Group Dynamics

Teaching Strategy	Considerations for Online Teaching
Group work/discussions/ meetings	Along with low trust, mutual engagement can also be low when working online. Some online group members have reported a feeling of social isolation as well as a lack of personal connection to other learners and instructors when learning is online only (Ali et al., 2008).
	To foster participation and a group focus, group members can ask questions, assign each other roles to fulfill in the discussion (i.e.initiate by asking a question, summarize discussion) and mandate group work for some tasks (Ali et al., 2004; Perlman, Weston, & Gisel, 2005). For more ideas on getting the group engaged in learning see the Active Learning Online website (**http://www.acu.edu/cte/activelearning/online_main.htm**).
	To ensure good communication flow online, let students know where they can access updates, guidelines, evaluation requirements, etc. Also, review with group members how they can communicate with each other, both online and offline. Including a calendar with important dates can also be helpful (Blackboard Inc., 2007).
	Meet online via web-conferencing, or make use of an online discussion board. Many of these programs allow users to share resources and create documents collaboratively (University of British Columbia, n.d.). For example:
	• Sharing references and resources can be done through websites such as del.icio.lus (**http://delicious.com/**) and CiteULike (**http://www.citeulike.org/**).
	• Creating documents collaboratively using Google Docs (**http://www.google.com/google-d-s/ b1.html**), and Zoho Writer (**http://writer.zoho.com/ home?serviceurl=%2Findex.doc**).
	• Wikis can also be used for a shared workspace for resources, links and ideas. Thinkature (**http://thinkature. com/about/**) is another tool for creating a shared workspace.
Reflection / analysing observations	Reflections can be shared over email person to person. If you want to make reflection more collaborative and easy to share, consider setting up a blog using a web-based tool such as Blogger (**https://www.blogger.com/start**) to post and share ideas. This service also encourages dialogue by allowing viewers to post comments/replies.