

Comparing whole group discussions: Face-to-face vs. Online

Face-to-face whole group	Online whole group
Session is within a specific time period	Session can be synchronous in specific time or asynchronous in specific time period
One person speaks at a time	More than one person can post response at a time (and there may be duplicate thoughts/postings and repetition)
Group listens to one person at a time, in the order responses are made	Responses can be read at any point in time and in any order
Some students may not contribute (but may be assumed to be listening)	Some students may not contribute (and cannot be assumed to be reading posts)
Tutor can assume that all students have listened to all responses	Tutor cannot assume all students have read all posts
Discussion is not (normally) recorded	All posts and responses are recorded
Tutor closes and may summarise	Tutor (or student moderator) may close and summarise
Discussion may continue informally out of scheduled time with no record kept	Discussion may continue out of scheduled time and be recorded