaborative problem-solving. Collectively, these observations underscore that while periodic group composition changes have the potential to enhance peer learning and inclusivity, the absence of structured guidelines, teacher monitoring, and feedback limited their impact, highlighting that the teacher's bio-data, including experience, subject specialization, and qualification level, played a key role in shaping how effectively this strategy promoted interactive and supportive group learning.

Furthermore, some teachers used the approach of periodically changing group compositions as a strategy for addressing needs of the learners through new group settings. For instance, PS2T3 (F), a Science teacher, highlighted this benefit when she explained that, *“in Science experiments, I change groupings based on learners' understanding of concepts. This allows me to pair learners who complement each other's*

*strengths and areas of improvement, fostering a supportive learning environment”* (June, 2024).

The information in this narrative indicates that by adjusting group compositions to match learners' evolving needs, teachers are expected to ensure that group activities remain engaging and beneficial for all learners involved. Similarly, PS2T3 (F), like PS2T1 (M) and PS1T2 (M), did not indicate if she provides interactive guidelines and steps that enable learners in the new adjusted groups to interact with each other in a manner that fosters a supportive collaborative learning environment. Learners can learn from each other's strengths and support each other's growth in the adjusted group settings only when the interactive guidelines and steps are given to them, and their implementation is monitored with feedback by the teacher.

The lesson observation findings provided robust evidence corroborating insights from teacher interviews and lesson plan analyses on the effective use of the grouping cards technique. During instructional sessions led by PS2T4 (M), PS2T2 (M), PS1T3 (F), PS1T1 (F), PS2T1 (M), and PS1T2 (M), teachers skillfully integrated grouping cards to structure dynamic group activities. For example, in a Mathematics lesson, PS2T4 (M) organized groups based on cards assigned with numbers, colors, or letters, facilitating focused and collaborative engagement. In SST and Science, respectively, PS2T2 (M) and PS1T3 (F) employed similar card-based grouping to foster teamwork and inclusivity, while PS1T1 (F) used the approach in an English lesson to promote equitable participation. Additionally, PS2T1 (M) and PS1T2 (M) used grouping cards across their subjects, showcasing the versatility of this strategy across disciplines. These findings

underscore the Grouping cards strategy's strategic and consistent application across varied instructional contexts, demonstrating its efficacy in fostering collaborative environments and enhancing learner engagement.

The practice of rotating group compositions extends to cross-curricular activities and project-based learning. PS1T2 (F), an English teacher, shared her experience: *“During group projects, I rotate group members to ensure that learners gain exposure to different viewpoints and collaborate effectively on tasks. This method fosters critical thinking and enhances learners' ability to work collaboratively in diverse group settings”* (June, 2024).

Observations in classrooms underscored the effectiveness of rotating group compositions to facilitate seamless transitions between different group configurations. PS2T4 (M), a Mathematics teacher, routinely rotated group memberships based on learners' performance and participation levels. He noted that *“regularly rotating groups allows me to create balanced learning environments where learners can benefit from each other's strengths. This strategy promotes active engagement and ensures that learners develop communication skills and collaborative problem-solving abilities”* (June, 2024).

Through systematic rotations, PS2T3 (F) enhanced the learning experiences of her learners by optimizing group dynamics and promoting continuous learning interactions among peers.

Findings in this section revealed that the composition of the groups was regularly changed by teachers in both school settings (PS1 and PS2) to encourage group learning in

terms of promoting peer-supported learning, learning from different peers, and meeting the emerging needs of learners. The realization of group learning through the aforementioned criteria for periodically changing group composition is limited by the teachers' narratives and lesson delivery's omission of stating what interactive guidelines they provide to learners in their usage of the formulated groups for group work. In addition, the findings also revealed that the monitoring and the feedback on the facilitation of learners' implementation of collaborative interaction in the formulated groups by teachers were missing in their practices.

#### **4.3.4 Offering Scaffolded learning within groups**

This technique involves teachers giving learners short-term assistance while they pick up new knowledge or abilities. This involves providing learners with the assistance they require to finish a task or understand a topic that they might not be able to achieve on their own. As learners become more competent and self-assured, the support is gradually reduced, enabling them to learn on their own.

In this context, scaffolding requires each group member to actively participate, collaborate with peers, and support each other's learning. Findings in this section reveal that teachers used the aforementioned technique for implementing group learning in the following ways: providing a structure for group activities, providing guidelines and expectations for group tasks, encouraging participation by distributing roles and responsibilities, setting guidelines for collaboration to help learners stay organized and focused, monitoring group progress, making necessary adjustments to achieve the learning objectives, and fostering an inclusive learning environment.

Findings in this study revealed that the teachers' experience of scaffolding learning was implemented in all the subjects by PS2T1 (F) in English, PS1T2 (M) in Mathematics, PS1T3 (F) in Science, PS1T4 (M) in SST, PS2T3 (F) in Science, and PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics. This temporary support was offered to learners as they learned new concepts or skills, and the support was gradually removed as they progressively performed tasks independently, without the need for scaffolding.

For instance, PS1T2 (M) said:

*"In teaching Mathematics, I give my learners temporary support at the beginning of all new concepts so that they gradually internalize concepts, develop problem-solving strategies, and gain the confidence to tackle more complex tasks on their own. In the process, I encourage them to learn from each other"* (June, 2024).

PS1T2 (M) further explained the usage of this strategy with an example in which he said, he worked out a problem-solving task in multiplication with the learners, and he eventually paired them to support each other. He explained that he used this technique to help learners understand concepts better through support from the teacher and through peer explanation.

PS1T2's (M) approach to group learning involved providing temporary support to learners as they learned new concepts or skills. This support was gradually removed as learners gained confidence and competence at a point where they could perform tasks independently, without the need for scaffolding. The guidance typically provided through group learning procedures, specific steps, and the rules for sharing and collaboration were

systematically followed by the teacher. The presence of these steps was evident in both the teacher's interview explanations and classroom observation. In one observed lesson, the teacher assigned a task to groups; he worked out a mathematical problem on the chalkboard for all to follow, and then provided them with clear instructions on how each individual would share their solutions collaboratively. As a result, all individuals in each group were able to share their answers, highlighting that effective group learning relies on the teacher's support and guidance to foster collaboration.

In terms of designing scaffolding learning tasks with collaborative work, PS1T3 (F) in Science explained that:

*“I often design scaffolding learning in Science experiments that can only be implemented through structured support to learners as they build their understanding of scientific concepts, processes, and skills. For example, I link new concepts to familiar ideas to build a foundation for learning. I divide content into manageable pieces, and I arrange lessons in a logical progression, moving from simple to complex. Through these steps, I provide clear instructions and examples using visual and hands-on learning aids like diagrams and charts to clarify abstract concepts. I work alongside learners to apply new concepts, gradually reducing assistance. I encourage peer discussions and group activities so that they explore ideas together”* (June, 2024).

This strategy involves teachers giving learners short-term assistance while learners pick up new knowledge or abilities. This involves providing learners with the assistance they require in order to finish a task or understand a topic that they might not be able to

achieve on their own. As learners become more competent and self-assured, the support is gradually reduced, enabling them to learn on their own.

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*“I assign tasks based on learners' abilities to ensure everyone can participate and learn at their own pace. For instance, in a group experiment on mass and weight, I provide a learner who does well with recording details in information to record the weight measurements and assign observation tasks to someone who is more observant” (June, 2024).*

The narrative above indicates that in the approach of differentiating the task within the group, the teacher provides a team task that enables each group member to perform a section of the task. The narrative also reveals that the steps individual learners follow in order to report their findings to the other group members so as to assemble the findings for the task to get a holistic group answer are missing in the teacher's explanation. This means that the specific rules and steps that foster cooperative interactions among learners to achieve a holistic answer were missing in the teacher's articulation of how he uses this strategy. Such an omission poses a threat to the realization of group learning because collaborative group learning should be a deliberate endeavor. Teachers often assume that putting learners in groups will naturally result in collaborative learning, but this isn't always true. Collaboration isn't just about reaching the final goal; it involves learning from one another and forming strong, positive relationships. To ensure that learners truly collaborate in group work, teachers must design learning experiences by providing specific collaborative rules and steps to learners, with monitoring and feedback intentions explicitly shown in their narratives, lesson plans, and lesson delivery.

Observation findings, too, revealed the usage of the scaffolded task approach within a group. In a Science class in PS2, the researcher observed PS2T3 (F) implement a scaffolded task within a group. In the task of an 'experiment on floating and sinking,' learners were divided into groups by the teacher. Each member was assigned a specific role based on their strengths, such as conducting the experiment, recording observations, or analyzing results. The teacher ensured that all learners were actively involved and contributed effectively to the group success because she provided specific interaction

guidelines and supportively monitored their implementation by the learners. In the interview session, PS2T3 (F) observed that the interactive guidelines in scaffolded learning helped her to set up inclusive classes. She explained how she implements scaffolded tasks in group learning in the following interview response:

*“Scaffolded tasks allow me to cater to the diverse abilities of my learners, making sure everyone has a role and feels valued because of the rules and steps I give for encouraging them to work alone in the group and together as a group.”* (June, 2024).

The above observation and interview findings indicate that learners collaborate in group learning when a teacher design scaffolded learning experiences by providing specific collaborative rules and steps to learners and providing feedback on their implementation.

In summary, the findings for this sub-theme reveal that through the use of scaffolded tasks within a group, teachers in both schools (PS1 and PS2) promoted personalized learning experiences that catered to learners' academic progress, social interactions, and individual learning preferences. This approach enhances peer collaboration, fosters inclusive classroom environments, and supports learner growth by optimizing group dynamics to maximize collective learning outcomes. Scaffolded tasks within these activities ensure that each learner's abilities are recognized and utilized, fostering inclusivity and enhancing overall learning experience. These positive outcomes are only realized where, teachers provide specific interactive rules and structures to the learners and supportively monitor their implementation, and the opposite happens in the absence of such measures.

**Table 4.4:** Summary matrix table of group learning implementation strategies in PS1 and PS2

<b>Group learning implementation strategies</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>Differences in the group learning implementation strategies between PS1 and PS2</b>	
<p><i>Assigning team tasks for collaborative work.</i></p> <p><b>Reasons</b> To enhance the inclusive participation of all members in the execution of the group task – eliminate passive participation.</p> <p>To maximize the peer support individuals, receive from other group members' contributions.</p>	<p>Employed in both schools.</p> <p>In both schools Science teachers used it.</p> <p>Stated by all the teachers in both schools.</p> <p>Stated by all the teachers in both schools.</p>	<p>PS1T4 (M) in SST.</p> <p>PS1T1 (F) in English.</p>	<p>PS2T1 (F) in Mathematics.</p>
<b>Teacher's facilitation of the group learning process.</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<p>Designing appropriate team learning tasks.</p> <p>Assigning time and instructions for the do-it-alone step of the group work by individual members).</p>	<p>Employed in both schools.</p> <p>In both schools Science teachers used it. PS2T3 (F) &amp; PS1T3 (F).</p>	<p>Employed in SST by PS1T4 (M) and in English by PS1T1 (F).</p> <p>Employed by the English teacher PS2T1 (F). The <i>do-it-alone step</i> was not employed in SST by PS1T4 (M).</p>	<p>Employed in Mathematics by PS2T1 (M).</p> <p>Employed in Mathematics by PS2T1 (M).</p>
<p>Monitoring the do-it-alone step of the group work by individual members.</p> <p>Assigning time and instructions for sharing individual answers with the group members.</p>	<p>In both schools Science teachers used it. PS2T3 (F) &amp; PS1T3 (F).</p> <p>In both schools Science teachers used it. PS2T3 (F) &amp; PS1T3 (F).</p>	<p>Employed by the English teacher PS2T1 (F).</p> <p>The <i>do-it-alone step</i> was not monitored in SST by PS1T4 (M).</p>	<p>Employed in Mathematics by PS2T1 (M).</p> <p>Employed in Mathematics by PS2T1 (M).</p>
<p>Monitoring the sharing of individual answers with the group members.</p>	<p>In both schools Science teachers used it. PS2T3 (F) &amp; PS1T3 (F).</p> <p>In both schools Science teachers used it. PS2T3 (F) &amp; PS1T3 (F).</p>	<p>Employed in SST by PS1T4 (M) and in English by PS1T1 (F).</p> <p>Employed in SST by PS1T4 (M) and in English by PS1T1 (F).</p>	

Rewarding groups that maximally encourage individual participation in group work.	In both schools Science teachers used it. PS2T3 (F) & PS1T3 (F).	Employed by the English teacher PS2T1 (F).	Employed in Mathematics by PS2T1 (M).
<b>Context</b> The tendency of some learners to be inactive participants in group work.	-	-	-
Presence of learners of various proficiency levels.	Employed in Science, English, SST, and Mathematics.	-	-
<b>Group learning implementation strategy.</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<i>Implementing role-play scenarios.</i>	-	Employed by only PS1T1 (F) in English.	-
<b>Reasons</b> To enhance critical thinking and listening skills.	-	-	-
To foster active participation of learners.	-	-	-
To boost learners' confidence in speaking.	-	-	-
To enhance effective communication among learners.	-	All these reasons were stated by only the English teacher PS1T1 (F).	-
<b>Teacher's facilitation of the role-play process.</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
Designing role-play activities.	-	-	-
Allocating roles to the learners.	-	-	-
Guiding learners to practice speaking and listening attentively.	-	-	-
Guiding learners in taking turns. Rewarding groups that participate in role-play activities.	- -	All these processes were conducted by only the English teacher PS1T1 (F).	-

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**Context**

The presence of learners with varying academic abilities in English.

All these settings were experienced by only the English teacher PS1T1 (F).

The presence of learners who are introverts and extroverts in the same groups.

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<b>Group learning implementation strategy.</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<i>Periodically changing group composition in terms of size and ability.</i>	Employed in both schools.  In both schools, the mathematics teachers used it (PS1T2 & PS2T4).  In both schools, the Science teachers used it (PS1T3 & PS2T3).		PS2T2 (M) in SST
<b>Reasons</b>			
To enable all learners to have the opportunity to collaborate with different peers at different times.	Stated by all teachers in both schools.		
To broaden the learners' social circles in class.	Stated by all teachers in both schools.		
To facilitate learners to benefit from the support of the new members.		Stated by PS1T3 in Science.	-
To prevent the formation of social cliques that hinder group learning.		-	Stated by (PS2T2 (M) in SST).
To promote an inclusive learning environment.		-	Stated by (PS2T4 - in Science).

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<b>Teacher's facilitation of periodically changing group composition.</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
Changes group composition based on various criteria.	It was employed in both schools.	-	-
Uses various methods of re-grouping:	PS1T3 in Science, PS2T3 in Science.	-	-
Inter-group & Intra-group rotation.	It was employed in both schools. PS1T1 in English, PS1T2 in Mathematics.	-	PS2T2 (M) in SST implemented a seat rotation system (intra-group).
Gives instructions and time for the different group learning interaction steps.	It was employed in both schools.	-	-

<b>Teacher's facilitation (Cont).</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
Provides supportive monitoring for inclusive learners' participation in group learning activities.	During Science experiments (mentioned by both PS1T3 & PS2T3). PS1T3 in Science, PS2T3 in Science.	-	PS2T2 (M) in SST
<b>Rewards groups that maximally:</b>			
Generated correct academic content.	Employed in both schools	-	-
Encouraged individual participation.	Employed in both schools.	-	-
Executed leadership roles.	Employed in both schools.	-	-
<b>Context</b>			
Presence of learners with various proficiency levels.	Employed in Science, English, SST, and Mathematics.	Employed in Science, English, SST, and Mathematics.	-
Presence of evolving learning social and academic issues.	Employed in Science, English, SST, and Mathematics.	-	-
Variance in the aspects of the group tasks.			

<b>Group learning implementation strategy.</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<i>Offering scaffolded learning within groups.</i>	Employed in both schools in all subjects by all teachers: Science, English, Mathematics, and SST.	-	-
<b>Reasons</b>			
To ensure that the group tasks match learners' abilities.	All these reasons were stated by all the teachers, in all subjects, in both schools.	-	-
To enhance learners' active participation in groups.			
<b>Scaffolded Learning Reasons (Cont).</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
To ensure that each learner's needs are addressed.			
To make the group activities more inclusive and interesting.			
<b>Teacher's facilitation role in scaffolded learning.</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
Uses various ways to assess learners' prior knowledge of the content to be covered.	Employed in both schools by all teachers.		
Asking prompting questions.		PS1T2 (M) in Mathematics.	
Passing around sheets of paper to collect learners' views.			PS2T3 (F) in Science.
Breaking down the learning task into smaller & sequenced group learning steps.	Employed in both schools by all teachers.	PS1T1 (F) in English. PS1T3 (F) in Science.	
Arrange lessons in a logical progression, moving from simple to complex.	-	-	PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics.
Demonstrates the task or concept to the learners, showing them how it's done.	Employed in both schools by all teachers.	-	-
Work out problems on the chalkboard for everyone to see and follow.		PS1T2 (M) in Mathematics.	

Provides opportunities for learners to practice the task with guidance and support:	Employed in both schools by all teachers.	-	PS2T1 (F) in English.
Work alongside learners to apply new concepts, gradually reducing assistance.	PS1T3 (F) in Science.	-	-
Encourage peer discussions and group activities to explore ideas together.	PS2T3 (F) in Science.	-	PS2T4 (M) in Mathematics.
Slowly releasing responsibility to the learners as they become more confident and competent in the task.	Employed in both schools by all teachers.	PS1T1 (F) in English.	PS2T2 (M) in SST.
<b>Teacher's facilitation (Cont.)</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
Asking learners to share the group's answers in a plenary.	Employed in both schools by all teachers.	-	-
Individuals present the answers to the class.	Employed in both schools, in all subjects.	-	-
Asking learners to carry out a gallery walk.	-	-	PS2T3 (F) in Science.
<b>Context</b>			
The presence of learners with varying academic and social abilities.	Stated by all teachers in both schools.	-	-

From the findings in table 4.4, teachers in the selected Primary Schools in Mityana District diversely use four different strategies to implement group learning in the four subjects. These include; assigning team tasks for collaborative work, applying role-play scenarios, periodically changing group composition in terms of size and ability, and employing scaffolded learning within groups. On one hand, offering Scaffold learning within groups was the most popular strategy employed by all teachers in all the four

subjects. On the other hand, the application of role-play scenarios least popular group learning implementation strategy used by only one teacher, a female, in the English subject.

Table 4.4 also revealed that various reasons influenced teachers' usage of each of the aforementioned group learning implementation strategies. The common reasons given by teachers include: enhancing active participation; ensuring that group tasks are matched to learners' abilities; ensuring that each learner's needs are addressed; enhancing the inclusive participation of all members in the execution of the group task to eliminate passive participation; enabling all learners to have the opportunity to academically collaborate with different peers at different times; broadening the learners' social circles in class; making group activities more inclusive and interesting; and maximizing the peer support individuals receive from other group members' contributions. The least stated reason(s) were related to promoting critical thinking and improving learners' confidence through role-play, which was noted by only a few teachers.

In addition, table 4.4 further indicated that teachers applied the identified group learning implementation strategies under given contexts like: The variance in the aspects of the group tasks; the presence of learners with varying academic and social abilities; the presence of learners who are introverts and extroverts in the same groups; the tendency of some learners to be inactive participants in group work; and the presence of evolving social and academic learning issues.

The findings in Table 4.4 indicated that teachers varied in their facilitation roles, which were meant to ensure that the different group learning strategies they employed effectively promoted group learning. The most successfully facilitated group learning strategies were those in which all the facilitation steps and activities were carried out by the teachers who stated they used them. This was evident in the group learning strategies of Assigning Team Tasks for Collaborative Work, where all teachers employed the full set of facilitation roles (Science teachers in both schools, the English teacher in PS1, and the mathematics teacher in PS2), and Role Play, where the one English teacher in PS1 who used this strategy implemented all its facilitation steps and actions.

The least successfully implemented group learning strategies were those where some facilitation steps and activities were not carried out by the teachers. This was particularly evident in the strategy of periodically changing the group composition in terms of size and ability. Only one out of the seven expected facilitation actions was consistently carried out by all five teachers who reported using this strategy. The remaining facilitation actions were unevenly implemented by the teachers in their respective subjects. Moreover, Table 4.4 revealed that even this one facilitation action was misapplied. Teachers only rewarded groups for maximally generating correct academic content but did not reward groups for encouraging individual learner participation or for individual learners who demonstrated leadership in group activities.

Table 4.4 also reveals that, at the subject level, group learning implementation strategies were more effectively facilitated in Science across both schools. At the school level, teachers in PS1 implemented these strategies more frequently.

By carefully planning group tasks and ensuring they aligned with learners' abilities and needs, teachers actively managed group dynamics by assigning roles, providing clear instructions, and setting expectations for collaboration to minimize passive participation and promote equitable involvement. Teachers served as scaffolds, offering timely support and feedback to help learners overcome challenges and build confidence in their contributions. Furthermore, their ability to adapt group compositions and strategies based on evolving classroom contexts, such as the presence of introverted learners or varying academic ability ensured that group activities remained inclusive and effective. Ultimately, the teachers' proactive engagement in designing, facilitating, and monitoring group learning activities played a pivotal role in the success of these strategies, fostering active participation, social cohesion, and academic collaboration among learners.

#### **4.4 Learners' experiences of group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana District.**

This research question presents the nature of learners' experiences with group learning, revealing why learners in the selected primary schools in Mityana District liked and disliked group learning.

##### **4.4.1 What Learners Like about Group Learning**

This section sought to present data on aspects on the learner participants liked about learning in groups. These included sharing ideas and learning from others, making learning fun, enhancing conceptualization of concepts, boosting confidence, relevant adjustment of group sizes, widening of social networks, provision of necessary learning materials, and asking for clarification from the teacher.

#### 4.4.1.1 Sharing Ideas and Learning from Others

Learner participants from all the FGDs conducted in the two school settings, PS1 and PS2, liked group learning because it provided them with an opportunity to share ideas with each other.

For instance, learner participant MFGD PS1 #1 said, "*Working in groups allows us to share ideas and learn from each other*" (July, 2024). This response indicates that the experience of collective problem-solving fosters the mutual give-and-take learning opportunity among the learners, thus making the learning process more dynamic and interactive.

Some learner participants said they like group learning because it helps them learn from others what they did not know before. Learner participant FFGD PS1 #1 supported this view when she said group learning is, "*... good because we get to learn from different classmates, who know different things*" (July, 2024). Learner participant MFGD PS2 #2 from PST2 equally stated the same benefit when she explained that "*...we're put in groups where we can help each other out. If someone knows more about something, they can explain it to the rest of us*" (July, 2024). The two responses indicate that in the group compositions, some learners know things that the other group members do not know, and the latter learn from the former. The experience being valued in this context is one of receiving from the stronger learners by the weaker ones. The second response further reveals that teachers facilitate the role of grouping the more knowledgeable and the less knowledgeable learners. This finding was supported by findings in research questions one

and two, which also revealed that teachers use a strategy of changing group compositions of learners based on their scaffolded abilities in an effort to support the less able group members. Lesson observation findings, too, revealed that in the different subjects, teachers strategically formed groups to include both strong and struggling learners to achieve team learning experiences where peers could support each other.

Some learner participants also mentioned that they like the way teachers encourage them to share their ideas in the group by guiding them to take turns speaking and listening to the different group members. They explained that this interactive arrangement enhanced their ability to express opinions and enabled them to actively engage in discussions. This view is evidenced in the following statement of learner participant FFGD PS2 #2, "*Our teacher encourages us to take turns speaking, so everyone gets a chance to share their ideas.*" Similarly, learner participant FFGD PS1 #1 also echoed this view when she said, "*Before starting group activities, our teacher explains how to work together and listen to each other. It helps us stay focused, and work well as a team*" (July 2024). The researcher equally observed teachers who facilitated turn-taking and respectful dialogue among learners during group work in SST and English lessons.

In addition, learner participants also stated that they liked the way group learning had taught them the importance of respecting diverse viewpoints within group settings. Learner participant MFGD PS1 #1 revealed this view when he said, "*In our groups, we respect each other's views, even if we don't always agree. It helps us understand different ways of thinking*" (July 2024). This response indicates that group work enabled learners to appreciate different perspectives and learn from each other's insights. The group

behavior of learners respecting each other's viewpoints was equally inbuilt in the teachers' guidance as stated by learner participant FFGD PS2 #2, "*Our teacher helps us stay on track and reminds us to respect each other's opinions*" (July 2024). Observation findings also affirm that teachers intervened when necessary to redirect conversations or address behavior that hindered constructive interactions.

Overall, in the context of this sub-theme, learners liked group learning because it provided them with opportunities to share ideas with others mutually and for the less knowledgeable to learn from the more knowledgeable as receivers of support. In the latter case, it was important for teachers to map, match, and merge the less knowledgeable with the more knowledgeable. The formation of mixed-ability groups was a critical step teachers followed in the formation of groups that enabled the less knowledgeable learners to gain understanding of concepts from the more knowledgeable learners in group learning. Other important qualities that made learners appreciate the practice of sharing ideas that happens in group learning included respect for each other's opinions and taking turns to listen and speak to others.

#### **4.4.1.2 It makes learning fun**

Learners in all four FGDs stated that working in groups was more fun than working alone. For instance, learner participant FFGD PS1 #1 said, "*Learning in groups is more fun than working alone.*" Learner participant MFGD PS2 #2 from school PS2 also said working in groups, "*is more fun than working alone.*" These responses indicate that the satisfaction learners derived from working in groups stemmed from the lively interactions

and the opportunity to engage with their peers in a meaningful way that they achieved through learning in groups. It should further be noted that this positive emotional experience and satisfaction associated with group work most likely contributed to an increased motivation and engagement of learners in their studies, thus further enhancing their overall learning experience.

Some learners from the government-aided Primary School (PS1) further indicated that the collaborative nature of group work made learning more interesting, specifically in projects, plenary presentations, and Science experiments. In relation to group projects and plenary presentations, learner participant FFGD PS1 #1 stated, "*We enjoy working together, especially in projects and presentations.*" In relation to Science experiments, learner participant MFGD PS1 #1 noted, "*In Science, we have fun doing experiments together.*" These responses indicate that the fun-related experiences in group learning were specifically more linked with the Science experiments, projects, and presentations, which are group aspects that allow learners to explore concepts hands-on. In addition, it should also be noted that the already in-built hands-on aspects in experiments, projects, and plenary presentations also make the learning experience more dynamic and engaging.

In a nutshell, findings on this sub-theme of "*It makes learning fun*" reveal that learners in PS1 like learning in groups because it makes learning fun, and this increased their motivation and engagement in their studies. This was especially the case in Science experiments, projects, and plenary presentations that already have in-built hands-on aspects. In such contexts, group interactions simply enhance the already in-built fun components in them.

#### **4.4.1.3 Accelerates the problem-solving process**

Learner participants across FGDs in both PS1 and PS2 consistently noted that collaborative work accelerates problem-solving and task completion compared to working individually.

As MFGD PS1 #1 stated, *"We can find answers faster when we work together,"* and FFGD PS2 #2 echoed, *"When we work in groups, everyone shares their ideas, and we can solve problems faster."* These responses highlight that both male and female learners recognize the speed advantage of collective problem-solving in group settings, embodying the adage, "A problem shared is a problem half solved."

This acceleration was particularly evident in subjects like Mathematics and Science. FFGD PS1 #1 remarked, *"In Science, we can quickly figure out experiments together, and in math, we solve equations faster as a group."* This indicates that group work is especially beneficial in subjects requiring critical thinking and quick resolution.

Learners also appreciated how teachers facilitated this accelerated problem-solving. MFGD PS1 #1 noted, *"Our teacher makes sure everyone has a role, so we finish tasks faster,"* and FFGD PS1 #1 added, *"Our teacher helps make sure everyone is involved."* Classroom observations confirmed these insights, with teachers assigning roles and tasks to streamline problem-solving in subjects like Mathematics and English. For instance, in Mathematics lessons, teachers organized groups and distributed specific tasks, while in English classes, different reading or writing tasks were assigned to speed up comprehension and discussion.

The learners' responses indicate that learning in a group accelerates problem-solving and task completion compared to working individually. The experiences being valued by learners in this context are finding answers faster, sharing ideas, and everyone getting involved. The findings suggest that group learning accelerates problem-solving by leveraging collective knowledge and skills. The structured support from teachers further enhances this process, ensuring a more efficient and effective problem-solving experience. These findings were supported by the findings in research questions one and two, which similarly revealed that teachers accelerated the problem-solving processes by designing collaborative team tasks for individual learners and the whole group for problem-solving and task completion outcomes.

#### **4.4.1.4 It enhances the conceptualisation of concepts**

This sub-theme delves into the importance learners place on group learning as a powerful tool for deepening their understanding of challenging concepts. Through focus group discussions (FGDs), learners from both school settings (PS1 and PS2) consistently expressed their appreciation for group learning, highlighting its effectiveness in demystifying and solidifying complex ideas. For instance, abstract concepts such as the causes and impacts of historical events in social studies or the intricate processes of photosynthesis in Science were mentioned as areas where group discussions enabled learners to break down and grasp these difficult topics more effectively. The collaborative environment of group learning allowed learners to draw on their peers' insights, leading to a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of these complex ideas.

Learners consistently highlighted the supportive nature of group work in aiding conceptual understanding. For instance, learner participant FFGD PS1 #1 shared, "*If one of us doesn't understand something, someone else in the group usually can help explain it quickly.*" This sentiment underscores the collaborative aspect of group learning, where peers can immediately step in to clarify concepts, thereby enhancing individual comprehension. Similarly, learner participant MFGD PS2 #2 provided a subject-specific example, stating, "*During group learning in social studies, we help each other understand the history topics better*" (July, 2024). This response points to the particular challenge of grasping historical concepts, which are often abstract and disconnected from learners' daily experiences. The use of group learning in this context becomes especially beneficial, as it allows learners to collectively tackle and better understand these abstract ideas. This collaborative approach not only accelerates understanding but also fosters a deeper engagement with the material, as learners build on each other's strengths. As a result, group learning transforms complex subjects into manageable and comprehensible lessons, reinforcing learners' confidence in tackling difficult content.

Another participant, MFGD PS2 #3, reinforced this by noting, "*When we work in groups, we work together and help each other to develop new skills and improve on the existing ones.*" This underscores the dual benefit of group learning: not only does it assist in grasping difficult concepts, but it also promotes the development of new skills and the enhancement of existing ones through peer interaction. However, some learners shared experiences of unequal participation within groups.

For instance, one learner remarked, "*Sometimes, the same people end up doing most of the work while others just follow along.*" This experience was echoed by a participant from PS2 who expressed, "*Not everyone participates equally, and it can feel like some are just there without contributing much*" (July, 2024). These experiences highlight that while group learning offers significant advantages, the group dynamics can sometimes impede equitable participation, limiting the opportunity for all learners to fully develop their skills. This situation underscores the need for structured guidance from teachers to ensure balanced involvement, enabling each learner to contribute meaningfully and benefit completely from the group learning experience.

These insights were further reinforced by lesson observations. For example, during a social studies lesson at PS2, the teacher deliberately grouped learners with varying levels of understanding of historical content. Rather than providing extensive direct instruction, the teacher encouraged learners to engage in peer discussions and explanations of historical events. This approach was observed to significantly improve the comprehension of weaker learners, as more knowledgeable peers took on the role of explaining complex concepts in simpler terms, making abstract historical content more accessible and easier to understand.

Lesson plans from both PS1 and PS2 consistently demonstrated the strategic use of group learning, particularly in subjects with complex, abstract concepts, such as Social Studies and Science. Teachers designed collaborative activities that encouraged learners to engage in problem-solving and discussion, fostering a deeper understanding through shared exploration. For instance, a Science lesson plan at PS1 focused on the water cycle,

a natural process in which water moves continuously through stages such as evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and collection. In this lesson, learners worked in groups to create diagrams modeling each stage of the cycle. The teacher's notes emphasized that the goal of this group activity was to promote peer teaching, where learners explained the stages to each other, reinforcing both their individual understanding and their ability to support their peers. This approach underscored the effectiveness of group learning in helping learners grasp challenging concepts through collaborative knowledge-building.

Overall, the findings from focus group discussions, lesson observations, and lesson plans indicate that learners highly value group learning for its effectiveness in deepening their understanding of complex and abstract concepts. This approach not only facilitates a deeper conceptual grasp but also fosters a collaborative learning environment where learners support each other's educational growth. The strategic grouping by teachers, mixing learners with diverse academic strengths, is crucial in enhancing the benefits of group learning, particularly in subjects that require abstract thinking and conceptual understanding.

#### **4.4.1.5 Boosts confidence**

This sub-theme explores how learners value group learning for its role in boosting their confidence. Focus group discussions (FGDs) revealed that learners from both PS1 and PS2 find collaborative work instrumental in enhancing their self-assurance. For instance, learner participant FFGD PS2 #2 stated, "*Working in groups boosts our confidence because we can share our ideas without feeling shy.*" Similarly, FFGD PS1 #1 noted, "*In math, I feel more confident when we solve problems together.*" Learner participant FFGD

PS1 #4 added, "*When our teacher divides tasks among our group members, we feel less burden of the work, and this allows all of us to contribute our strengths, which also boosts our confidence*" (July, 2024).

These insights underscore that group learning is highly effective in fostering confidence among learners. The experience of sharing ideas and responsibilities within groups creates a supportive environment where learners can express themselves freely and engage in tasks without fear. This collaborative approach reduces individual pressure and enhances learners' overall confidence by leveraging their collective strengths.

These findings are further supported by findings from the lesson observations and the analysis of lesson plans, which illustrate how teachers strategically use group learning to build confidence. For example, during a social studies lesson at PS2, the teacher organized groups with varying roles, encouraging learners to discuss and present historical events. This approach allowed learners to take ownership of specific aspects of the project, as observed by FFGD PS2 #2's comment on sharing ideas and gaining confidence from peer interactions. Similarly, the lesson plan from PS2 detailed a math project where learners collaborated to solve complex problems. The group discussions and peer feedback in the lesson plan directly relate to FFGD PS1 #1's experience of feeling more confident when solving problems together.

In PS1, the Science teacher's lesson plan involved a group activity where learners modeled the water cycle. The plan highlighted how learners were assigned to research and present on the different parts of the water cycle. This role-based distribution of the

task's sections helped learners feel less overwhelmed, aligning with FFGD PS1 #4's observation of feeling less burdened and more confident through shared responsibilities.

Overall, the findings from FGDs, lesson observations, and lesson plans demonstrate that group learning significantly boosts learners' confidence. The strategic design of group activities and roles in lesson plans directly supports the experiences reported by learners. By providing opportunities for collaborative problem-solving and shared responsibilities, teachers create a positive and inclusive learning environment that enhances learners' self-assurance and academic growth.

#### **4.4.1.6 Relevant Adjustment of Group Sizes**

This sub-theme explored how the strategic adjustment of group sizes by teachers enhances task performance during group learning activities. Focus group discussions (FGDs) revealed that learners appreciate this flexible approach. For instance, learner participant FFGD PS2 #2 noted, "*Our teacher changes how many are in each group based on what we are doing. It helps because sometimes you need more people for a big project, and other times just a few with different abilities*" (July, 2024). This comment underscores the effectiveness of adapting group sizes to fit the nature of the task, highlighting the importance of matching group dynamics to specific learning objectives.

Supporting this, teachers' interview responses confirmed the intentional use of size-oriented group formation strategies. Teachers articulated that adjusting group sizes is essential for fostering collaboration, optimizing peer interaction, and ensuring balanced

peer-supported learning during group activities. This strategy allows for flexibility, enabling teachers to create group configurations that best address the demands of different tasks and time constraints.

Classroom observations provided concrete examples of how teachers implemented these adjustments. For example, in Mathematics lessons, teachers PS1T2 and PS2T4 demonstrated effective regrouping practices. In one instance, PS1T2 divided learners into pairs with complementary strengths to tackle complex problem-solving tasks. This arrangement facilitated peer support and enhanced engagement, as learners could draw on each other's skills to solve problems more efficiently. Similarly, PS2T4 adjusted group sizes based on the complexity of the task, ensuring that larger groups were used for more extensive projects, while smaller, skill-diverse groups were employed for targeted activities. These adjustments were observed to increase learner participation and improve overall group performance.

Lesson plans from both PS1 and PS2 further illustrated the strategic adjustment of group sizes. For example, a lesson plan from PS2 detailed a group project on environmental conservation, where the teacher planned to use varying group sizes to match the project's phases. Initially, larger groups were formed for brainstorming and research, while smaller groups were used for detailed analysis and presentation. This approach not only optimized the group's ability to manage different stages of the project but also ensured that each learner could contribute effectively based on their skills and the group's needs.

Overall, the findings from FGDs, teacher interviews, and lesson observations highlight the significant benefits of adjusting group sizes in group learning activities. This practice promotes effective collaboration, supports diverse learner needs, and leads to improved engagement and performance. By strategically modifying group sizes, teachers create a more adaptable and responsive learning environment that enhances both individual and collective outcomes.

#### **4.4.1.7 Widening of social networks**

This sub-theme underscores the value learners place on the teachers' strategy of adjusting seating arrangements and group sizes to expand their social networks within the classroom. Learners in focus group discussions (FGDs) expressed appreciation for these adjustments, noting that they provided opportunities to interact with a diverse set of classmates. For instance, MFGD PS1 #1 observed, "*We change seats often, and it helps us get to know different people in our class. When we work in different groups, we already know more people better*" (July, 2024). Similarly, MFGD PS1 #3 remarked, "*Changing seats gives us opportunity to meet new peers and build friendships. We find this refreshing, as it allows us to connect with peers we might not usually interact with*" (July, 2024). This demonstrates that frequent changes in seating and group composition help learners form connections with a broader range of classmates, enhancing their social interactions.

Learners from PS2 echoed these sentiments: FFGD PS2 #2 noted, "*Working in different group sizes makes work interesting, as we get diverse ideas from different peers.*"

FFGD PS2 #4 added, “*We enjoy getting different views that come from working with different classmates who have different experiences.*” MFGD PS2 #3 observed, “*Changing seating and group composition keeps us engaged and motivated. As a result, lessons feel lively and less boring*” (July, 2024). These responses reflect how varying group interactions not only enrich the learning experience by incorporating diverse perspectives but also sustain learner engagement and enthusiasm.

The benefits of this approach are also reflected in the lesson plans reviewed. For example, in a Social Studies lesson plan from PS1, the teacher designed an activity where learners were regularly assigned to different groups to explore various historical perspectives. This approach allowed learners to engage with a range of viewpoints and facilitated the development of broader social connections within the class. Similarly, a Science lesson plan from PS2 included a group project where learners were paired with different classmates for each task, fostering opportunities to build new relationships and collaborate with a variety of peers. The teacher’s notes highlighted that this rotating structure aimed to enhance collaborative skills and promote a more inclusive classroom environment.

Classroom observations supported these findings by showing that teachers effectively modified group sizes and seating arrangements to match task requirements. For instance, in Mathematics lessons, teachers PS1T2 and PS2T4 regrouped learners into pairs or small groups with complementary strengths to support problem-solving and peer learning. This strategic adjustment not only improved group interactions but also increased engagement by allowing learners to work with different classmates.

Overall, the strategic adjustment of group sizes and seating arrangements effectively supports the development of social networks within the classroom. This approach strengthens peer relationships, enriches collaborative learning, and creates a more inclusive and engaging educational environment. The alignment of these strategies with lesson plans and classroom observations underscores their role in fostering a supportive and dynamic learning community.

#### **4.4.1.8 Provision of Necessary Learning Materials**

This sub-theme highlights the positive impact that the provision of necessary instructional materials has on group learning. Learners expressed appreciation for teachers who ensure that all required materials are available at the outset of group tasks, as well as those who offer clear instructions on material usage. The provision of necessary materials enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of group work, contributing to a more focused and productive learning environment.

Learners valued the instances where teachers provided all necessary materials before beginning group activities. They noted that having these materials readily available facilitated smoother transitions into group work and minimized disruptions.

For example, FFGD PS1 #1 commented, "*Before group activities, our teacher gives us all the materials we need. It helps us do the group work (task) without wasting time looking for things.*" This sentiment was further reinforced when the same learner added, "*Our teacher checks if we have everything we need before we start. It helps us stay focused and work together*" (July, 2024). These observations underscore the importance

of having all materials provided in advance, allowing learners to concentrate on the task without interruptions caused by the need to search for or share resources.

The importance of clear instructions from teachers regarding the use of materials was also emphasized by learners. They appreciated understanding how to effectively use resources during group activities, which contributed to their overall learning experience and productivity. MFGD PS2 #2 explained, "*Our teacher explains what we have to do and how to use the materials. It makes it easier for us to work together*" (July 2024). This is especially important in subjects like Science and Mathematics, where practical experiments and manipulation are crucial for grasping concepts. Clear instructions help learners use materials correctly, enhancing their ability to collaborate effectively and achieve learning objectives.

Moreover, learners favored the use of similar materials across group members. This approach, they argued, levels the playing field and ensures that all group members can contribute effectively. FFGD PS2 #2 expressed this view, stating, "*Having the same materials as everyone else makes us feel like we're all in it together. We can focus on learning and helping each other*" (July 2024). This suggests that uniformity in materials minimizes distractions and ensures that all learners are equally prepared to engage in group tasks, fostering a more equitable and collaborative learning environment.

Lesson plans from both PS1 and PS2 further support these findings. For instance, a Science lesson plan at PS1 detailed how the teacher prepared and distributed identical materials for a group experiment on chemical reactions. The plan included specific

instructions on how to use each material, ensuring that all learners had the necessary tools and understood their use. Similarly, a Mathematics lesson plan from PS2 featured group tasks involving geometric manipulation, with the teacher providing all groups with the same set of materials and clear guidance on their application. These lesson plans reflect a strategic approach to material provision, aligning with learners' experiences and enhancing the effectiveness of group work.

Classroom observations also corroborated these findings. Observations revealed that teachers consistently provided adequate materials at the beginning of group activities and offered clear instructions on their use. This practice was observed in various subjects, including Science and Mathematics, where the availability and proper utilization of materials were critical for successful group tasks. Teachers' efforts in ensuring that learners had the necessary resources and understood their use contributed significantly to a productive and collaborative learning environment.

In summary, the provision of necessary learning materials promoted learners' interest in group learning because it plays a crucial role in facilitating effective group learning experiences. Ensuring that all materials are available, offering clear instructions on their use, and providing uniform resources for all group members enable learners to engage more fully in group tasks and focus on achieving learning objectives. These practices, supported by lesson plans and classroom observations, enhance the overall learning experience and foster a more collaborative and equitable educational environment.

#### **4.4.1.9 Asking for clarification from the teachers**

This sub-theme explores how teachers' practices in encouraging and addressing questions for clarification during group work positively influenced learners' experiences and preferences for group learning. The analysis highlights two key aspects: teachers' encouragement of questions and the provision of relevant guidance in response to those questions.

Learners expressed a strong appreciation for teachers who actively encouraged them to ask questions during group work. This practice was particularly valued because it facilitated a deeper understanding of the subject matter and enriched group discussions. For example, FFGD PS2 #2 remarked, "*Our teacher encourages us to ask questions whenever we don't understand. It helps clear up confusion and keeps our discussions focused, especially in subjects like Science and social studies.*" This sentiment was echoed by FFGD PS1 #1, who stated, "*We feel comfortable asking questions because our teacher listens attentively and helps us understand. This support is crucial in subjects like social studies and English, where discussions and debates are encouraged*" (July, 2024).

The encouragement of questions was notably effective in both PS1 and PS2, indicating that this practice was well received across different school settings. The preference for this support was especially pronounced among female learners, suggesting that they particularly valued the opportunity to seek clarification in a supportive environment. In PS2, the practice was predominantly observed in Science and social studies classes,

highlighting the importance of this approach in subjects characterized by complex content and interactive discussions.

In addition to encouraging questions, learners appreciated the relevant guidance provided by teachers in response to their queries. This aspect of group learning was highly valued as it enhanced learners' confidence and their ability to contribute meaningfully within their groups. MFGD PS1 #1 shared, "*In Mathematics and English, when we ask questions, our teacher is there to guide us. It makes us feel more confident sharing our ideas with the group and tackling challenging problems together*" (July, 2024). This feedback indicates that the provision of guidance was a distinctive feature of PS1, where teachers' responsive support contributed substantially to learners' engagement and confidence in group activities.

Lesson plans from both schools support these findings by demonstrating how teachers integrated opportunities for questions and clarification into their instructional strategies. For instance, a Mathematics lesson plan from PS1 included designated time for learners to ask questions during group work, with specific prompts for teachers to provide detailed explanations and support. Similarly, a social studies lesson plan from PS2 outlined structured group discussions with allocated moments for learners to seek clarification and receive guidance from their teacher.

Classroom observations further corroborate these insights. Observers noted that teachers in both PS1 and PS2 effectively encouraged questions and provided relevant guidance during group work sessions. In subjects such as Science and Social Studies, teachers were

observed facilitating group discussions, addressing learners' questions, and offering additional explanations to enhance understanding. This practice was integral to maintaining engagement and ensuring that learners felt supported throughout their group activities.

In summary, the encouragement of questions for clarification and the provision of relevant guidance by teachers are crucial elements that contributed to learners' positive experiences with group learning. These practices facilitated clearer understanding, enhanced engagement, and boosted learners' confidence in their contributions. The findings highlight that both aspects were valued across school settings, with particular emphasis on their impact in subjects characterized by discussion and complex content. Teachers' responsiveness to learners' needs played a key role in making group learning an effective and enjoyable experience, ultimately supporting the learners' academic growth and collaborative skills.

#### **4.4.2 Dislikes for group Learning**

This section documents findings of the various experiences of group learning that learner participants did not like. These include passive participation of some group members, frequent group changes made by teachers irritating some learners, learners' inability to ask for clarification, limited participation by all, and inadequate learning materials.

#### **4.4.2.1 Passive participation of some group members**

This sub-theme examines the challenges associated with unequal participation in group learning activities, as perceived by learners. It highlights the frustrations experienced when some group members do not contribute equally and explores how teachers address these issues through classroom interventions.

Learner participants expressed notable frustration with instances where some members of their groups did not contribute equally. For example, MFGD PS1 #1 observed, "*Sometimes, not everyone participates equally, and it can be frustrating.*" This view was further supported by FFGD PS2 #2, who remarked, "*In English, sometimes people don't do their part in group projects, and it slows us down.*" These observations reflect the impact of unequal participation on group progress and the overall learning experience, highlighting a common challenge in collaborative settings.

Classroom observations further corroborated these concerns. For instance, during a Social Studies lesson observed in PS1, one group was notably affected by unequal participation. While some learners actively engaged in discussing and presenting their findings, others were disengaged, leading to an imbalance in contributions. In response, teachers implemented strategies to address these imbalances. They redistributed tasks among group members and actively encouraged quieter learners to participate more. For example, in a Mathematics lesson, teachers used a lesson plan that assigned specific problem-solving roles to each learner. Despite these measures, the imbalance in participation persisted. The observation revealed that while teachers' interventions aimed

to foster more active involvement, they sometimes disrupted the group's workflow, as reported by MFGD PS1 #1: "*When the teacher steps in to change group roles, it sometimes interrupts our focus and feels like it slows us down*" (July 2024).

The lesson plans were thoughtfully structured, detailing specific roles and responsibilities for each group member. Tasks were divided based on individual strengths to ensure each participant had a clear, defined role, promoting active engagement. For example, in a Science lesson, groups were assigned distinct aspects of an experiment to foster involvement from all members. However, despite these structured approaches, passive participation was an ongoing challenge. In a PS2 Science class observation, one group struggled with engagement, as certain members failed to contribute actively, underscoring the persistent issue of unequal participation despite the well-planned group tasks.

In summary, passive participation among some group members presented a significant challenge, limiting overall engagement in group learning settings. Learners voiced frustration over unequal contributions, a sentiment confirmed through classroom observations. Teachers implemented interventions such as redistributing tasks and actively encouraging participation to address these imbalances, though these measures were at times seen as disruptive by some learners. The structured lesson plans aimed to foster balanced participation across groups, yet the challenge persisted, revealing the complexities involved in effectively managing group dynamics within collaborative learning environments.

#### 4.4.2.2 Frequent group changes

Learners expressed notable discomfort with the frequent changes in group sizes and seating arrangements, indicating that such frequent adjustments could be a source of confusion and stress. For instance, MFGD PS1 #3 observed, "*Sometimes the groups change too often, and it can be confusing. You have to keep adjusting to new people and new ways of working.*" Similarly, FFGD PS1 #1 commented, "*It's sometimes hard to keep switching groups or seats because you have to get used to new people and new ways of working each time*" (July 2024).

These perspectives reflect a common challenge faced by both male and female learners in PS1, who reported difficulty in adapting to the constant changes in group dynamics. Frequent modifications in group composition and seating arrangements, while intended to foster diverse interactions and collaborative experiences, sometimes led to feelings of instability and discomfort among learners.

Classroom observations further illustrated these challenges. For example, in a social studies lesson observed at PS1, a group was restructured multiple times throughout the session. Some learners struggled to acclimate to the new group configurations, leading to moments of confusion and disengagement. Teachers aimed to balance group dynamics by implementing various configurations, such as changing group sizes and seating arrangements based on the task requirements. However, these frequent adjustments sometimes disrupted learners' focus and hindered their ability to build cohesive working relationships.

Lesson plans were designed to include regular group rotations and seating changes to encourage broad interaction and adaptability. For instance, in a Mathematics lesson, learners were frequently regrouped to solve different types of problems, with each group working on a specific problem type. Despite the well-intentioned design of these lesson plans, the frequent changes often left some learners feeling unsettled and challenged in maintaining a consistent collaborative effort.

In summary, while frequent group changes were intended to enhance collaborative learning and broaden peer interactions, they sometimes led to confusion and discomfort among learners. The experiences shared by learners and observations from classroom interactions highlight the need for a balance between promoting diverse group work and allowing learners enough time to adjust and build effective collaborative relationships.

#### **4.4.2.3 Learners' inability to ask for clarification**

Learner participants sometimes faced substantial challenges in seeking clarification during group learning activities due to concerns about being judged by peers or due to perceived limitations in opportunities for asking questions. MFGD PS2 #2 expressed this difficulty, stating, "*Sometimes, we're unsure if we should ask questions because the teacher seems busy with other tasks, or other learners look at us as weaklings. It can make us feel hesitant about clarifying our doubts, especially in Science and Mathematics*" (July 2024).

This observation underscores how learners' reluctance to seek clarification affected their engagement and learning outcomes. The hesitation to ask questions arose from two

primary factors: the perception of the teacher's unavailability and the fear of being judged by peers. In group settings, when teachers appeared preoccupied or distant, learners felt less inclined to interrupt or seek help, which impeded their ability to resolve confusion effectively. Moreover, the social dynamics within groups, where learners feared negative judgments from their peers, further contributed to their reluctance to seek clarification.

Classroom observations highlighted these issues during group activities. For example, in a Science lesson, several learners hesitated to raise their questions or concerns, leading to a lack of understanding about key concepts. Observers noted that, during these instances, teachers were often engaged with other groups or tasks, which inadvertently limited the opportunities for individual learners to ask for clarification. In Mathematics sessions, similar patterns emerged, where learners' uncertainty about asking questions affected their participation and confidence in group work.

Lesson plans included designated time for teacher-led question-and-answer sessions to address learners' doubts. However, the effectiveness of these sessions was sometimes compromised by the teachers' focus on managing multiple groups or tasks simultaneously. This situation occasionally left learners feeling unsupported and unsure about seeking help.

In summary, the inability of learners to ask for clarification during group work was greatly impacted by their concerns about being judged by peers and the perceived inaccessibility of teachers. These challenges hindered their participation and learning and

negate the importance of creating supportive environments where learners feel comfortable seeking help without fear of judgment.

#### **4.4.2.4 Domineering peers**

The focus group discussions (FGD) revealed that some learners were dissatisfied with instances where group learning did not ensure equal participation or foster respectful interactions among group members. Learner participant MFGD PS2 #2 reflected this sentiment, stating, *"Sometimes, it's hard when someone talks too much or doesn't listen to others. We try to work it out, but it can be challenging."*

This observation highlights a critical issue: when group work lacks a structured framework for equitable participation and respectful communication, it can undermine the effectiveness of the learning experience. The absence of clear guidelines for taking turns to share ideas and listen to others often led to frustration among learners. For example, when one member dominated the conversation or ignored others' contributions, it disrupted the collaborative dynamic and made group tasks less productive and more difficult.

Additional learner experiences underscored these challenges. Learner participant MFGD PS1 #2 mentioned, *"In some of our groups, there are always a few people who don't say anything, and others end up doing all the work. It feels unfair and makes it hard to finish the tasks well."* This response reveals that imbalanced contributions often resulted in frustration and an uneven distribution of workload, negatively impacting group morale and effectiveness.

Another learner, FFGD PS2 #4 added that, *"When someone keeps interrupting or dominating the discussion, it feels like our opinions don't matter. We try to address it, but it can be exhausting to manage on our own."* This statement highlights how interruptions and dominant behavior from a few group members could undermine the sense of fairness and inclusivity, affecting the overall group experience.

Classroom observations further illustrated these dynamics. In a Mathematics lesson, some groups struggled with unequal participation, where dominant voices overshadowed quieter members, leading to imbalanced contributions and ineffective group collaboration. Teachers intervened by reminding learners of the importance of equal participation and active listening, yet these interventions were sometimes perceived as interruptions rather than supportive measures. In another instance, during a social studies group activity, learners expressed frustration over the lack of structure in how they were supposed to share their ideas, which contributed to conflicts and hindered group progress.

Lesson plans included strategies for promoting equal participation, such as assigning specific roles and establishing ground rules for group interactions. Despite these efforts, the implementation of such strategies varied across different groups and lessons. When teachers provided clear guidelines and actively monitored group interactions, learners generally reported more positive experiences. However, inconsistencies in enforcing these guidelines often resulted in some groups experiencing challenges with maintaining respectful and balanced participation.

In summary, limited participation and unequal interactions within group learning settings stemmed from the absence of effective frameworks for communication and collaboration. These challenges highlighted the need for teachers to clearly establish cooperative learning guidelines and consistently monitor adherence to them, ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to contribute and engage respectfully.

#### **4.4.2.5 Inadequate learning materials**

Learner participants reported frustration when the available learning materials were insufficient for the entire group, which hindered their ability to effectively engage in group activities. For example, learner participant MFGD PS1 #1 observed, "*Sometimes, we don't have enough materials for everyone. It can slow us down or make it harder to do the activity.*" This response highlights how the lack of adequate materials can disrupt group work, making it challenging for learners to fully participate and collaborate.

Another learner, FFGD PS1 #3, shared a similar experience: "*When there aren't enough materials, some of us have to wait or share too much, which makes the group work less effective.*" This statement underscores how inadequate materials can lead to inefficiencies and frustration, as learners may have to wait for their turn or struggle with sharing resources, impacting the group's overall productivity and engagement.

Additionally, learner participant FFGD PS2 #1 mentioned, "*In our Science experiments, not having enough equipment means some of us miss out on hands-on activities, which affects our learning.*" This experience illustrates that in subjects requiring practical

application, such as Science, insufficient materials can prevent learners from participating fully in critical hands-on learning opportunities, thereby affecting their understanding of the subject matter.

Classroom observations substantiated these challenges. For example, during a Science lesson, it was observed that certain groups lacked sufficient equipment for experiments, causing delays and resulting in uneven participation. Teachers made efforts to mitigate this issue by redistributing materials and improvising with available resources. However, these interventions were sometimes insufficient to address the deeper problem of material scarcity. In Mathematics classes, the lack of manipulation led to similar disruptions, as some learners had to wait for materials or work with limited resources, impacting both the efficiency and effectiveness of the group activities.

Lesson plans often included provisions to ensure adequate materials, yet implementation varied. In certain instances, teachers had anticipated resource needs but encountered logistical challenges during execution, which perpetuated material shortages. Although careful preparation and material allocation aimed to support effective group work, inconsistent availability of resources frequently led to disruptions and dissatisfaction among learners.

In summary, findings suggest that learners' dissatisfaction with group learning partially stems from inadequate learning materials. This shortfall highlights the importance of equipping all groups with sufficient resources to facilitate smooth and inclusive group activities. Ensuring ample materials is essential for fostering positive group learning experiences and maximizing engagement and participation among all learners.

**Table 4.5:** Summary matrix table of learners’ experiences of group learning

Learners’ Experiences	Similarities between PS1 and PS2	Differences in learners’ experiences	
		PS1	PS2
<b>Reasons for interest in Group Learning</b>			
<i>Support each other.</i>	Stated by learners from both schools.	-	-
To share ideas.	-	MFGD PS1 #1 FFGD PS1 #1	MFGD PS2 #2
Take turns to speak and listen to others (Respect).	-	FFGD PS1 #1	-
To stay focused on group tasks.	-	-	FFGD PS2 #2
To learn from stronger peers.	Stated by learners from both schools: FFGD PS2 #2, FFGD PS1 #1, MFGD PS2 #2, MFGD PS1 #1.	-	-
<b>Reasons for interest in Group Learning</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<i>It makes learning fun.</i>	Stated by learners from both schools.	FFGD PS1 #1	
In group projects.		FFGD PS1 #1	
In group plenary Presentations.	FFGD PS1 #1, MFGD PS2 #2.		
In Science experiments.		MFGD PS1 #1	
<i>It accelerates the problem-solving process.</i>	Stated by learners from both schools.		
Finding answers faster because time takers are helped by gifted learners.	Stated by learners from both schools: MFGD PS1 #1 FFGD PS1 #1 FFGD PS2 #2		
Finishing tasks faster because everyone has a role.		FFGD PS1 #1 MFGD PS1 #1	

<b><i>Enhances Conceptualization of Concepts.</i></b>	Stated by learners from both schools:		
More knowledgeable peers explaining complex ideas to others.	FFGD PS1 #1 MFGD PS2 #2 MFGD PS2 #3		
<b><i>Boosts Confidence</i></b>	Observed by learners from both schools.		
Sharing ideas with others without feeling shy.			FFGD PS2 #2
When we solve problems together.		FFGD PS1 #1	
Contributing our areas of strength boosts our confidence.		FFGD PS1 #4	
<b>Reasons for interest in Group Learning</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<b><i>Relevant Adjustment of Group Sizes.</i></b>	Observed by learners from both schools.	-	-
Different group sizes make the group work doable.	-	-	FFGD PS2 #2
We learn from different classmates.	-	FFGD PS1 #1	-
<b><i>Widening of Social Networks.</i></b>			-
We get to know different people in our class.	-	MFGD PS1 #1	-
Allows us to build new friendships.	-	MFGD PS1 #3	-
<b><i>Provision of necessary learning materials by teachers.</i></b>	Observed by learners from both schools.	-	-
We save time.	-	FFGD PS1 #1	-
We stay focused.	-	FFGD PS1 #1	-

Eases sharing of roles.	FFGD PS1 #1 MFGD PS2 #2 FFGD PS2 #2	-	-
<b><i>We can ask for clarification as a group.</i></b>	Appreciated by learners from both schools.	-	-
We understand concepts better.	FFGD PS1 #1 FFGD PS2 #2	MFGD PS1 #1	-
We feel more confident to ask as a group.	-		
Teachers welcome questions from learners during group work.	-	FFGD PS1 #1	-
<b>Reasons for Disliking Group Learning.</b>	<b>Similarities between PS1 and PS2</b>	<b>PS1</b>	<b>PS2</b>
<b><i>Passive participation of some group members.</i></b>	Mentioned by learners from both schools.	-	-
It frustrates us.		MFGD PS1 #1	
It slows us down.		-	FFGD PS2 #2
It interrupts our focus on group tasks.		MFGD PS1 #1:	-
<b><i>Frequent group changes.</i></b>		Mentioned by PS1 learners	-
It can be confusing.		MFGD PS1 #2	-
It interrupts the active participation of some members.		MFGD PS1 #1	-
Adjusting to new ways of working.		MFGD PS1 #3	-
Adjusting to new people.		FFGD PS1 #1	-
<b><i>Learners' inability to ask for clarification.</i></b>		-	Mentioned by only one learner from PS2.
Fear of being judged by peers in the group.		-	MFGD PS2 #2
Teachers attend to too many groups.		-	MFGD PS2 #2

<b><i>Domineering peers.</i></b>	Mentioned by learners from both schools.	-	-
Talking too much.		-	MFGD PS2 #2
Not listening to others.	-	MFGD PS1 #2	MFGD PS2 #2
Interrupting other people's submissions.	-	-	FFGD PS2 #4
<b><i>Inadequate learning materials.</i></b>	Mentioned by learners from both schools.	-	-
+Slows group work down.	-	MFGD PS1 #1	-
Makes us miss out on hands-on activities.	-	-	FFGD PS2 #1

The findings in Table 4.5 reveal nine distinct reasons why learners in selected primary schools in Mityana District appreciated group learning. These reasons included: supporting each other; making learning fun; accelerating the problem-solving process; enhancing conceptualization of concepts; boosting confidence; adjusting group sizes appropriately; widening social networks; teachers providing necessary learning materials; and enabling learners to ask for clarification as a group.

Among these, the focus group discussions highlighted the four most popular reasons across both schools (PS1 and PS2) as: supporting each other, making learning fun, teachers providing necessary learning materials, and accelerating the problem-solving process. Notably, the most frequently cited reason in both schools was the benefit of supporting each other. Conversely, the least popular reasons included relevant adjustment of group sizes and widening social networks.

Table 4.5 also shows that five reasons for disliking group learning that were mentioned by the learners include: passive participation by some group members; frequent group changes; an inability to ask for clarification; domineering peers; and inadequate learning materials. The most commonly cited reasons for disliking group learning by the learners were: frequent group changes, passive participation, and domineering peers.

The findings from Table 4.5 further indicate that overall, learners offered more reasons for liking group learning than for disliking it, suggesting that despite its challenges, the pedagogical approach was broadly viewed as beneficial. In addition, these perspectives were predominantly voiced by girls and were more frequently reported by learners in PS1 than those in PS2, reflecting potential differences in gender dynamics and contextual settings between the two schools.

In conclusion, these findings from research questions one, two, and three collectively provide a nuanced understanding of the practical, logistical, and pedagogical dimensions influencing learners' experiences with group learning. This comprehensive perspective highlights the strengths and areas for improvement within group learning practices in primary school settings, laying a foundation for discussions in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

The following sections discuss the findings on the three research questions (strategies teachers employ in forming groups, practices of teachers regarding the implementation of group learning, and learners' experiences of group learning), linking the development of knowledge with the theoretical framework of group learning, implications for the study, and recommendations.

### **5.1 Discussion of the Findings**

The discussion of findings for this study is organized following the main research questions, as follows:

- i. What strategies do teachers employ in forming groups to promote group learning in selected primary schools in Uganda?
- ii. What are the practices of teachers regarding the implementation of group learning in selected primary schools in Uganda?
- iii. What are the experiences of learners in group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana district?

#### **5.1.1 Strategies teachers employ in forming groups**

The findings for research question one present a diverse range of strategies teachers employed to form groups of learners in primary school classrooms in Mityana District. The six primary grouping strategies revealed from the findings were random group formation, mixed-ability grouping, same-ability grouping, size-determined group formation, temporary groups, and special needs-support grouping reflecting a nuanced

approach to facilitating collaborative learning. Each strategy revealed distinct intentions such as fostering active participation, enhancing inclusivity, ensuring targeted instruction, and optimizing learner engagement across subjects such as Mathematics, English, Social Studies (SST), and Science.

A notable dimension of the findings is the variation in the prevalence and practicality of the grouping strategies employed by teachers. Strategies such as size-determined grouping, temporary grouping, and special needs-support grouping emerged as the most frequently applied and contextually relevant approaches among teachers. In contrast, although random group formation, same-ability grouping, and mixed-ability grouping are often praised in educational theory for promoting social constructivist principles (Vygotsky, 1978) and facilitating peer-assisted learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2018), they were reported as being used unevenly across different subjects and among male and female teachers. This uneven application suggests that external factors such as classroom size, instructional goals, subject complexity, and the availability of teaching and learning resources heavily influence the selection of grouping strategies. For instance, the size-determined grouping strategy was particularly prevalent in situations where equitable resource sharing was critical, allowing teachers to allocate limited materials efficiently, an approach that also mirrors the African philosophy of Ujamaa, which emphasizes cooperative sharing and collective responsibility. Meanwhile, same-ability and mixed-ability groupings were used more strategically to cater to differentiated academic needs and foster social inclusion, a practice that resonates with the spirit of Ubuntu, where the principle of “I am because we are” highlights the importance of empathy, mutual support,

and collective progress in learning. These findings reinforce insights from the literature review, where Tomlinson (2018) and Baines et al. (2022) emphasized that the effectiveness of group learning is closely tied to the teacher's ability to adapt strategies based on classroom realities and pedagogical intent. The flexible use of grouping techniques, therefore, reflects an adaptive professionalism that is both evidence-informed and responsive to local conditions.

The variety of rationales teachers gave for selecting particular group formation strategies reflects the complex pedagogical balancing act involved in addressing learners' diverse academic and social needs. Teachers deliberately adopted strategies that enabled differentiated instruction, targeted support, and inclusive participation, aligning with the principles of differentiated learning articulated in the literature (Tomlinson, 2018). This adaptability reflects a practical embodiment of Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory, where learning is facilitated through scaffolded interactions and social exchanges within the zone of proximal development. By enabling more capable peers to assist those who take more time to grasp concepts, teachers created opportunities for shared meaning-making and cognitive advancement, as supported by Johnson and Johnson's (2018) cooperative learning. Additionally, the intentional formation of groups that accommodate learners with special needs supports findings by Namukwaya et al. (2020), who posited that inclusive group arrangements not only enhance cognitive outcomes but also promote social-emotional learning, empathy, and classroom cohesion. This underscores the transformative potential of group learning when grounded in both sound theoretical foundations and responsive instructional practice.

These group formation strategies were not employed uniformly but rather emerged as adaptive pedagogical responses to complex and shifting classroom realities, including resource limitations, learner diversity, and the specific nature of instructional tasks. In contexts where schools faced acute shortages of instructional materials, teachers adopted strategies like size-determined grouping to optimize limited resources and promote equitable participation during activities that required shared materials, particularly in Science and Social Studies. This practice also resonates with the principle of Ujamaa, which emphasizes cooperative sharing, mutual responsibility, and collective wellbeing, values that align with how teachers sought to ensure inclusivity in resource-constrained classrooms. This mirrors findings by Casserly et al. (2019), who highlighted how resource constraints in under-resourced educational settings often shape pedagogical strategies. Additionally, the presence of learners with varying academic abilities and the practical challenge of managing large classrooms pushed teachers to flexibly use grouping techniques aimed at enhancing interaction quality, peer accountability, and engagement. These situational strategies are not only aligned with the literature (Baines et al., 2022; Tomlinson, 2018) but also strongly reflect the assumptions of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the value of peer interaction in scaffolding individual development. Furthermore, the practice of adapting group strategies to evolving learner needs and classroom dynamics resonates with Johnson and Johnson's (2018) cooperative learning, which advocates for flexible, context-driven group structures that cultivate collaboration, shared responsibility, and mutual support among learners, a principle that is also consistent with Harambee, the East African philosophy of collective effort and pulling together towards shared progress. However, the

inconsistency in applying these strategies across subjects and classrooms exposes a pedagogical gap: while the theoretical assumptions emphasize structured and consistent peer learning opportunities, in practice, these were often contingent upon external constraints rather than being a pedagogical constant.

The findings also revealed subtle but important differences in how demographic factors among the teachers shaped the choice and consistency of group formation strategies. For example, female teachers were more likely to emphasise inclusivity-oriented strategies, such as mixed-ability grouping and special needs-support grouping, which they associated with nurturing peer collaboration and social cohesion. Male teachers, by contrast, reported more frequent reliance on size-determined and temporary grouping approaches, particularly in managing larger classrooms and resource constraints. This gendered variation in practice suggests that teacher demographics influence pedagogical choices, a dimension often underexplored in existing group learning literature. Previous studies, including those by Baines et al. (2022) and Tomlinson (2018), primarily focused on structural and instructional conditions, while overlooking how teacher characteristics shape strategy adoption. By bringing this perspective to the fore, the current study adds nuance to debates on the contextual drivers of group pedagogy in resource-limited settings such as Uganda.

Another point of divergence arose from the use of random grouping strategies. While the literature widely commends random grouping for fostering peer diversity and discouraging cliques (Gillies, 2016; Slavin, 2015), some teachers in this study expressed reservations. They reported that random groupings occasionally led to imbalanced

distributions of academic abilities, slowing task completion, and disadvantaging weaker learners who lacked adequate peer support. These concerns challenge the notion, often advanced in Western literature, that random grouping is universally beneficial. Instead, the findings suggest that random grouping requires adaptation to specific classroom contexts, particularly in settings where academic disparities are wide and teacher-student ratios are unfavourable. This contextual contradiction underscores the importance of situating pedagogical strategies within local realities rather than assuming direct applicability of international best practices.

Similarly, while mixed-ability grouping aligns with social constructivist ideals by encouraging peer-to-peer scaffolding, some teachers in the study noted that stronger learners sometimes dominated group tasks, leaving weaker learners as passive participants. This finding is consistent with critiques by Kutnick and Blatchford (2014), who cautioned that mixed-ability settings may reinforce inequalities if not carefully facilitated. Yet, what emerges as new from this study is the adaptive agency of teachers in navigating this tension. Rather than abandoning mixed-ability grouping, teachers supplemented it with deliberate monitoring and role assignments to maintain balanced participation. This innovation highlights a form of “contextual improvisation” that has not been fully captured in mainstream literature, where structural prescriptions often overshadow practical teacher adaptations. It suggests that teachers in Mityana District are not passive adopters of pedagogical models but active negotiators of theory and reality.

The integration of special needs-support grouping also reflected both compliance with inclusive education policies in Uganda and the teachers’ commitment to ensuring that

learners with disabilities were not left behind. However, unlike in Namukwaya et al. (2020), where such practices were often externally driven by school policies or donor-funded projects, this study found that some teachers pursued these strategies out of personal conviction and ethical responsibility, reflecting the spirit of Ubuntu, which underscores the recognition of every learner's dignity and the collective responsibility of a community to uplift all its members, even without explicit institutional enforcement. This deviation suggests a potential shift towards grassroots-driven inclusivity, where teacher values and agency play as much of a role as formal policy in shaping classroom practices. Such findings enrich the discourse on inclusive education in sub-Saharan Africa by highlighting the human element in pedagogical decision-making.

The widespread and consistent use of the grouping card technique across classrooms highlights its practical utility and theoretical alignment with equitable teaching practices. Teachers used simple, randomized markers such as numbers, colors, or letters to form groups, enabling them to efficiently navigate complex classroom compositions and to either foster mixed-ability interaction or streamline same-ability instruction depending on the learning goal. This aligns with Olaniyan and Adepoju's (2019) study, which emphasized that grouping cards promotes fairness and transparency in group formation, reducing teacher bias and enabling quick decision-making. In this study, the technique emerged as a low-resource yet powerful tool that teachers could modify based on the intended learning outcome, whether it be promoting cooperative engagement or addressing learners' differentiated needs. From a theoretical lens, the technique supports both the social constructivist model by facilitating heterogeneous peer interactions and

cooperative learning by creating structures where all learners have defined roles and the opportunity to contribute actively. In terms of peer learning behaviors, the cards enabled organic peer leadership, knowledge sharing, and mutual assistance behaviors that are foundational to the development of interdependence, accountability, and collaborative problem-solving, as posited by Johnson and Johnson (2018). Nonetheless, the absence of a more structured theoretical framing in the application of this strategy beyond its functional convenience points to a gap where teachers may benefit from more explicit training in the pedagogical theories underpinning their practices. Bridging this gap can move the strategy from being merely pragmatic to becoming a theory-informed tool for fostering transformative peer learning environments.

Beyond simply facilitating equitable group formation, the grouping card technique also played a significant role in enhancing learning opportunities and promoting inclusive participation by streamlining group dynamics and ensuring balanced learner representation. Teachers highlighted that this method allowed for the swift creation of diverse groups, which not only optimized the use of limited instructional materials but also fostered more effective peer interactions across academic and social dimensions. This aligns with Mergiwati et al. (2024), who emphasized that adaptable and structured grouping approaches strengthen collaborative learning, deepen social integration among learners, and enhance the outcomes of peer-assisted instruction. Moreover, the technique's simplicity made it versatile across different subjects and classroom scenarios, enabling teachers to meet pedagogical goals such as differentiated instruction, targeted peer support, and equitable task sharing. In effect, the card-based strategy functioned as a

pedagogical equalizer that enabled all learners, regardless of ability or background, to engage meaningfully with their peers and contribute actively to shared learning goals. This inclusive approach reflects the core assumptions of social constructivist theory, which values learning as a socially mediated process, and cooperative learning, which highlights the importance of structured interaction and interdependence. By embedding this strategy consistently into their classroom routines, teachers not only responded pragmatically to contextual demands but also, perhaps unintentionally, reinforced theoretical principles that support inclusive, learner-centered education.

The findings revealed both alignment and divergence with existing literature, offering fresh contributions to the discourse on group learning. While the strategies documented resonate with established theoretical frameworks such as social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2018), their practical application in Mityana District highlights contextual adaptations shaped by teacher demographics, classroom resource constraints, and learner diversity. The presence of contradictions, such as the uneven outcomes of random and mixed-ability grouping, all point to the need for more nuanced, locally grounded theories of group learning that move beyond generic prescriptions. This study, therefore, underscores the importance of recognising teacher agency, contextual dynamics, and demographic influences in shaping effective pedagogical practices. By surfacing these insights, the study not only enriches the literature but also provides a basis for policy and professional development initiatives that support teachers in making informed, contextually relevant choices in group learning implementation.

### **5.1.2 Practices of teachers regarding the implementation of group learning**

The findings on teachers' practices of implementing group learning in Mityana District primary schools highlight both the diversity and intentional selectivity of instructional methods adopted to meet pedagogical goals within the local context. Teachers employed strategies such as assigning team tasks for collaborative engagement, utilising role play scenarios to foster empathy and creativity, periodically altering group composition to prevent stagnation, and providing scaffolded learning to tailor support across core subjects like Mathematics, English, Social Studies, and Science. Among these, scaffolded learning stood out as the most consistently utilised practice, reflecting teachers' belief in its effectiveness for bridging academic gaps, accommodating learner diversity, and deepening conceptual understanding. This finding resonates with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learning is optimised through guided support from more capable peers or instructors. The emphasis on scaffolding also aligns with cooperative learning frameworks, such as those advanced by Johnson and Johnson, which promote structured peer collaboration, individual accountability, and mutual support as foundational elements of group-based pedagogy. More recent studies, such as Tran and Nguyen (2020) and Smith and McGregor (2022), have similarly argued that scaffolded group learning is essential for enhancing peer mediation and sustaining learner engagement, even in resource-constrained environments.

Teachers' motivations, such as enhancing learner engagement, promoting equitable participation, tailoring support to learner needs, and strengthening peer interaction,

revealed an underlying commitment to inclusive and responsive teaching. These motivations align with the literature emphasising the role of collaborative learning in fostering critical thinking, deepening content mastery, and nurturing social skills in mixed-ability classrooms (Slavin, 2019; Gillies, 2020). Furthermore, these drivers resonate with the African principle of Ujamaa, which values collective advancement and social cohesion, framing education as a communal endeavour. Practices like periodic group reconfiguration and differentiated task allocation suggest a deliberate attempt by teachers to maintain social balance and prevent learner exclusion, consistent with social constructivist principles. This conscious effort to ensure no one is left behind is a practical enactment of the Ubuntu philosophy, where the well-being of the individual is inextricably linked to the well-being of the group. At the same time, the selective uptake of more innovative practices such as role play and the heavy reliance on scaffolded instruction expose a pedagogical gap in the fuller integration of socially grounded, exploratory learning methods. While role play has been highlighted in recent scholarship as a powerful tool for building empathy, communication, and creativity (Miller and Chen, 2021; Adeyemi, 2023), it remained underutilised in these classrooms. This suggests that although teachers value cooperative interaction, they may perceive some methods as peripheral rather than central to academic success. This highlights an area for further professional development, where teachers can be supported to integrate a more balanced repertoire of learner-centred approaches that combine structure with creativity.

The findings further illuminate the intricate interplay between contextual realities and the pedagogical implementation of group learning strategies. Teachers worked within

heterogeneous classroom settings characterised by diverse academic abilities, contrasting personality types such as introverted and extroverted learners, and participation levels that ranged from passive to domineering. These dynamics were compounded by evolving academic and social learning challenges, requiring teachers to constantly recalibrate their instructional practices. To address these complexities, teachers applied varied methods, including assigning collaborative tasks, using role play to stimulate interactive learning, and adjusting group composition to manage peer relations and sustain engagement. These adaptive efforts are echoed in the works of Tomlinson (2018) on differentiated instruction and Gillies (2020) on the facilitation of group interactions in diverse classrooms. The approaches used also align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, particularly the importance of mediated learning through peer interaction, and Johnson and Johnson's cooperative learning model, which prioritises positive interdependence and individual accountability. However, despite recognising the potential benefits of regrouping learners, teachers often struggled with consistently implementing facilitation practices such as providing timely feedback on group dynamics or ensuring equitable participation. This reflects a disjuncture between theoretical ideals and applied practices, where the absence of systematic reflection and guided mediation weakened the full realisation of collaborative benefits.

The quality and depth of group learning implementation practices were uneven across subjects and school environments. Science lessons, due to their inherently practical and inquiry-driven nature, were more conducive to structured collaboration and prompted more deliberate facilitation by teachers. By contrast, subjects like English or Social

Studies, especially in classrooms with large enrolments or limited resources, saw less consistent integration of facilitative practices. A common trend was the tendency to reward groups primarily for correct academic responses, while neglecting recognition of cooperative behaviours such as peer mentorship, problem-solving, collaboration, or conflict resolution. This narrow approach to rewards stands in contrast with the insights of Kagan (2017), Brown (2019), and more recent studies such as Alvarez (2021), who highlight the importance of simultaneously nurturing both cognitive and social-emotional skills in group settings. From a theoretical perspective, this practice suggests an incomplete operationalisation of cooperative learning, which requires balanced attention to both academic outcomes and interpersonal development. The under-recognition of social competencies also limits the potential of group learning to build long-term skills in teamwork, empathy, and communication, which are increasingly recognised in the global education discourse as equally important as cognitive mastery (UNESCO, 2023).

Teachers' selective use of group learning strategies also revealed how structural and demographic factors shaped their pedagogical choices. For instance, female teachers in this study tended to prioritise inclusive practices that emphasised equitable participation and attention to quieter learners, while male teachers often focused on strategies for managing classroom discipline and maintaining order in large groups. These gendered patterns resonate with findings from Akinyi and Ochieng (2021) in Kenya, who observed similar distinctions in how male and female teachers prioritised elements of group pedagogy. Such differences suggest that teacher characteristics play a significant role in the application of group learning practices, an area often underexplored in mainstream

literature, which tends to emphasise structural constraints. By surfacing these patterns, this study contributes new insights into how teacher demographics interact with pedagogical decisions, underscoring the need for context-sensitive training that equips all teachers with the capacity to adopt both inclusive and structured practices effectively.

Contradictions also emerged in relation to the application of theory to practice. For example, while Vygotsky's framework emphasises scaffolded peer interaction as a means of extending learning within the zone of proximal development, some teachers reported that stronger learners often completed tasks independently without adequately engaging weaker peers. This tendency undermined the intended benefits of scaffolded group work and left less proficient learners as passive participants, directly contradicting the Ubuntu ideal of mutual support and shared knowledge construction. Such findings echo Kutnick and Blatchford (2014), who warned of the risks of unequal participation in group tasks, but they also go further by highlighting the adaptive responses of teachers in Mityana District. Rather than abandoning scaffolded learning, some teachers introduced deliberate task-sharing roles to ensure equitable contributions. This suggests a pragmatic form of pedagogical improvisation that blends theoretical ideals with classroom realities, reflecting a commitment to Harambee by reasserting the priority of collective effort and progress over individual accomplishment. It also highlights an area where teacher professional development can focus on equipping educators with facilitation skills that ensure scaffolding translates into meaningful participation for all learners.

Finally, the findings emphasise that while teachers in Mityana District demonstrated strong commitment to implementing group learning practices, the uneven depth of

application across classrooms points to a need for more robust professional development structures. Studies by Mergiwati et al. (2024) and Chirwa (2023) underscore that effective group learning requires teachers not only to know the strategies but also to develop confidence in facilitating equitable participation, integrating creative methods, and assessing both cognitive and social outcomes. In this study, teachers relied heavily on pragmatic adjustments such as reconfiguring groups or providing scaffolded support, but often fell short of embedding reflective practices that would elevate group learning into a consistently transformative pedagogy. Thus, while the practices observed align in principle with cooperative learning and sociocultural theories, their implementation was mediated by contextual constraints, demographic influences, and limited exposure to advanced facilitation techniques. Addressing these gaps could significantly enhance the capacity of teachers to harness the full potential of group learning as both an instructional and socialising tool for learners in Ugandan primary schools.

### **5.1.3 Learners' experiences of group learning**

The findings from research question three underscore the multifaceted nature of learners' experiences with group learning, revealing both the cognitive and socio-emotional dimensions that made this pedagogical approach meaningful in the selected primary schools in Mityana District. Learners consistently pointed out that supporting each other, making learning enjoyable, accelerating problem-solving, deepening understanding of concepts, building confidence, adjusting group sizes, expanding social networks, receiving necessary learning materials, and working collaboratively to seek clarification enriched their learning. These experiences illustrate the dynamic interplay between

knowledge acquisition, social interaction, and affective engagement. Notably, the emphasis learners placed on supporting each other strongly resonates with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory, which highlights the significance of socially mediated learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By working with peers, especially more capable ones, learners accessed knowledge and skills that might otherwise have remained out of reach, an observation supported by recent studies that affirm peer support as a central mechanism of effective collaborative learning (Chiriac, 2019; Mercer & Littleton, 2020).

Enjoyment and motivation emerged as critical factors shaping positive learner experiences of group learning. Many learners valued the sense of fun and shared activity inherent in group work, noting that it made lessons more engaging and less monotonous. This aligns closely with Johnson and Johnson's (2018) cooperative learning framework, which stresses positive interdependence and motivation as drivers of successful collaboration. Similar observations were made by Tondeur et al. (2021), who found that when students perceive learning as enjoyable, their cognitive persistence and willingness to engage in tasks increase significantly. Learners' association of group work with faster problem-solving also echoes Slavin's (2014) argument that collaborative structures allow multiple perspectives to be brought together, enabling quicker comprehension of complex material. Thus, learners' voices highlight the extent to which enjoyment, social bonding, and academic support intersect to enhance their classroom experiences.

Confidence-building emerged as another strong theme. Learners explained that sharing ideas in groups, even when they initially felt shy, helped them gain the courage to

participate actively. Such reflections underscore the affective outcomes of collaborative pedagogy, reinforcing arguments by Gillies (2016) and Brown (2019) that group learning not only develops cognitive skills but also nurtures interpersonal growth and self-efficacy. More recent work by Mahmud and Rawshon (2022) confirms this trend, showing that learners involved in structured group learning often report enhanced self-confidence and communication skills. These findings highlight the vital role of group learning in fostering holistic education that goes beyond academic mastery to support personal development. Learners' recognition of teacher-provided resources as an enabling factor also reflects Tomlinson's (2018) differentiated instruction model, which emphasises the importance of tailoring resources to support diverse learners. The consistency of this feedback suggests that resource provision is a visible marker of teacher commitment, significantly shaping learners' perceptions of group learning.

Beyond the immediate benefits, learners also demonstrated an emerging awareness of the structural aspects of group learning, particularly the significance of group size and composition. While not all learners articulated this explicitly, some noted that smaller groups made it easier to focus and ensure participation. This awareness reflects a developing metacognitive understanding of how structural arrangements influence collaboration and outcomes, echoing research by Gillies and Boyle (2022), which shows that learners often become more attuned to group dynamics when regularly exposed to structured collaboration. Such reflections also support the cooperative learning model's emphasis on group cohesion and individual accountability, underscoring the importance of deliberate group structuring for effective engagement.

Despite these positive reflections, several challenges emerged that complicated learners' experiences. Five main reasons for disliking group learning were cited: passive participation by some members, frequent group changes, difficulties in asking for clarification, domineering peers, and inadequate learning materials. Among these, frequent regrouping, passive participation, and peer dominance stood out as the most recurrent concerns. These challenges reflect the complexities of poorly structured group work, consistent with the literature on cooperative learning, which warns that without careful facilitation, group work can reinforce inequities or disengagement (Kagan, 2017; Gillies, 2016). More recently, Andriessen and Baker (2020) stressed that poorly managed group interactions risk undermining the very social interdependence that makes group learning powerful. Thus, while learners valued collaboration, their frustrations highlight critical areas where pedagogy requires strengthening.

Frequent group changes, while intended to broaden learners' peer networks, were often experienced as destabilising and disruptive. Learners described how constant reshuffling hindered the development of trust and group cohesion, which are vital for effective collaboration. This insight aligns with Slavin's (2014) caution that group stability is essential for accountability and meaningful interaction, and with a more recent study by van Leeuwen and Janssen (2019), which showed that stable group membership allows learners to develop shared norms and deeper trust, leading to more productive collaboration. Similarly, issues of passive participation and peer dominance point to weaknesses in role distribution and inclusivity, echoing Johnson and Johnson's (2018) emphasis on the need for clear role assignments to ensure balanced participation. These

challenges illustrate a gap between theoretical ideals of cooperative learning and the realities of classroom implementation.

Finally, learners' difficulties in seeking clarification and the scarcity of learning materials reveal more systemic limitations in group learning practices. From a Vygotskian perspective, these gaps undermine the ZPD by restricting opportunities for scaffolded support, either from peers or teachers. When learners feel intimidated to ask for clarification or when resources are insufficient, the very conditions required for effective socially mediated learning are compromised. This resonates with findings by García-Cabrero et al. (2020), who noted that the effectiveness of group learning is contingent not only on social interaction but also on the presence of adequate resources and supportive structures. The learners' perspectives, therefore, highlight both the promise and the limitations of group learning as currently practiced. While their positive experiences validate much of the theoretical basis for collaborative pedagogy, the challenges they identified underscore the need for intentional scaffolding, balanced group structures, and sustained teacher mediation to fully realise the academic and social-emotional potential of group learning in primary schools.

In sum, the learners' experiences of group learning in Mityana District reveal a nuanced picture of promise and challenge. On the one hand, learners deeply valued the cognitive, social, and affective benefits of collaboration, particularly the opportunities to support each other, enjoy learning, build confidence, and solve problems collectively. These outcomes affirm the theoretical underpinnings of social constructivism and cooperative learning, demonstrating how well-structured group learning can enrich both academic

achievement and personal growth. On the other hand, concerns such as frequent group reshuffling, unequal participation, peer dominance, and resource shortages highlight gaps in implementation that undermine the full realisation of these theoretical ideals. Together, these findings point to the dual imperative of sustaining the positive aspects of group learning while addressing the structural and facilitative weaknesses that persist in practice. By critically reflecting on learners' voices, educators and policymakers can more effectively tailor group learning strategies that are inclusive, balanced, and better aligned with the holistic goals of education in Uganda's primary schools.

## **5.2 Contribution to the World of Knowledge**

By focusing on the lived experiences of both teachers and learners in Mityana District, the study contextualises theoretical principles and highlights how they operate within resource-constrained environments. More importantly, it extends the theoretical frontier by demonstrating how classical models of collaborative learning, which were developed in predominantly Western contexts, can be reinterpreted to accommodate African primary school realities.

One notable theoretical contribution lies in clarifying the relationship between class size and the appropriateness of specific group formation strategies. This study extends the literature by demonstrating that same-ability and mixed-ability grouping tend to be more effective in smaller class environments. Such findings sharpen the understanding of how contextual variables such as classroom size influence pedagogical decision making, thereby challenging the often-implicit assumption that grouping strategies are universally transferable across educational systems. This research, therefore, advances theory by

highlighting the importance of context-specific adaptations in group pedagogy. Furthermore, the finding that female learners, particularly in Mathematics, reported greater confidence gains through group learning than their male counterparts, introduce a gendered perspective rarely documented at the primary school level. By doing so, the study contributes a new dimension to the discourse on learner agency in collaborative environments, showing that gender identities shape not only levels of participation but also confidence trajectories. This theoretical insight, when connected to technology-assisted grouping systems, highlights opportunities for digital platforms to promote equity, inclusivity, and learner empowerment across diverse learning contexts.

In addition, this study contributes to theory by offering a critical lens on how group learning is conceptualised and practiced by teachers. The findings depart from the researcher's prior assumption that that group work naturally cultivates both cognitive and socio-emotional competencies. Instead, the evidence shows that teachers primarily implemented group learning to improve subject content mastery, with limited emphasis on developing interpersonal skills, values, or emotional resilience. This theoretical insight is important because it challenges cooperative learning frameworks that often assume the holistic development of learners as a natural outcome of group pedagogy. The study, therefore, extends theoretical debates by demonstrating a gap in pedagogical content knowledge related to affective and psychomotor domains, suggesting that without intentional scaffolding, these outcomes do not automatically materialise. Moreover, by linking these gaps to the increasing presence of digital technologies in classrooms, the study advances theory by proposing that teacher professional development must not only

cover traditional group facilitation skills but also strategies for integrating technology to simultaneously support cognitive and socio- emotional learning outcomes. In this sense, the research reimagines classical frameworks such as Vygotskian social constructivism and Johnson and Johnson's cooperative learning model to account for digitally mediated collaboration and the twenty first century skills development.

Taken together, these contributions enrich existing theories of collaborative learning and extend them into new contexts, while also addressing pressing empirical and practical gaps. This study advances theoretical discourse by demonstrating that effective implementation of group pedagogy cannot be divorced from contextual realities such as class size, gender dynamics, resource availability, and the digital transformation of education. It calls for a recalibration of both teacher training curricula and classroom support systems to ensure that group learning strategies are not only effective in promoting academic achievement but also inclusive, context-responsive, and attuned to the twenty first century demands. By situating its insights within both African realities and broader global debates, the study contributes to the world of knowledge by showing that there is no single universal truth about group learning. Instead, there are multiple realities shaped by context, gender, material conditions, and increasingly, the adoption of technology. This recognition expands the theoretical frontier, providing a foundation for future research that integrates traditional collaborative learning theories with emerging digital pedagogies to foster holistic, equitable, and globally relevant models of group learning.

### **5.3 Article Publications**

From this study, the researcher has published three scholarly articles that will contribute to the ongoing academic debate on learner engagement and group learning in primary education. These are: *'Strategies Employed by Teachers in Forming Groups to Facilitate Group Learning in Selected Primary Schools in Uganda'*; *'Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of Group Learning in Selected Primary Schools in Uganda'*; *'Experiences of Learners in the Context of Group Learning in Selected Primary Schools of Uganda'*

### **5.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study illuminates the diverse strategies teachers employ to form groups for group learning in primary schools, addressing the first research question. The findings revealed that teachers utilized a range of thoughtful, tailored strategies to meet the unique needs and dynamics of their classrooms. These strategies encompassed grouping based on random selection, mixed-ability grouping, same-ability grouping, size-determined grouping, temporary grouping, special needs-support grouping, and grouping cards. These strategies enabled teachers to create engaging, interactive environments where learners participated actively, shared ideas, and supported each other in learning, thus reinforcing the overall effectiveness of group learning in primary schools.

In response to the second research question, the study provides valuable insights into teachers' perspectives in implementing group learning, highlighting both the rewards and the challenges of this pedagogical approach. The findings show that effective utilization

of groups requires careful planning, ongoing supportive monitoring, and management of diverse learner dynamics. Teachers viewed group learning as a powerful means to foster collaboration, communication, and critical thinking among learners. However, the study also uncovers substantial gaps in teachers' abilities to design and enforce structured cooperative learning guidelines, as well as to provide constructive monitoring and feedback to support learners' interactive performance. This lack of knowledge and skills in implementing interactive group learning structures points to the need for continuous professional development, equipping teachers with the tools to create cooperative learning environments that promote balanced participation and maximize the benefits of group learning for all learners.

Finally, addressing the third research question, the study explores learners' perspectives on their experiences in group learning. The findings reveal that primary school learners generally favor group learning due to the opportunities it provides to share knowledge, tackle complex tasks collaboratively, and make learning more enjoyable. Additionally, learners reported that group activities boost their confidence, expand their social networks, and help them develop essential social skills such as teamwork, communication, and empathy. These positive experiences underscore the holistic value of group learning, which not only enhances academic achievement but also prepares learners for future collaborative academic and professional settings. However, some learners expressed frustration with certain aspects of group learning, including the unequal participation of some group members, frequent group changes that led to confusion, and limited access to necessary learning materials.

The conclusions drawn from this study closely relate to the theoretical foundations of Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which guide the research. The findings on teachers' group formation and management strategies align with Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction as central to learning, as teachers create structured activities that foster collaboration and shared knowledge-building among learners. Furthermore, Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding is evident, as teachers provide necessary guidance to support productive interactions within groups, enhancing learning outcomes through structured social engagement.

The study also resonates with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which highlights the importance of observational learning and modeling. Teachers who act as facilitators, rather than authoritative directors, allow learners to observe and model positive group behaviors, thus reinforcing collaborative learning and social skills. By facilitating group interactions and encouraging learners to learn from one another, teachers embody Bandura's idea that social contexts shape learning, demonstrating the crucial role of teachers in shaping group dynamics through modeling and support.

By emphasizing structured group tasks, the study highlights the critical role of active, hands-on engagement in fostering learner growth in collaborative environments, as advocated by Vygotsky and Bandura.

### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

The study was geographically confined to Mityana District in Uganda, representing only a specific area among the 146 districts in the country (Batdi, 2017). Therefore, the

findings were interpreted within the specific context of Mityana District and may not be generalisable to other districts or regions, as educational practices and circumstances may differ.

On the other hand, the implementation of group learning strategies by teachers was evaluated at different times of the school year. Variations in strategies used by teachers may have limitations in promoting group learning and how they impact learners' experiences. To address this limitation, the study focused on providing a detailed understanding of the strategies employed by teachers, exploring their practices, and understanding learners' experiences of group learning within Mityana District. By conducting in-depth interviews and observations within this specific context, the study aimed to provide insights that could be valuable for educational practices within the district.

Furthermore, due to time constraints, the study might not have been able to comprehensively explore all the different ways in which the teachers utilised group learning strategies to enhance group work in the classroom. The focus was limited to observing teachers' application of group learning strategies within the research period, which may not have fully represented the entire range of group learning practices employed by teachers in primary schools. To mitigate this limitation, the study attempted to maximise the data collection period within the available timeframe. The researcher carefully selected observation periods and interview schedules to capture a diverse range of group learning practices employed by teachers.

Additionally, while the study targeted the primary five class within the primary school cycle, it is important to note that the new primary education curriculum emphasises the participation of all learners at different levels. Therefore, the perspectives and experiences of teachers and learners who were not included in the study sample may not have been captured, limiting the generalisability of the findings to the entire population of teachers and learners in primary schools. To mitigate the limitation of not including all teachers and learners in the study sample, the researcher ensured that the selected sample was representative of the broader population in terms of school types, locations, and learner demographics.

Lastly, as data collection heavily relied on classroom observations, the presence of the researcher may have inadvertently influenced the behaviour and practices of participants. Teachers may have modified their approaches to group learning structures due to the awareness of being observed, potentially affecting the authenticity of their usual teaching approaches. Thus, the data collected may not fully reflect the true extent and implementation of group learning strategies used by teachers in the context of the new primary school curriculum. To address this concern, the researcher took measures to minimise the impact of her presence on the observed classrooms. This included establishing rapport with teachers and learners, explaining the purpose of the study, and ensuring that observations were conducted modestly.

Despite these limitations, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the practice of group learning in primary schools within Mityana District and contribute to the existing knowledge on collaborative learning pedagogy. It is essential to acknowledge these

limitations and carefully interpret the findings, taking into account the specific scope and context of the study.

## **5.6 Delimitations**

This qualitative case study focused on understanding the implementation of group learning pedagogy in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. Several delimitations shaped the scope and findings of the study. Firstly, the sample was limited to two primary schools. While this may not represent all primary schools in Uganda, schools were purposively selected to ensure geographic accessibility and practical feasibility of in-depth data collection. By concentrating on these schools, the study aimed to provide detailed insights into group learning practices within the local context.

Secondly, the study focused specifically on Primary Five classes, recognising the transitional significance of this stage in learners' education. Findings may not be generalisable to other grade levels. To address this, data collection methods were adapted to the characteristics and needs of Primary Five learners, ensuring that their experiences with group learning were accurately captured and understood.

Thirdly, the study employed a qualitative case study methodology, which prioritises depth and contextual understanding over breadth. While this approach may limit generalisability, it allowed for a rich exploration of teachers' and learners' perspectives. Credibility was enhanced through rigorous data collection strategies, including multiple sources of data, triangulation, and member checking.

The study also acknowledged time constraints, as research activities were conducted within a specified timeframe. Despite this, the researcher maximised opportunities for data collection and reflection to ensure that key aspects of group learning implementation were explored comprehensively.

Importantly, the study recognised the potential influence of researcher perspectives on the findings. To address this, the researcher engaged in reflexivity throughout the study. This involved critically reflecting on personal assumptions, beliefs, and prior experiences related to group learning pedagogy, and actively considering how these might shape interactions with participants, data interpretation, and conclusions. Reflexive practices included maintaining reflective notes during field interactions, reviewing decisions on coding and thematic analysis, and discussing emerging interpretations with peers to reduce subjective bias. By incorporating these reflexive strategies, the researcher aimed to ensure that the findings authentically represented participants' experiences rather than being overly influenced by personal viewpoints.

In summary, the delimitations of this study that include sample size, grade level focus, methodological approach, time constraints, and potential researcher bias were explicitly acknowledged and addressed. By reflecting on these boundaries and engaging in reflexivity, the study aimed to provide reliable and meaningful insights into the implementation of group learning pedagogy in Mityana District while recognising the limits of generalisability to other contexts or grade levels.

## **5.7 Recommendations**

Drawing on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the implementation and impact of group learning pedagogy in primary school classrooms in Uganda. These recommendations are directed toward multiple stakeholders, including teachers, school administrators, learners, and the Ministry of Education and Sports, and are aligned with the empirical gaps identified in the study while taking into account the broader objective of fostering inclusive and effective collaborative learning environments. The recommendations aim not only to improve academic achievement but also to nurture social and emotional competencies, critical thinking, and learner agency.

For Teachers, targeted professional development is essential to equip educators with practical, classroom-applicable skills for facilitating group learning effectively. Beyond general pedagogical knowledge, training should emphasize scaffolding strategies that support learners with diverse academic abilities, managing group dynamics to prevent passive or domineering behaviours, rotating roles to ensure equitable participation, and applying formative assessment tools during group activities. The study highlighted that although group learning is widely practiced, many teachers lack confidence in structuring peer interactions or fostering collaborative problem-solving. Therefore, workshops should focus on practical facilitation skills, including setting clear expectations for group tasks, guiding learners in turn-taking and idea-sharing protocols, and designing tasks that engage both cognitive and social-emotional domains. Complementing these workshops with follow-up mentoring, peer coaching, or reflective teacher communities can reinforce

these practices in real classroom contexts and help teachers translate theoretical principles into sustainable classroom strategies.

For School Leaders and Administrators, creating an enabling environment for group learning is critical. This includes rethinking classroom layouts to allow for flexible seating arrangements that facilitate interaction, ensuring access to sufficient instructional resources such as task cards, manipulatives, discussion prompts, and digital tools where feasible, and supporting the integration of group learning across timetabled lessons. The study revealed that logistical constraints, including limited space and materials, often impeded effective group work. Administrators should also institutionalize collaborative planning among teachers, encouraging the sharing of lesson designs, successful group tasks, and best practices. Regular observation of group learning sessions followed by constructive feedback can strengthen teacher practice, while recognizing and celebrating innovations in pedagogy can sustain motivation and reinforce a culture of collaborative excellence. Moreover, school leaders should actively involve learners in reflecting on group dynamics, encouraging them to take ownership of their roles, participate responsibly, and provide peer feedback, thus fostering a sense of accountability and agency in the learning process.

For Pupils, the recommendations emphasise active engagement and the development of social and emotional competencies alongside academic outcomes. Learners should be encouraged by teachers to take on rotating leadership roles, actively participate in discussions, and support peers in clarifying concepts, ensuring equitable contribution to group tasks. Strategies such as peer mentoring, guided reflection, and collaborative

problem-solving should be integrated into classroom routines by the teachers to promote confidence, empathy, and mutual respect. In addition, pupils should be sensitized to the rationale behind group learning structures and encouraged to communicate challenges openly to teachers, thereby fostering a collaborative culture where feedback loops are integral to continuous improvement.

For the Ministry of Education and Sports, the study suggests integrating structured group learning pedagogy into national teacher training programs and continuous professional development frameworks. This includes modules on differentiated grouping strategies, inclusive group formation, and monitoring peer interactions in line with Uganda's Competency-Based Curriculum. The study found that group learning was primarily leveraged for cognitive development, with limited attention to socio-emotional growth. Therefore, the Ministry should revise teacher training curricula to emphasize the role of group activities in fostering cooperation, empathy, communication, and self-regulation. Funding action research programs within schools to assess, refine, and scale effective group learning practices based on empirical evidence will enable context-responsive models of collaborative learning to emerge. Additionally, the Ministry should encourage the integration of digital and low-cost technological tools to support collaborative learning, particularly in under-resourced classrooms, thereby connecting traditional group pedagogy with the twenty-first century learning demands.

For researchers and practitioners in education, further investigation is recommended to examine the long-term developmental impacts of group learning in diverse contexts. Research should explore how facilitation strategies influence cognitive, affective, and

social outcomes and consider gender dynamics, particularly given that female learners in Mathematics reported heightened confidence through group learning. Future studies should also investigate the role of culturally grounded practices, community engagement, and technology integration in enhancing group collaboration, thereby generating locally relevant evidence to inform both theory and practice. Understanding how learners negotiate group dynamics, exercise agency, and develop interpersonal skills will strengthen pedagogical models that are sensitive to the realities of rural and under-resourced educational settings.

By implementing these stakeholder-specific recommendations, Uganda's education system can move toward a more inclusive, effective, and developmentally comprehensive model of group learning. These measures not only aim to improve academic achievement but also nurture the social and emotional competencies that are critical for lifelong learning, collaboration, and active citizenship. Collectively, these recommendations underscore the need for a coordinated approach that aligns teacher capacity, administrative support, learner engagement, and policy frameworks to maximize the potential of group learning as a transformative pedagogical strategy.

### **5.8 Future Directions**

Building on the findings of this study, several targeted future research directions are proposed to address specific gaps and enrich the understanding of group learning pedagogy in Ugandan primary schools.

**Longitudinal Studies on Learner Trajectories:** Future studies should track cohorts of primary learners across several academic years to investigate how participation in

structured group learning influences not only immediate classroom outcomes but also long-term academic progress, social adaptability, and cooperative learning attitudes into upper primary or secondary school. Such longitudinal research could explore, for example, how early exposure to group learning correlates with performance in national assessments or with sustained engagement in peer learning environments. This would address the current study's limitation of capturing only short-term outcomes and offer insights into whether the benefits of group learning persist or transform over time.

**Impact Evaluation Using Quasi-Experimental Designs:** Subsequent research should apply quasi-experimental or randomized controlled trials to assess the academic impact of group learning interventions, particularly in Literacy and Science subjects. For instance, researchers could compare the performance of learners exposed to structured group work (e.g., scaffolded problem-solving tasks) with those in teacher-centered classrooms over a term. This would generate empirical evidence on whether, and under what conditions, group learning leads to statistically significant improvements in learning outcomes. Such studies could help inform evidence-based policies on instructional design in primary education.

**Evaluation of Specific Teacher Training Models:** There is a need to examine the efficacy of specific teacher training programs focused on key group learning facilitation skills such as scaffolding, learner differentiation, conflict resolution, and equitable participation. Studies could assess the comparative value of workshops, in-class coaching, or peer mentoring in improving teachers' capacity to implement group learning strategies effectively. These investigations would offer practical guidance on how to

structure in-service training that directly responds to gaps highlighted in this study, particularly around inconsistent facilitation and unequal learner engagement.

**Contextual Studies in Rural and Under-Resourced Settings:** Since the current study was limited to a single district, future research should expand to rural and remote schools with limited access to learning materials, diverse linguistic profiles, or high pupil-to-teacher ratios. Investigating how group learning is practiced and adapted in such environments would illuminate context-specific barriers and strategies, especially among schools that lack physical space, teacher support, or parental engagement. Findings would help to tailor group learning approaches that are resilient to systemic inequities and infrastructural limitations.

**Cultural Influences on Group Learning Dynamics:** Further studies should explore how cultural values, such as deference to authority, collectivism, or gender norms, influence learner interactions within groups. For example, research could investigate whether cultural expectations discourage some learners, especially girls or learners from marginalized communities, from participating actively in group discussions. Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing culturally responsive group learning methods that foster inclusivity and engagement across varied school populations.

**Digital Group Learning in Low-Connectivity Environments:** Future research should examine how hybrid or low-tech digital tools (e.g., radio-assisted lessons, offline mobile applications) can be integrated into group learning in schools with limited internet access. Specifically, studies could pilot group learning tasks using tablets or shared devices in

resource-constrained settings and assess their effect on learner collaboration, participation, and comprehension. Such research is timely, given the post-COVID emphasis on technology in education, and could offer scalable models for blended group learning in Ugandan and comparable education systems.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

**Study title: Exploring Teachers' Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda**

##### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

**Date:**

**1. Sex of respondent:** F/M

**2. School:**

**3. Subject Taught:**

**4. Class:** P.5

**5. No: of boys and girls in class**

Boys		Girls	
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**6. No: of learners with disability**

Boys		Girls	
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**7. Education Level:**

- Graduate
- Diploma
- Certificate
- Others (**Please specify**)

##### SECTION B: Sub-Section I: *Group formation and implementation for group learning*

- 1. In your view, how would you describe group learning** (*Probe for its characteristics*)
- 2. Do you use group learning when conducting your lessons?** (*Probe with questions like; If yes: in which subjects and why; what group sizes do you form in terms of numbers and why; do you vary the groups in terms of numbers and duration; encourage him/ her to describe the processes he/she follows when forming the groups and the factors he/she considers in the*

formation of each type of group he uses. Encourage him/her to give reasons for each considerations).

3. **If any, please describe any preparations you make before the lesson for promoting group learning** (*Probe to establish if she/he does the following in advance: trains learners on how to interact in groups; follow systematic steps to form mixed ability groups; identifies and prepares the material and tasks for distribution to the groups; assigns roles to group leaders; allocates group tasks; organises the seating arrangement, draws the plan the seating arrangement of the room; determines the competences, social skills, values to be developed /addressed in the group learning* )
4. **When you are using group learning, do you guide the learners to learn from each other?** (*If yes, Interrogate for the accepted steps and guidance as informed by literature like; Does he/she provide all the relevant guidelines and steps for group learning and interaction at the appropriate time, state the time allocation for the respective steps, state the roles the respective leaders are expected to perform so as to encourage individual learner's participation, encourage group members to; take turns to listen to others, share ideas and clarify each other's answers.*
5. **Do you monitor learners' group work activities? If yes, please mention and describe what you support learners to do when monitoring them learning in groups/doing group work?** (*Interrogate for the expected forms of support as informed by literature like ensuring that; you train the learners on how to behave in group learning, learners participate at individual and group levels, sharing of ideas, performance of roles by leaders like the; chairpersons, secretaries, time keepers, encouragers, learners follow the respective guidelines, steps and time allocated for doing tasks at individual and group levels and interacting with others).*
6. **Do you give feedback for learners' performance in group learning? If yes, please mention and explain what you give feedback on /assess and reward** (*Interrogate for when this is done and for the expected answers informed by literature like; content accuracy, performance of social skills and values. Encourage the respondent to give reasons for each answer).*

## **SECTION B: Sub-Section II: Teachers' perspectives as regards group learning**

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1. **What is your opinion about group learning** (*Probe for benefits, challenges and personal experiences in using it*)

2. **In what ways might group size affect teaching and learning?** (Probe for benefits, challenges and experiences/*illustrations and reasons for the answers*).
3. **What is your perspective about the different kinds of groups used in group learning** (*probe for the likes and dislikes with reference to; permanent; varying groups, small and large sized groups? Encourage the respondent to give reasons for each answer*).
4. **In your opinion, in what ways can teachers be supported to strengthen their use of the group learning methods** (*Encourage the respondent to explain this with reference to any challenges mentioned in the earlier submissions*).

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE***

Appendix 2

**LEARNERS' FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Study title: Exploring Teachers' Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda**

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Date:**

**1. Sex of respondent:** F/M

**2. School:**

**3. Subject Taught:**

**4. Class: P.5**

**5. No: of boys and girls in class**

Boys		Girls	
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**6. No: of learners with disability**

Boys		Girls	
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**SECTION B:**

**Sub-Section I: GROUP FORMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR GROUP LEARNING.**

***INTRODUCE YOURSELF-SPECIFY –WRITE IT IN HERE***

- 1. In your own words can you explain what you understand as the meaning of group learning?** (*Probe for its characteristics*).
- 2. Have you ever done class activities in groups?** (*Probe with questions like; If yes: in which subjects; what group sizes do you use in terms of numbers; does the teacher vary the groups in terms of numbers and duration; encourage the group to describe the processes the teacher follows when forming the groups and the reasons he/she considers in the formation of each type of group he uses. Encourage group to give reasons for each reason*).

3. **If any, please describe any preparations your teachers make before the lesson for promoting group learning** (*Probe to establish if the teacher does the following in advance: trains learners on how to interact in groups; follow mixed ability groups; identifies and prepares the material and tasks for distribution to the groups; assigns roles to group leaders; allocates group tasks; organises the seating arrangement, draws the plan the seating arrangement of the room; determines the competences, social skills, values to be developed /addressed in the group learning*).
4. **When you are doing group work, do teachers guide you to learn from each other?** (*If yes, Interrogate for the subjects and for the accepted steps and guidance as informed by literature like; Does he/she provide all the relevant guidelines and steps for group learning and interaction at the appropriate time, state the time allocation for the respective steps, state the roles the respective leaders are expected to perform so as to encourage individual learner's participation, encourage group members to; take turns to listen to others, share ideas and clarify each other's answers.*
5. **Do teachers monitor learners' group work activities? If yes, please mention and describe what teachers support learners to do when monitoring the learning in groups/doing group work?** (*If yes, in which subjects and interrogate for the expected forms of support as informed by literature like ensuring that; he/she trains the learners on how to behave in group learning, learners participate at individual and group levels, sharing of ideas, performance of roles by leaders like the; chairpersons, secretaries, time keepers, encouragers, learners follow the respective guidelines, steps and time allocated for doing tasks at individual and group levels and interacting with others*).
6. **Do teachers give comments on learners' performance in group learning? If yes, please mention and explain what teachers comment on/assess** (*Interrogate for when this is done and for the expected answers informed by literature like; content accuracy, performance of social skills and values. Encourage the respondent to give reasons for each answer*).
7. **Are there learners in the groups you belong to who do not participate in the group work?** (*If yes, probe who they are and why they are not active?*
8. **Do your activities in the group allow all the learners to participate in all discussions?** (*Probe for the reasons of the answers given*).

9. **Does learning in groups encourage you to learn?** (*Give reasons for your answer. Illustrate it with examples where possible.*)
10. **What do members in your group do to help you learn better?** (*Give some examples.*)
11. **What do you do to help other children in your group learn better?** (*Give some examples.*)

**SECTION B: Sub-Section II: LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES  
TOWARDS GROUP LEARNING**

12. **What do think about group learning?** (*Give reasons for your answer? Ensure that the respondent provides responses for learning aspects. The respondent is encouraged to articulate if she /he thinks group leaning benefits the individual and group learning if his/her response is a positive one, encourage them to say what they like and do not like about learning in groups.*)
13. **What do think about the group sizes used for group learning in your classes?** (*Probe for benefits, challenges and experiences/illustrations and reasons for the answers.*)
14. **What is your perspective about the different kinds/types of groups used in group learning**
15. (*Probe for the likes and dislikes with reference to; permanent; varying groups, small and large sized groups? Encourage the respondent to give reasons for each answer.*)
16. **In your opinion, in what ways can learners be supported to benefit more from the group learning methods** (*Encourage the respondent to explain this with reference to any challenges mentioned in the earlier submissions.*)

### Appendix 3

#### DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

**Study title: Exploring Teachers' Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda**

**Demographic information:**

Date:.....Time:

.....

School:.....Subject:.....

..... Teacher's Name .....

Tel: ..... Class: .....No. of boys:

..... No. of Girls: .....

No. of Learners with disability: .....Sex:

..... Qualification:

.....

**Class: P.5**

**Type of document: LESSON PLAN**

	<b>Topic:</b> Print Media <b>Sub-topic:</b> Print media <b>Lesson Aspect:</b> Comprehension (Dialogue) <b>Skills:</b> Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.		
	<b>ASPECT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>COMMENTS/QUESTION/ REFLECTION</b>
1.	Group learning method(s).		
2.	Group learning strategies.		
3.	Alignment of the Group Learning Strategies (GLSs) with the lesson's competencies.		
4.	Alignment of the GLSs with the lesson's social skills.		
5.	Alignment of the GLSs with the lesson's Social values.		
6.	Activities that the learners will do in groups.		
7.	Guidelines for learning in groups.		
8.	Steps for learning groups.		
9.	Time frame for group activities.		
10.	Feedback/rewards for learning in groups.		

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year of publication:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 4**

**OBSERVATION CHECKLIST**

**Study title: Exploring Teachers’ Implementation of Group Learning  
Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda**

**Demographic information:**

Date:.....Time: .....  
 School:.....Subject: ..... Teacher’s Name .....Tel: .....  
 ..... Class: .....  
 No. of boys: ..... No. of Girls: .....  
 No. of Learners with disability: .....Sex: .....  
 Qualification: .....

	<b>REFLECTIVE NOTES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTIV E NOTES</b>	<b>COMMENTS/ REFLECTIONS/ QUESTIONS</b>
	<b>TEACHERS: Preparation for group learning (Pre- observation phase).</b>		
1.	Identifying learners as individuals depending on strength weaknesses, interests, age, skills.		
2.	Identifying the; CL structures, content concepts, tasks, activities, materials, social skills and values to be developed/done/used in the group learning		
3.	Deciding how long the groups will work together (time frame) Permanent/temporary groups.		
4.	Organizing seating plans; for easy interaction among members.		
5.	Assigning group; names, colours or numbers.		

6.	Planning the arrangement of the room for the upcoming group oriented tasks.		
7.	Preparing materials for distribution to the group.		
8.	Assign leadership roles to the group members.		
9.	Trains the learners/demonstrate/ allow them practice these roles before setting the group (during the first lessons of the year or at the beginning of the term).		
10.	Devise a way of eliminating groans and complaints from high achievers and socially popular learners who may not approve of the composition of their group.		
	<b>Implementation of Group Learning (Observation phase)</b>		
11.	Teacher uses the group methods in the lesson (Think-pair share groups, small group discussions, plenary session group).		
12.	The teacher forms manageable groups (2-8 members), which can be adjusted accordingly and for easy interaction among members (depending on the number of learners in the class).		

13.	At what point in the lesson is group learning used? (Introduction, sharing or conclusion phase/ or all?).		
14.	The teacher jointly names the different learning groups with the learners.		
15.	The teacher explains the group interaction guidelines and steps, (for example; contributing to the group effort; respecting and listening to other group members; helping other group members; and asking the teacher for help only if it is a question of everyone in the group).		
16.	The teacher allocates time frames for the different group activities, (for example, time for working alone, sharing individual answers/contributions with the group/pair-mate, plenary session, etc).		
17.	The teacher assigns work among learners in the group to enable each group member to participate (e.g the Think-pair/group share).		
18.	The teacher rewards groups for cooperation levels among other performance aspects required of the groups.		

19.	The teacher moves around each group giving support (in terms of; clarifying, guiding, encouraging and observing individual participation in the group).		
20.	The teacher takes note of learners not participating in the group task and activities (probably due to hunger, timidity, etc).		
21.	The teacher does not answer learners' group questions unless the group members are unable to resolve the issue by themselves.		
22.	During the group activity the teacher asks general questions and makes general remarks to ensure alertness and participation of the learners. (The teacher reminds group leaders to enhance group participation by each member, etc).		
	<b>Feedback back in group learning (Assessment phase)</b>		
23.	Teacher invites each group to present their work to the whole class.		
24.	The teacher allows peer assessment to mark/ correct and analyze individual performance.		
25.	Teacher allows learners to critique		

	themselves (other groups' performance).		
26.	Teacher evaluates each group's performance/product judged against a certain standard reflecting degree of learning (groups that were the; quickest, neatest, most creative group, most interactive, etc.)		
27.	The teacher plans for the next lesson's learning in groups and identifies better ways of doing it together with the learners.		
28.	The teacher carries out lesson evaluation assessment in groups (Group questions and answers; Group written exercise; Group demonstration).		

**Appendix 5**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS**

**Study title: Exploring Teachers' Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda**

**Researcher's Name: Gloria Geria Reg No: 16/U/13221/GDED/PE**

Dear Teacher,

I am conducting a qualitative exploratory case study as part of my Doctoral research at Kyambogo University. The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of implementing group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. Your participation as a teacher in this research is highly valued.

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to the knowledge and understanding of effective strategies in forming groups to promote group learning in primary schools. Your insights and experiences will help inform future educational practices and enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Uganda.

Participation in this research is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly maintained, and any information you provide will be used solely for research purposes.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to interview questions related to your experiences and perceptions of implementing group learning strategies in your classroom. The interview will be audio-recorded for accuracy and later transcribed for analysis. Your identity will be kept confidential, and any personal identifiers will be removed from the transcripts to ensure anonymity.

Your involvement in this study will require approximately 40 to 60 minutes of your time. However, please note that you are free to end the interview at any point if you feel uncomfortable or if you wish to discontinue your participation.

By signing below, you indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this research. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me at +256 772 460021.

Thank you for considering participation in this study and for your valuable contribution to educational research.

.....

**Participant's Signature**

**Date.....**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR  
CHILDREN’S CARETAKERS**

**Study title: Exploring Teachers’ Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda**

**Researcher's Name: Gloria Geria Reg No: 16/U/13221/GDED/PE**

Dear Guardian/Caretaker,

Your child has been selected to participate in a qualitative exploratory case study as part of a Doctoral research project conducted by Gloria Geria at Kyambogo University. The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of implementing group learning in selected primary schools in Mityana District, Uganda. Your child's participation is highly valued and important for the success of this research.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to refuse or withdraw your child's participation at any time without any negative consequences. Your child's anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly maintained, and any information collected will be used solely for research purposes.

If you agree to allow your child to participate, they will be involved in interviews or focus group discussions related to their perceptions and experiences of group learning in their school. The discussions will be conducted in a safe and supportive environment, adhering to ethical guidelines and ensuring the well-being of your child.

Your child's participation will require approximately 40 to 60 minutes of their time. However, please be assured that their involvement in this study will not interfere with their regular academic activities.

By signing below, you indicate your voluntary agreement to allow your child to participate in this research. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me at +256 772 460021. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you for your records.

Thank you for considering your child's participation in this study and for supporting educational research.

.....

**Guardian/Caretaker's Signature**

**Date.....**

## Appendix 7

### EKIWANDIIKO KY'OMUZADDE EKY'OKUKKIRIZA OMWANA OKWETABA MU KUKUBAGANYA EBIROWOOZO OKWO MU BIBINJA - ABAYIZI

#### (PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

<b>Omutwe gw'Okunoonyereza</b>	<b>Exploring Teachers' Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda</b>
<b>Omunoonyereza</b>	<b>Ms. Gloria Geria, Kyambogo University. Email:geriagloria@gmail.com</b>
<b>Ataddemu Ssente</b>	<b>Student sponsored</b>
<b>Version n'ennaku z'omwezi</b>	<b>Version #1, April 2024</b>

#### 1. Ennyanjula

Erinnya lyange nze Gloria Geria. Nga nkola okunoonyereza okwekkenneenya enkola ey'abaana okuyigirizibwa nga bali mu bibinja mu masomero ga pulayimale. Olw'okusomoozebwa okutuukiddwaako mu nkola ey'abaana okuyigirizibwa nga bali mu bibinja naddala mu Uganda esinga okwesigama ku nsomesa eyeetoololera ku musomesa, okunoonyereza kuno n'olwekyo kugenderera okuzuula enteekateeka ezikozesebwa abasomesa mu kutondawo ebibinja okubasobozesa okuyigiriza abaana nga bali mu bibinja mu masomero ga pulayimale amalondemu, okwekkenneenya n'okutegeera endowooza z'abasomesa ezikwaata ku kuteeka mu nkola okuyigiriza abaana okwo mu bibinja mu masomero ga pulayimale mu Uganda; okunoonyereza n'okwekkaanya endowooza n'ebintu abayizi bye bayiseemu mu nkola ey'okugirizibwa nga bali mu bibinja mu masomero ga pulayimale abiri (2) agaloneddwa mu mu Uganda.

Okunoonyereza kukolebwa Ms. Gloria Geria, omuyizi ku Ssetendekero e Kyambogo ng'ali ku misomo gye egya PhD mu By'enjigiriza.

## 2. Background and rationale for the study Ensibuko ne ‘rationale’ y’okunoonyereza

Okunoonyereza kufunye embavu okuva ku maanyi ageeyongedde agakwaata ku nteekateeka ez’eby’enjigiriza ebirimu okukolera awamu n’abantu abalala mu by’enjigiriza bya pulayimale, naddala okuteeka mu nkola emitendera egy’okuyigiriza abaana mu bibinja.

Kugenderera okunoonyereza ku nkola ez’enjawulo abasomesa ze bakozesa mu kutondawo n’okukubiriza ebibinja bino mu masomero ga pulayimale amalondemu agali mu Uganda, ng’essira liri mu disituliki ye Mityana. Nga kusimbye emirandira mu ‘constructivist theory’, okunoonyereza kuluubirira okutegeera endowooza z’abasomesa n’abayizi, ng’essira litereedwa ku bibiina bya pulayimale eyokutaano (P5), nga tutunuulidde omutendera gw’obukulu omwana gw’aliko, ebigobererwa mu kusomesa ebyakamalirizibwa, emyaka egisaanidde, n’obusobozi obw’okukola okunoonyereza. Mu kwekkenneenya ebintu ebityiddwaamu, okusoomoozebwa n’emiganyulo gy’okuyigiriza abaana nga bali mu bibinja, okunoonyereza kuluubirira okuwa endoowoza ez’omuzinzi ezisobola okulambika amakubo g’eby’enjigiriza ebirimu omulamwa n’okutumbula emiganyulo egiva mu by’enjigiriza mu masomera ga pulayimale mu Uganda.

<b>Ekibinja ky’Omwetabi</b>	<b>Omuwendo</b>
Abasomesa	8
Abayizi	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>

Kaakati, nja kukuyisa mu misoso gy’okunoonyereza kuno era biki bye tukwetaaza.

### 3. Lwaki nsabibwa okwetaba mu kunoonyereza?

Osabibwa okukkiriza omwana wo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno kubanga oli muzadde wa muyizi mu ssomero lino.

N’olwekyo, omwana wo ategeera nnyo okusoomoozebwa okukwaata ku kuyigiribwa okwo mu bibinja era ali mu kifo kirungi okutuubuulira oba nga kyandibadde kirowoozo kirungi, buzibu ki obuliwo bwe buba we buli, era na ngeri ki esinga ey’okuvvunuukamu obuzibu buno. N’olwekyo ajja kutuwa obubaka obw’omuwendu obujja okutumbula eby’enjigiriza singa oba owaddeyo olukusa omwano wo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno.

Mu kiseera ng'okunoonyereza kugenda mu maaso, omwana wo ajja kutekebwa mu bibinja by'abayizi abali wakati wa 8 – 10. Omugatte, okubuuzibwa kujja kukolebwa mu bibinja eby'okubaganyizaamu ebirowoozo bina (4). Tewali kiddibwaamu kituufu oba kikyaaamu. Buli omu ajja kusabibwa okwogera omu ku omu okukuuma eddembe.

**4. Bulabe ki obuli mu kunoonyereza?**

Okunoonyereza kuno tekuliimu mutendera gwonna guleeta buvune. N'olwekyo waliwo obulabe butono ddala obusuubirwa.

**5. Naaganyulwa ki mu kwetaba mu kunoonyereza?**

Tewali miganyulo gy'ofuna buteervu bw'oba owaddeyo olukusa olw'omwana wo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno. Wabula, ebinaazuulwa okuva mu kunoonyereza bijja kukozezebwa okulambika n'okuteekawo amateeka agatambuza enteekateeka y'eByenjigiriza, okukola ennongoosereza mu mateeka agamu agaliwo mu kiseera kino oba n'okugakyuusa ne gasikirwa amalala. N'olwekyo, kino kya kutumbula engaba y'obuweereza n'enkola ezikozesebwa mu mitendera gy'eby'enjigiriza.

**6. Naaliyirirwa olw'obulabe obw'engeri yonna obuli mu kunoonyereza?**

Omwana wo ajja kufiirwaayo obudde obusaamusaamu era ajja kutaataaganyibwaamu mu kiseera ng'ali mu kunoonyereza wabula ajja kuliyirirwa ne siringi za Uganda 20,000/=; ezijja okuweebwa omuzadde/amulabirira. Omwana wo era ajja kufuna eky'okulya n'eky'okunywa ekigonvu mu kiseera ky'okubuuzibwa ebibuuzo.

**7. Ekiseera kyenkana ki?**

Okubuuzibwa kusuubirwa okutwaala eddakiika wakati wa 45 – 60.

**8. Okwetaba kwange mu kunoonyereza kwa kyeyagalire?**

Okwetaba kw'omwana wo mu kunoonyereza kuno kwa kyeyagalire era ajja kwetaba mu kunoonyereza oluvannyuma lw'okufuna obubaka obumala obukwaata ku kunoonyereza. Osobola okusalawo obutakkiriza mwana wo kwetaba mu kunoonyereza oba okumujjumu ekiseera kyonna. Okusalwo kwo okugaana okwetabamu oba okujjumu omwana wo okuva mu kunoonyereza tekijja kukosa muntu yenna ku mmwe.

**9. Waliwo eby'okulondako ebirala bwe mba seetabye mu kunoonyereza kuno?**

Tewali bya kulondako birala bw'olondawo obutawaayo lukusa eri omwana wo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno.

**10. Waliwo eby'okusasula ebyekuusa ku kunoonyereza kuno?**

Tewali kusasula kwonna okwekuusa ku kwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno.

**11. Ebyaama n'obubaka obunkwatako bikuumibwa bitya mu kunoonyereza?**

Bw'osalawo okuwaayo olukusa eri omwana wo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno, obubaka obukwaata ku mwana wo bujja kuumibwa nga bwa kyaama nga tukakasa nti tewali bantu batalina lukusa bajja kubutuukako. Ekyokubiri, obubaka bujja kukozezebwa ku lw'okunoonyereza kwokka tewali kintu kirala. Omwana wo taja kubuuzibwa bibuuzo bijja kwasanguza ebikwogerako oba ebimwogerako okugeza amannya oba ekifo we mubeera. Wabula, ebyogera ku mwana wo bijja kusigala nga tebimanyiddwa mu kiseera kyonna eky'okunoonyereza era ebizuuliddwa bikuumibwe mu 'duloowa' etatuukako bulabe era esibiddwa ekiseera kyonna.

**12. Nsobola okuva mu kunoonyereza ekiseera kyonna?**

Ekiseera kyonna, osobola okujja omwana wo okuva mu kwetaba mu kunoonyereza bw'oba oyagadde. Okwetaba kw'omwana wo mu kunoonyereza kwa kyeyagalire ddala. Singa olw'ensonga yonna osalawo okugaana oba okujjaye okwetaba kw'omwana wo, tewali buzibu eri okusalwo okwo. Singa omwana wo awulira nga talina mirembe mu kuddamu ebibuuzo ebimu, wa ddembe okuntegeeza okutusobozesa okusalawo oba tweyongerayo n'okumubuuzza oba nedda.

**13. Nkuumibwa ntya mu kiseera ng'okunoonyereza kugenda mu maaso?**

Bw'omala okuwaayo olukusa eri omwana wo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza, okunoonyereza kutaddewo enteekateeka ezikakasa nti eddembe n'obubaka eby'omwana wo bikuumibwa nga bya nkiso ate nga bya kyaama. Okugeza mu kiseera kyonna eky'okunoonyereza, okwetaba kw'omwana wo mu kunoonyereza kujja kuba kwa kyeyagalire, ajja kubeera n'eddembe okubuuzza ebibuuzo n'okuddibwaamu, era n'okuvaamu singa ggwe oba omwana musalawo okukikola.

**14. Okunoonyereza kwafunye olukusa okuva mu b'obuyinza abeetagisa?**

Okunoonyereza kwekennyezeddwa era ne kufuna olukusa okuva mu Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee (MUREC). Akakiiko ka MUREC katuulako abantu abalina obukugu obw'enjawulo; nga balina obumanyirivu obugazi mu kunoonyereza era obuvunaanyizibwa bwabwe kwe kukakasa nti okunoonyereza okwetabyemu abantu tekuleetawo bulabe, kuteefu, era nti okunoonyereza kutuukirizza emitendera gyonna egyetaagisa okukuuma enkiso n'ebyaama eri obubaka bw'omwana wo era ng'aweewba enkiso emusaanira. Akakiiko kawadde olukusa eri okunoonyereza.

**15. Nsobola ntya era wa we nsobola okufuna obubaka obusingawo?**

Singa obeera n'ensonga oba ebibuuzo byonna ebikwaata ku kwetaba kw'omwana wo mu kunoonyereza kuno, osabibwa okubeera n'eddembe okumbuuza kati. Singa obeera n'ebibuuzo ebikwaata ku kunoonyereza, tuukirira Akulira Okunoonyereza, Ms. Gloria Geria ku [geriagloria@gmail.com](mailto:geriagloria@gmail.com) oba ku ssimu +256 772 460021.

Ku nsomga ezikwaata ku ddembe lyo, obutatusibwaako bulabe, oba ebikwaata ku mbeera zo, osabibwa okutuukirira Sentebe wa MUREC, **Ms. Susan Nakubulwa** ku [murec@mildmay.or.ug](mailto:murec@mildmay.or.ug) oba ku ssimu; **0392174236**. Bajja kubeera basanyufu okuddamu ebibuuzo byo n'okukuwa obubaka obusingawo.

**16. Okufulumya ebizuuliddwa**

Amangu ddala ng'okunoonyereza kuno kukomekkereddwa, ebizuuliddwa bijja kugabanibwa n'abeetabi bonna n'abanoonyereza abalala okuyita mu kubyanjula mu nkiiko ennene. Wabula, ebyogera ku mwana wo bijja kusigala nga bya kyaama, era n'ebivuddemu bijja kuweebwaayo wamu mu mugatte.

**17. Lwaki nsabibwa okuteeka omukono oba ekinkumu ku kiwandiiko kino?**

Okuteeka omukono oba ekinkumu ku kiwandiiko kino kitegeeza:

- a. Otegezeddwa ekigendererwa ky'okunoonyereza kuno, emitendera egirimu, emiganyulo gy'okunoonyereza, n'obulabe obusobola okutuukawo.
- b. Oweereddwa omukisa okubuuza ebibuuzo nga tonnaba kuteeka mukono ku kiwandiiko kino.
- c. Okkiriza nga weeyagalidde omwana wo okwetaba mu mu kunoonyereza.

**18. Okkiriza omwana wo akwaatibwe ku katambi akakwaata amaloboozi?**

Yee

Nedda

**Sitatimenti Ewaayo Okukkiriza**

Ntegeede mu bujuvu biki ebigenda okukolebwa, obulabe, emiganyulo egirimu n'eddembe lyange erikwaata ku kunoonyereza kuno. Ntegedde nti okusalawo kwange okukkiriza omwana wange okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno tekijja kukyuusa kusoma kwa mwana wange. Mu kuzesa obubaka bunu, ebyogera ku mwana wange bijja kukwekebwa. Nkimanyi nti nsobola okusazaamu okwetaba kw'omwana wange ekiseera kyonna. Nkitedde nti mu kuteeka omukono ku kiwandiiko kino, sirina ddembe lya mwana wange

lyonna lye mpanyisa wabula kabonero akalaga nti ntegezeddwa ebikwaata ku kunoonyereza mwe nzikiririzza nga nneyagalidde omwana wange okwetaba.

**Kkopi y'ekiwandiiko kino ejja kumpeebwa.**

**Erinnya**

**ly'Omuzadde.....**

**Omukono/ekinkumu.....**

**Ennaku z'omwezi**

**(DD/MM/YY).....**

**Erinnya**

**ly'Omujulizi.....**

**Omukono.....**

**Ennaku (DD/MM/YY)**

.....

**Erinnya ly'omuntu afuna olukusa**

.....

**Omukono.....**

**Ennaku z'omwezi (DD/MM/YY)**

.....

## Appendix 8

### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

<b>Study title</b>	<b>Exploring Teachers' Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda</b>
<b>Investigator</b>	<b>Ms. Gloria Geria, Kyambogo University.</b> <b>Email:geriagloria@gmail.com</b>
<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Student sponsored</b>
<b>Version and date</b>	<b>Version #1, April 2024</b>

#### **Introduction**

My name is Gloria Geria, conducting a study to explore the implementation of Group learning in primary schools. Due to challenges registered with the group learning approach especially in Uganda where basically a teacher centered approach is commonly used, this study therefore seeks to identify strategies employed by teachers in forming groups to facilitate group learning in selected primary schools, examine and understand the practices of teachers regarding the implementation of group learning in primary schools in Uganda; investigate and analyze the practices and experiences of pupils in the context of group learning in two (2) selected primary schools in Uganda.

#### **Background and rationale for the study**

The research is motivated by the increasing emphasis on collaborative learning strategies in primary education, particularly the implementation of group learning methods. It seeks to investigate the varied approaches teachers employ in forming and facilitating groups in selected primary schools in Uganda, focusing on Mityana District. Anchored in constructivist theory, the study aims to understand the perspectives of teachers and pupils, with a specific focus on Primary 5 classrooms, considering the developmental stage, curriculum coverage, age appropriateness, and research feasibility. By exploring the experiences, challenges, and benefits of group learning, the research aims to provide nuanced insights that can inform effective instructional strategies and enhance learning outcomes in Ugandan primary schools.

<b>Participant category</b>	<b>Number</b>
Teachers	8
Learners	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>

Now, I will take you through what the study entails and what will require of you.

**Why am I being asked to participate in the study?**

You are being requested to participate in this study because you are a learner. Therefore, you have better understanding of the challenges concerning group learning and are in a good position to tell us whether it would be a good idea, what are the difficulties if any would be, and how best to overcome such difficulties. Therefore, you will provide valuable information that will improve learning if you participate in this study.

During the study, you will be grouped into groups of 8-10 learners. In total, 4 focus discussion group interviews will be conducted. There are no wrong or right answers. Each one will be asked to speak one at a time to maintain order.

**What risks are involved in the study?**

This study does not involve any invasive procedure Therefore, there are minimal anticipated risks.

**What will I benefit from participating in the study?**

There are no direct benefits if you decide to participate in this study. However, findings from the study will be used to inform and influence policy in the Education system, amend some of the existing policies or replace them. Therefore, this would greatly improve on service delivery and approaches used in the learning processes.

**Will I be compensated for any risk involved in the study?**

You will lose some time and will be inconvenienced as you participate in the study but will not be compensated. However, you will receive a snack and soft drink during the interview.

**What is the duration?**

The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

**Is my participation in the study voluntary?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you will only participate after receiving sufficient information about the study. You can decide not to participate in the study or to withdraw participation at any time. Your decision to decline participation or even withdraw participation will not affect your work in any way.

**Are there any alternatives to participating in this study?**

There are no alternatives if you choose not to participate in this study.

**Are there costs related to this study?**

There are no costs related to participating in this study.

**How is my privacy and information protected in the study?**

If you decide to participate in this study, your information will be kept private and confidential by ensuring no unauthorized persons get access to it.

Secondly, the information will strictly be used for the study but nothing else. You will not be asked for information that will reveal your identity such as your names or physical location. However, your identity will remain unknown throughout the study and findings kept in a safe drawer under key and lock.

**Can I withdraw my participation at any time?**

At any time, you can withdraw from the study if you wish. Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. If for any reason you decide to decline or withdraw participation, there is no problem with that decision. Should you feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions, please let me know so that we can decide whether to continue with the interview or not.

**How am I protected during the study?**

Once you decide to participate in the study, the study has put in measures to ensure that your rights, privacy, and confidentiality of information are kept private and confidential. For example, throughout the study, your participation will be voluntary, you will have the right to ask questions and receive answers, and to withdraw if you decide to do so.

### **Is the study approved by relevant authorities?**

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee (MUREC). The MUREC committee consists of a multi-disciplinary team; with wide experience in research and their responsibility is to ensure that research involving human participants does not cause harm, is safe, and that the study has taken the necessary measures to protect the privacy and confidentiality of your information and accords you privacy. The committee has approved the study.

### **How and where can I receive further information?**

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding your participation in this study, please feel free to ask me now. Should you have questions about the study, contact the Principal Investigator, **Ms. Gloria Geria** at [geriagloria@gmail.com](mailto:geriagloria@gmail.com) or +256 772 460021

For concerns about your rights, safety, and welfare, please contact the MUREC Chairperson, **Ms. Susan Nakubulwa** at [murec@mildmay.or.ug](mailto:murec@mildmay.or.ug) or **Phone; 0392174236**. They will be pleased to answer your questions and provide additional information.

### **Dissemination of findings**

Once this study is completed, the findings will be shared with all the participants and other researchers through a presentation at conferences. However, your personal identity will remain confidential, and the results will be reported in aggregate form.

### **Why am I being asked to sign or thumbprint on this form?**

Signing or thumb printing on this form means:

- d. You have been informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the study's benefits, and possible risks.
- e. You have been given the chance to ask questions before signing this document.
- f. You have voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

**19. Do you agree to be audio recorded?**

Yes

No

**Statement of assent**

I have comprehensively understood what is going to be done, the risks, the benefits involved and my rights regarding this study. I understand that my decision to participate in this study will not alter your learning processes. In the use of this information, my identity will be concealed. I am aware that I may withdraw at any time. I understand that by signing this form, I do not waive any of my legal rights but merely indicate that I have been informed about the research study in which I am voluntarily agreeing to participate.

**Name of Child**

.....

**Signature/thumbprint**

.....

**Date (DD/MM/YY)**

.....

**Name of witness**

.....

**Signature**

.....

**Date (DD/MM/YY)**

.....

**Name of person obtaining consent**

.....

**Signature**

.....

**Date (DD/MM/YY)**

.....

## Appendix 9

### EKIWANDIHO KY'OMWANA EKY'OKUKKIRIZA OKWETABA MU KUKUBAGANYA EBIROWOOZO OKWO MU BIBINJA

#### (ASSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

<b>Omutwe gw'Okunoonyereza</b>	<b>Exploring Teachers' Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda</b>
<b>Omunoonyereza</b>	<b>Ms. Gloria Geria, Kyambogo University. Email:geriagloria@gmail.com</b>
<b>Ataddemu Sente</b>	<b>Omuyizi ye nnyini</b>
<b>Version n'ennaku z'omwezi</b>	<b>Version #1, April 2024</b>

#### **Ennyanjula**

Erinnya lyanze nze Gloria Geria. Nga nkola okunoonyereza okwekkenneeny enkola ey'abaana okuyigirizibwa nga bali mu bibinja mu masomero ga pulayimale. Olw'okusomoozebwa okutuukiddwaako mu nkola ey'abaana okuyigirizibwa nga bali mu bibinja naddala mu Uganda esinga okwesigama ku nsomesa eyeetoololera ku musomesa, okunoonyereza kuno n'olwekyo kugenderera okuzuula enteekateeka ezikozesebwa abasomesa mu kutondawo ebibinja okubasobozesa okuyigiriza abaana nga bali mu bibinja mu masomero ga pulayimale amalondemu, okwekkenneeny n'okutegeera endowooza z'abasomesa ezikwaata ku kuteeka mu nkola okuyigiriza abaana okwo mu bibinja mu masomero ga pulayimale mu Uganda; okunoonyereza n'okwekkaanya endowooza n'ebintu abayizi bye bayiseemu mu nkola ey'okugirizibwa nga bali mu bibinja mu masomero ga pulayimale abiri (2) agalondeddwa mu mu Uganda.

## 1. Ensibuko ne ‘rationale’ y’okunoonyereza

Okunoonyereza kufunye embavu okuva ku maanyi ageeyongedde agakwaata ku nteekateeka ez’eby’enjigiriza ebirimu okukolera awamu n’abantu abalala mu by’enjigiriza bya pulayimale, naddala okuteeka mu nkola emitendera egy’okuyigiriza abaana mu bibinja. Kugenderera okunoonyereza ku nkola ez’enjawulo abasomesa ze bakozeza mu kutondawo n’okukubiriza ebibinja bino mu masomero ga pulayimale amalondemu agali mu Uganda, ng’essira liri mu disituliki ye Mityana. Nga kusimbye emirandira mu ‘constructivist theory’, okunoonyereza kuluubirira okutegeera endowooza z’abasomesa n’abayizi, ng’essira litereedwa ku bibiina bya pulayimale eyokutaano (P5), nga tutunuulidde omutendera gw’obukulu omwana gw’aliko, ebigobererwa mu kusomesa ebyakamalirizibwa, emyaka egisaanidde, n’obusobozi obw’okukola okunoonyereza. Mu kwekkenneenya ebintu ebityiddwaamu, okusoomoozebwa n’emiganyulo gy’okuyigiriza abaana nga bali mu bibinja, okunoonyereza kuluubirira okuwa endoowoza ez’omuzinzi ezisobola okulambika amakubo g’eby’enjigiriza ebirimu omulamwa n’okutumbula emiganyulo egiva mu by’enjigiriza mu masomera ga pulayimale mu Uganda.

Ekibinja ky’Omwetabi	Omuwendo
Abasomesa	8
Abayizi	24
<b>Omugatte</b>	<b>32</b>

**Kaakati, nja kukuyisa mu misoso gy’okunoonyereza kuno era biki bye tukwetaaza.**

## 2. Lwaki nsabibwa okwetaba mu kunoonyereza?

Osabibwa okukkiriza okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno kubanga oli muyizi mu ssomero lino. N’olwekyo, otegeera nnyo okusoomoozebwa okukwaata ku kuyigirizibwa okwo mu bibinja era oli mu kifo kituufu okutuubuulira oba nga kyandibadde kirowoozo kirungi, buzibu ki obuliwo bwe buba we buli, era na ngeri ki esinga ey’okuvvunuukamu obuzibu buno. N’olwekyo ojja kutuwa obubaka obw’omuwendu obujja okutumbula eby’enjigiriza singa oba weetabye mu kunoonyereza kuno.

Mu kiseera ng’okunoonyereza kugenda mu maaso, ojja kuteekebwa mu bibinja by’abayizi abali wakati wa 8–10. Omugatte, okubuuzibwa kujja kukolebwa mu bibinja eby’okubaganyizaamu ebirowoozo bina (4). Tewali kiddibwaamu

kituufu oba kikyaamu. Buli omu ajja kusabibwa okwogera omu ku omu okusobola okukuuma eddembe.

### **3. Bulabe ki obuli mu kunoonyereza?**

Okunoonyereza kuno tekuliimu mutendera gwonna guleeta buvune. N’olwekyo waliwo obulabe butono ddala obusuubirwa.

### **4. Naaganyulwa ki mu kwetaba mu kunoonyereza?**

Tewali miganyulo gy’ofuna buteervu bw’oba owaddeyo olukusa olw’omwana wo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno. Wabula, ebinaazuulwa okuva mu kunoonyereza bijja kukozezebwa okulambika n’okuteekawo amateeka agatambuza enteekateeka ye Byenjigiriza, okukola ennongoosereza mu mateeka agamu agaliwo mu kiseera kino oba n’okugakyuusa ne gasikirwa amalala. N’olwekyo, kino kya kutumbula engaba y’obuweereza n’enkola ezikozesebwa mu mitendera gy’eby’enjigiriza.

### **5. Naaliyirirwa olw’obulabe obw’engeri yonna obuli mu kunoonyereza?**

Ojja kufiirwaayo obudde obusaamusaamu era ojja kutaataaganyibwaamu mu kiseera ng’oli mu kunoonyereza wabula ojja kuliyirirwa. Wabula ojja kufuna eky’okulya n’eky’okunywa ekigonvu mu kiseera ky’okubuuzibwa ebibuuzo.

### **6. Ekiseera kyenkana ki?**

Okubuuzibwa kusuubirwa okutwaala eddakiika wakati wa 45 – 60.

### **7. Okwetaba kwange mu kunoonyereza kwa kyeyagalire?**

Okwetaba kwo mu kunoonyereza kuno kwa kyeyagalire era ojja kwetaba mu kunoonyereza oluvannyuma lw’okufuna obubaka obumala obukwaata ku kunoonyereza. Osobola okusalawo obuteetaba mu kunoonyereza oba okuvaamu ekiseera kyonna. Okusalwo kwo okugaana okwetabamu oba okuvaamu tekijja kukosa mirimu gyo mu ngeri yonna.

### **8. Waliwo eby’okulondako ebirala bwe mba seetabye mu kunoonyereza kuno?**

Tewali bya kulondako birala bw’olondawo obuteetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno.

### **9. Waliwo eby’okusasula ebyekuusa ku kunoonyereza kuno?**

Tewali kusasula kwonna okwekuusa ku kwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno.

**10. Ebyaama n’obubaka obunkwatako bikuumibwa bitya mu kunoonyereza?**

Bw’osalawo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno, obubaka bwo bujja kukuumbwa nga bwa kyaama nga tukakasa nti tewali bantu batalina lukusa bajja kubutuukako.

Ekyokubiri, obubaka bujja kukozezebwa ku lw’okunoonyereza kwokka tewali kintu kirala. Tojja kubuuzibwa bibuuzo bijja kwasanguza ebikwogerako okugeza amannya oba ekifo we mubeera. Wabula, ebikwogerako bijja kusigala nga tebimanyiddwa mu kiseera kyonna eky’okunoonyereza era ebizuuliddwa bikuumibwe mu ‘duloowa’ etatuukako bulabe era esibiddwa ekiseera kyonna.

**11. Nsobola okuva mu kunoonyereza ekiseera kyonna?**

Ekiseera kyonna, osobola okuva mu kunoonyereza bw’oba oyagadde. Okwetaba kwo mu kunoonyereza kwa kyeyagalire ddala. Singa olw’ensonga yonna osalawo okugaana oba okujjaye okwetaba kwo, tewali buzibu eri okusalwo okwo. Singa ofunamu embeera ey’obutawulira mirembe mu kuddamu ebibuuzo ebimu, nsaba obeera n’eddembe okuntegeeza okusobola okusalawo oba tweyongerayo n’okubuuza ebibuuzo oba nedda.

**12. Nkuumbwa ntya mu kiseera ng’okunoonyereza kugenda mu maaso?**

Bw’omala okusalawo okwetaba mu kunoonyereza, okunoonyereza kutaddewo enteekateeka ezikakasa nti eddembe n’obubaka bwo bikuumibwa nga bya nkiso ate nga bya kyaama. Okugeza mu kiseera kyonna eky’okunoonyereza, okwetaba kwo mu kunoonyereza kujja kuba kwa kyeyagalire, ojja kubeera n’eddembe okubuuza ebibuuzo n’okuddibwaamu, era n’okuvaamu singa osalawo okukikola.

**13. Okunoonyereza kwafunye olukusa okuva mu b’obuyinza abeetagisa?**

Okunoonyereza kwekennyezeddwa era ne kufuna olukusa okuva mu Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee (MUREC). Akakiiko ka MUREC katuulako abantu abalina obukugu obw’enjawulo; nga balina obumanyirivu obugazi mu kunoonyereza era obuvunaanyizibwa bwabwe kwe kukakasa nti okunoonyereza okwetabyemu abantu tekuleetawo bulabe, kuteefu, era nti okunoonyereza kutuukirizza emitendera gyonna egyetaagisa okukuuma enkiso n’ebyaama eri obubaka bwo era ng’oweewba enkiso ekusaanira. Akakiiko kawadde olukusa eri okunoonyereza.

**14. Nsobola ntya era wa we nsobola okufuna obubaka obusingawo?**

Singa obeera n’ensonga oba ebibuuzo byonna ebikwaata ku kwetaba kwo mu kunoonyereza kuno, osabibwa okubeera n’eddembe okumbuuza kati. Singa obeera n’ebibuuzo ebikwaata ku kunoonyereza, tuukirira Akulira

Okunoonyereza, Ms. Gloria Geria ku [geriagloria@gmail.com](mailto:geriagloria@gmail.com) oba ku ssimu +256 772 460021.

Ku nsonga ezikwaata ku ddembe lyo, obutatuusibwaako bulabe, oba ebikwaata ku mbeera zo, osabibwa okutuukirira Sentebe wa MUREC, **Ms. Susan Nakubulwa** ku [murec@mildmay.or.ug](mailto:murec@mildmay.or.ug) oba ku ssimu; **0392174236**. Bajja kubeera basanyufu okuddamu ebibuuzo byo n'okukuwa obubaka obusingawo.

### 15. Okufulumya ebizuiliddwa

Amangu ddala ng'okunoonyereza kuno kukomekkereddwa, ebizuiliddwa bijja kugabanibwa n'abeetabi bonna n'abanoonyereza abalala okuyita mu kubyanjula mu nkiko ennene. Wabula, ebyogera ku mwana wo bijja kusigala nga bya kyaama, era n'ebivuddemu bijja kuweebwaayo wamu mu mugatte.

### 16. Lwaki nsabibwa okuteeka omukono oba ekinkumu ku kiwandiiko kino?

Okuteeka omukono oba ekinkumu ku kiwandiiko kino kitegeeza:

- Otegezeddwa ekigendererwa ky'okunoonyereza kuno, emitendera egirimu, emiganyulo gy'okunoonyereza, n'obulabe obusobola okutuukawo.
- Oweereddwa omukisa okubuuza ebibuuzo nga tonnaba kuteeka mukono ku kiwandiiko kino.
- Okkiriza nga weyagalidde okwetaba mu mu kunoonyereza.

### 7. Okkiriza okwaatibwe ku katambi akakwaata amaloboozi?

Yee

Nedda

### Sitatimenti Ewaayo Okukkiriza

Ntegeede mu bujuvu biki ebigenda okukolebwa, obulabe, emiganyulo egirimu n'eddembe lyange erikwaata ku kunoonyereza kuno. Ntegedde nti okusalawo kwange okukkiriza okwetaba mu kunoonyereza kuno tekijja kukuusa nteekateeka ya kusoma kwange. Mu kukozeza obubaka buno, ebinjogerako bijja kukwekebwa. Nkimanyi nti nsobola okusazaamu okwetaba kwange ekiseera kyonna. Nkitedde nti mu kuteeka omukono ku kiwandiiko kino, sirina ddembe lyange lyonna lye mpanyisa wabula kabonero akalaga nti ntegezeddwa ebikwaata ku kunoonyereza mwe nzikiririzza okwetaba nga nneyagalidde.

**Erinnya ly'Omwana**

.....

**Omukono/ekinkumu**

.....

**Ennaku z'omwezi(DD/MM/YY)**

.....

**Erinnya ly'omujulizi**

.....

**Omukono**

.....

**Ennaku z'omwezi (DD/MM/YY)**

.....

**Erinnya ly'omuntu afuna olukusa**

.....

**Omukono**

.....

**Ennaku z'omwezi (DD/MM/YY)**

.....

**Appendix 10**


**CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION**

**K FOUR AGENCY LTD**  
P. O. BOX 6984, Kampala  
17kms, Kampala – Entebbe  
TEL: +256 782 440674; +256 702 078659  
Email: dorakiwanuka@gmail.com; [kfouragency@gmail.com](mailto:kfouragency@gmail.com)

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: KFAL/CF/Lug/May/2024  
10<sup>th</sup> /May/2024

**CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION**

I, **NAKKAZI DOROTHY KIWANUKA**, of K FOUR AGENCY LTD, certify that the **Luganda** translation of the Assent Form for Focus Group Discussions, Version #1 April 2024, of the study, 'Exploring the Implementation of Group Learning In Primary Schools: A Case Of Selected Primary Schools In Mityana District', is a **true and correct** translated version of the English Assent Form for Focus Group Discussions, Version #1 April 2024 of the same study.

<b>SIGNATURE OF PERSON PROVIDING CERTIFICATION:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
	10 <sup>th</sup> /May/2024
<b>INSTITUTION:</b>	<b>TITLE:</b>
K FOUR AGENCY LTD	TRANSLATOR

Appendix 11

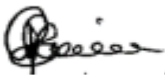
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Version 1 Date: April 2023	
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN</b>	
<p><b>Exploring Teachers’ Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda</b></p>	
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	Ms. Gloria Geria
<b>Outline of study activities to be carried out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pre-study:</b> We will seek administrative clearance from the administrators of each school.</li> <li>• Site initiation visits will be done on all study sites with engagement of the study team.</li> <li>• Study participants will be randomly selected.</li> <li>• <b>During the study:</b> Quantitative data collection will be through a pre-coded and open-ended questionnaire.</li> <li>• For qualitative research, a discussion guide shall then be used to interview the participant preferably at a quiet place that will enable them to express themselves.</li> <li>• Any participant who has a query about the project can address these issues with Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee.</li> <li>• <b>At study closure;</b> Participants will be invited for dissemination of study results.</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives to be achieved</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To identify the strategies employed by teachers in forming groups to facilitate group learning in selected primary schools</li> <li>2. To examine and understand the perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of group learning in primary schools in Uganda.</li> <li>3. To investigate and analyze the perceptions and experiences of pupils in the context of group learning in selected primary schools in Uganda.</li> </ol>
<b>The key community stakeholders to be involved.</b>	The study population will consist of teachers and learners

<p><b>What are the benefits of your project community engagement activities?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will increase awareness of the study to the school administrators</li> <li>• We will also be able to receive any concerns about the study that can be addressed beforehand.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The research team responsible for managing community engagement activities</b></p>	<p>Principal investigator Study coordinator Research assistants</p>
<p><b>Communication strategy for the engagement</b></p>	<p><b>Before the study engagement:</b> We will send emails to school administrators of selected study sites; emails will contain approved study documents and a letter requesting for administrative clearance.</p> <p><b>During the study:</b> The study team will have regular meetings with the PI to check study progress and ensure participants rights welfare and safety have been respected. An internal monitor will also make routine visits to the study sites.</p> <p><b>After the study:</b> Phone calls and or emails will be made to study participants and other stakeholders to attend a dissemination meeting.</p>
<p><b>Plan on mitigation, identification, documentation, and addressing of risks, conflicts as well as grievances resulting from community engagement efforts.</b></p>	<p>There is unlikely to be major foreseeable risks or and grievances resulting from community engagements since the study is more of a program evaluation.</p>
<p><b>How do you plan to ensure confidentiality during the community engagement plan activities?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will not be obtaining any identification information that would be traced back to the study participants.</li> <li>• All study documents will be kept under key and lock; also, a password encrypted computer will be used for safety.</li> <li>• Apart from the study team, only regulatory bodies will be allowed to access the study documents.</li> <li>• No participant identifying information will be disclosed in any publication or at any conference activities arising from the study.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do you have a budget for your community engagement activities?</b></p>	<p>The budget caters for reimbursement of participants' time and other consumables during the community engagement activities.</p>

Page 2 of 3

Version 1  
Date: April 2023

<p><b>Principal Investigator</b> Geria Gloria</p>	<p><b>Signature:</b></p> 	<p><b>Date: April 2023</b></p>
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Appendix 12


**COVID-19 RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**COVID -19 RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Version: 1 Date: 24 April 2023

**Exploring Teachers’ Implementation of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Central Uganda**

<b>Principal Investigator (PI)</b>	Ms. Gloria Geria
<b>Local/ Site PI</b>	Ms. Gloria Geria
<b>Contact Information</b>	Phone: +256 772 460021 Email: geriagloria@gmail.com
<b>Study sites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mityana District</li> </ul>
<b>Study objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify the strategies employed by teachers in forming groups to facilitate group learning in selected primary schools</li> <li>To examine and understand the perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of group learning in primary schools in Uganda.</li> <li>To investigate and analyze the perceptions and experiences of pupils in the context of group learning in selected primary schools in Uganda.</li> </ol>
<b>Brief outline of study activities</b>	The study team will obtain necessary approvals, collect data using questionnaires and interview guides.
<b>Assessed potential risks</b>	Contracting COVID-19 and Ebola among research study team and participants
<b>Potential consequences.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to attain study objectives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk Mitigation measures:</b></p> <p><b>Recruitment site</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disinfection of study area</li> <li>Identification of well-aerated outdoor space where data will be extracted from to minimize congestion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Research team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular washing of hands with soap and water or sanitizer before and after visiting the facilities, before and after study visit procedures and in between participants</li> </ul>	

<b>Principal Investigator</b> Geria Gloria	<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date: 24 April 2023</b>
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Appendix 13

INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM THE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL



P. O. BOX 1 KYAMBOGO  
Tel: 041 - 4286792 Fax: 256-41-220464  
Website: www.kyu.ac.ug

**Office of the Dean, Graduate School**

24<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**To Whom It May Concern**

Dear Sir/Madam,

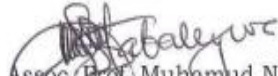
This is to introduce Ms. Gloria Geria Margaret Registration Number 16/U/13221/GDED/PE who is a student of Kyambogo University pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

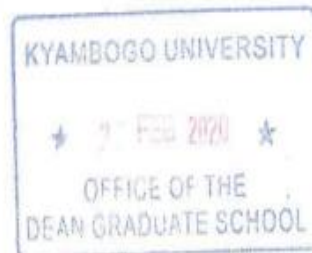
She intends to carry out a research on “**Exploring the Implementation of Group Learning in Primary Schools: A Case of Selected Primary Schools in Mityana District**” as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

We therefore kindly request you to grant her permission to carry out this study in your institution.

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.


Yours sincerely,

  
Assoc. Prof. Muhamud N. Wambede  
**DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL**



## Appendix 14

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM THE DEAN, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

  
**KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY**  
P. O. BOX 1 KYAMBOGO  
Tel: 041 - 4286792 Fax: 256-41-220464  
Website: www.kyu.ac.ug  
**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**  
**OFFICE OF THE DEAN**

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15<sup>th</sup> February 2023

The Chairperson  
Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee (MUREC)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: REQUEST TO REVIEW THE PROPOSAL OF MS. GLORIA MARGARET GERIA**

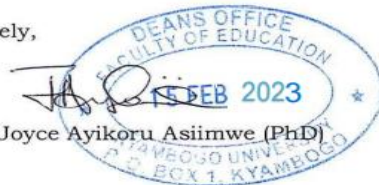
This is to confirm that the above named person is a PhD student at Kyambogo University, pursuing a programme leading to the award of a PhD in Education, of Kyambogo University. Her research topic is *“Exploring the Implementation of Group Learning In Primary Schools: A Case of Selected Primary Schools in Mityana District”*

This Research proposal has been submitted and approved at the Departmental and School Higher Degrees Committees. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the 51<sup>st</sup> Graduate Board, her request for full admission and subsequently to start collecting data was approved.

The purpose of this communication is therefore, to request your Research Ethics Committee to consider her application and review her proposal as a requirement to enable her conduct the research study for her PhD.

Yours sincerely,

  
Assoc. Prof. Joyce Ayikoru Asiimwe (PhD)  
**DEAN**



Appendix 15

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM THE  
EDUCATION OFFICER - MITYANA DISTRICT**

TELEPHONE MAYOR: 0752908383  
TELEPHONE TOWN CLERK: 0772496926  
TEL DEPUTY TOWN CLERK: 0782019685  
TEL PRINCIPAL EDUCATION OFFICER 0772510259  
Website: [www.mityanamc.go.ug](http://www.mityanamc.go.ug)  
Email: [mityanamcservicedesk@gmail.com](mailto:mityanamcservicedesk@gmail.com)



**MITYANA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
OFFICE OF THE  
PRINCIPAL EDUCATION OFFICER  
P.O. BOX 140,  
MITYANA - UGANDA

IN ANY CORRESPONDENCE ON  
THIS SUBJECT PLEASE QUOTE REF: MMC/

**Date: 05/03/2024**

To all Headteachers,  
Government and Private Primary schools,  
Mityana Municipal Council.

**RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER.**

This is to introduce M/s. Gloria Geria of Kyambogo University, she is undertaking her PHD research based on "An Exploration of Group Learning Pedagogy in Primary Schools in Mityana District: Teachers' Practices".


In view of this, avail all the necessary support and co-operation that will help her conduct her research at your school.



**SSALI GERALD**  
Municipal Education Officer

## Appendix 16

### APPROVAL LETTER, MILD MAY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE



## Research Ethics Committee (MUREC)

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30 May 2024

**Gloria Geria**  
Principal Investigator

**Type:**  Initial Review  
 Expedited  
 Protocol Amendment  
 Continuing Review  
 Other, Specify

Dear Gloria,

**RE: RESEARCH APPROVAL: #REC REF 1003-2022 "EXPLORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS"**

Thank you for submitting this application for approval of the above referenced protocol to MUREC.

I am glad to inform you that approval is hereby given to conduct the study; this approval is given following your exhaustive responses to initial comments raised by MUREC. The approval is for one Year, effective 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and will expire on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

**As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:**

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the **MUREC** for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. The MUREC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or other must be submitted to the **MUREC**. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for **MUREC** review.

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<p>Location/Correspondence Mildmay, Uganda Plot 27, Lweza P.O Box 24985, Kampala</p>	<p>Communication Tel: 0392174236 Email: murec@mildmay.or.ug www.mildmay.or.ug</p>
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4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The MUREC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Regulations require review of an approved study not less than once per 12-month period. **Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the MUREC three months prior to the above expiration date of [30<sup>th</sup> May 2025] to continue the study beyond the approved period.** Failure to submit a continuing review application in timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.
6. Approval from the National Drug Authority should be sought where applicable.
7. You are required to register the research protocol with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) for final clearance to undertake the study in Uganda.

The following is the List of all documents approved in this application by the MUREC:

SN	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1	Protocol	English	2.0	13 January 2023
2	Assent Form for Focus Group Discussions	English	2.0	13 January 2023
3	Assent Form for Focus Group Discussions	Luganda	2.0	13 January 2023
4	Parental consent form for Focus Group Discussions-Learners.	English	2.0	13 January 2023
5	Parental consent form for Focus Group Discussions- Learners	Luganda	2.0	13 January 2023

Yours Sincerely



Mrs. Mary Odiit

Vice Chairperson



## Appendix 17

### APPROVAL LETTER, UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

*(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)*

Our Ref: SS3100ES

25 June 2024

GLORIA GERIA  
Kyambogo University  
Kampala

Re: Research Approval: EXPLORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GROUP LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF MITYANA DISTRICT

I am pleased to inform you that on 25/06/2024 the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above referenced research project. The Approval of the research project is for the period of 25/06/2024 to 25/06/2028.

Your research registration number with the UNCST is **SS3100ES**. Please, cite this number in all your future correspondences with UNCST in respect of the above research project. As the Principal Investigator of the research project, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. Keeping all co-investigators informed of the status of the research.
2. Submitting all changes, amendments, and addenda to the research protocol or the consent form (where applicable) to the designated Research Ethics Committee (REC) or Lead Agency for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. UNCST must be notified of the approved changes within five working days.
3. For clinical trials, all serious adverse events must be reported promptly to the designated local REC for review with copies to the National Drug Authority and a notification to the UNCST.
4. Unanticipated problems involving risks to research participants or other must be reported promptly to the UNCST. New information that becomes available which could change the risk/benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for UNCST notification after review by the REC.
5. Only approved study procedures are to be implemented. The UNCST may conduct impromptu audits of all study records.
6. An annual progress report and approval letter of continuation from the REC must be submitted electronically to UNCST. Failure to do so may result in termination of the research project.

Yours sincerely,

Hellen Opolot  
For: Executive Secretary  
**UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Please note that this approval includes all study related tools submitted as part of the application as shown below:

No.	Document Title	Language	Version Number	Version Date
1	Research tools	English	02	13 January 2023
2	Assent form	English	02	13 January 2023
3	Community Engagement plan	English	02	13 January 2023
4	Assent form	Luganda	02	13 January 2023
5	COVID-19 & EBOLA risk management plan	English	02	13 January 2023
6	Parental consent	English	02	13 January 2023
7	Parental consent	Luganda	02	13 January 2023
8	Project Proposal	English	02	13 January 2023
9	Approval Letter	English		
10	Administrative Clearance	English		

Yours sincerely,



Hellen Opolot

For: Executive Secretary

**UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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*LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE*

*Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda  
P.O. Box 6884  
KAMPALA, UGANDA*

*COMMUNICATION*

TEL: (256) 414 705500  
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EMAIL: [info@uncst.go.ug](mailto:info@uncst.go.ug)  
WEBSITE: <http://www.uncst.go.ug>

**Appendix 18**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE NOTIFICATION, UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL  
FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**



**Uganda National Council for Science and Technology**

*(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)*

Dear Ms. GERIA,  
23September

**23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024**

This is to notify you that your study application has been checked for completeness, and has met the minimum requirements for research clearance.

Your study application will be scheduled for review and the outcomes communicated to you in an email. Your study reference number is SS3100ES. Please, use this number for all your future correspondences with UNCST on this particular study.

Sincerely,



Dr. Christopher Ddamulira

For: Executive Secretary

**UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY**

LOCATION MAP OF MITYANA DISTRICT

