Collaborative Activities for Online Courses

Activity	Description	Online Course Example
Case analysis	A detailed story of a real or realistic situation is introduced, along with a problem that learners can analyze and resolve.	Small groups of learners collaboratively analyze an injury case and identify measures that may be undertaken to prevent or reduce the damages from this type of injury.
Collaborative writing	Small groups of learners create a written deliverable.	The learners in the case analysis group write a joint position paper on the most promising measures for preventing and reducing damages from this type of injury.
Peer help	Learners post questions and call on the diversity of people resources to get help. The questions also provide the instructor with opportunities to assess problems and progress.	The course help discussion forum in the object-oriented programming course allows learners to post questions and get help from other learners and the instructor. As a result, questions are often answered quickly and creatively.
Knowledge base	Learners maintain a knowledge base to help them deal with typical problems encountered in the course content.	The intro-to-statistics course uses Web forms and a database to maintain a list of common issues and problems, and solutions for each of them.
Resource database	Learners find, share, tag, and maintain a list of favorite resources.	An online database has been created by the lead instructor for learners enrolled in the Web development certificate course. Learners in the program use, maintain, and add to it as part of their course activities.
Peer editing	Learners exchange draft versions of course deliverables (papers, Web sites, spreadsheets, etc.) and get feedback from each other in order to improve them.	Learners in a public health course write a paper on whether public health workers should advocate for the prevention of accidents (such as mandating motorcycle helmets). They share their papers with two other learners who provide feedback on the quality of their argument and writing.
Online discussions	Asynchronous dialogue is used for sharing and negotiating understanding.	A business law course includes two online discussion topics in the asynchronous course discussion forums each week. One discussion is initiated by the instructor. Another is initiated by one of the small groups that are formed at the beginning of the course.