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Dr. Balasooriya is a lecturer at School of Public Health & Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, Australia. In his current position, he facilitates scenario groups in all courses of Phase 1 in the undergraduate medicine program, and teaches clinical skills to medical students at the Clinical Skills Centre. He is also a convenor of the Society & Health B course of the undergraduate medicine program, and a Portfolio Advisor for College C of Phase 1 medical students. He holds his PhD in Medical Education from University of New South Wales. He has obtained his bachelor's degree in Medicine and in Surgery from University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. His ongoing research aimed at further exploring the small group learning process.



### **Facilitation of collaborative learning: what works**

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#### **Abstract**

This paper explores a number of issues surrounding the management of group dynamics in collaborative learning settings in medical education at the University of New South Wales, Australia. Better management of group dynamics is increasingly being recognised as crucial for the success of inquiry-based curricula such as PBL. The findings presented in this paper provide a practical framework for the identification of common problems in group dynamics that can confront facilitators, as well as a range of strategies that have been found by experienced facilitators to be useful in managing these issues. The strategies are discussed within the conditions in which they have been found to be effective, and facilitators are alerted about the possible pitfalls associated with these strategies. Thus, the paper explores a key aspect of the collaborative learning and teaching process and is a starting point for developing quality teaching support.