KEY DIMENSIONS OF GROUP-BASED LEARNING

1. VENUE AND CLIMATE
   Checking that venues are suitable in terms of heating,
   lighting, etc.
   Trying to establish a congenial atmosphere in which
   students’ viewpoints and experiences are valued

2. AIMS AND PURPOSES
   Making sure that students understand:
   - the aims of the session(s)
   - how these relate to other parts of their course
   - what they can expect to achieve from the session

3. GROUND RULES
   Clarifying:
   - what is expected of students by way of preparation
   - when it is appropriate to raise or respond to
     question, or to challenge points made by others
   - what the role of the tutor/group leader is

4. PLANNING TASKS
   Devising tasks which:
   - are appropriate to the aims of the session(s)
   - offer an appropriate variety of learning experiences
   - are preceded by adequate briefing and guidance
     where appropriate (e.g. when students are required
     to make presentations to the group)

5. STRUCTURING AND SEQUENCING TASKS
   Ensuring that, where appropriate:
   - there are tasks early in the session(s) which enable
     all to be involved
   - the outcomes from one task lead into another
   - realistic time allocations for tasks are set and kept

6. LISTENING
   Being attentive to what is said by each member of
   the group
   Displaying a readiness to listen, as reflected both
   through verbal responses and body language

7. QUESTIONING
   Making use of a variety of questioning strategies (e.g.
   open, closed and reflective questions)
   Deploying these questioning strategies sensitively
   and flexibly

8. EXPLAINING AND CLARIFYING
   Giving students space to attempt tasks or problems
   before giving own explanations
   Being clear and succinct in own explanations
   Building students’ ideas into own explanations when given

9. ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION
   Encouraging all students in the group to contribute/
   to talk to each other as well as to the tutor
   Avoiding too dominant a role
   Intervening appropriately, (e.g. to restrain the
   vociferous, encourage the silent, defuse conflict,
   refocus on the topic)

10. RESPONDING TO STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS
    Addressing students by their preferred names
    Showing sensitivity to students as individuals (i.e. taking
    into account their backgrounds and prior knowledge)
    Providing constructive feedback to students who
    have made presentations to the group

11. CLOSING
    Making provision for:
    - summing up what has been achieved
    - establishing what might be necessary to follow up
      the session and consolidate what has been learnt

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION
    Monitoring what is going well in the sessions and
    what might be improved
    Providing opportunities for the group to review its
    overall effectiveness
    Evaluating the quality of work produced by individuals
    within the group or by the group as a whole (e.g. oral
    or poster presentations or written reports)