



Departamento de  
Teoría e Historia  
Económica

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**Título:** Peer effects in pairs: collaborative and individual tasks

**Sala:** E28

**Hora:** 12:30

**Abstract:** Most empirical studies of peer effects document strong positive correlations between an individual's outcome and those of their peers. We analyze (ability) peer effects on education outcomes focusing on a context where first year students from a Spanish University are randomly organized in pairs within their classroom in order to collaborate on activities throughout the semester. We focus on how the composition of the pair according to abilities determines academic achievements in that semester, where abilities are approximated by students' previous grades. We find that positive peer effects exist for the collaborative outcomes (e.g., for the activities realized in pairs during the semester), but negative peer effects exist for the individual outcome (i.e., the higher the ability of the partner, the lower one's score is in the final exam). This second finding is mainly due to the behavior of boys when interacting with another more able boy. One possible interpretation for this is that boys are discouraged to put effort in such cases as their partner becomes their reference point which is difficult to surpass.

