

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCUSSION IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the problem of the importance discussion in developing learners' communicative skills. Also, there were given various group discussions for having successful interaction and some essential characteristics in achieving the goal of the learner.

Key words: skills, tool, motivation, interaction, learners' needs, evaluate, estimate, assess, discuss, gesture, voice, tone, team, group, peer.

Discussions of any sort are supposed to help us develop a better perspective on issues by bringing out diverse viewpoint. Whenever we exchange differing views on an issue, we get a clearer picture of the problem and are able to understand it. The understanding makes us better equipped to deal with the problem. This is precisely the main purpose of a discussion. The dictionary meaning of the word Group Discussion is to talk about a subject in detail. So, group discussion may refer to a communicative situation that allows its participants to express views and opinions and share with other participants. It is a systematic oral exchange of information, views and opinions about a topic, issue, problem or situation among members of a group who share certain common objectives. Group discussion is essentially an interactive oral process. The group members need to listen to each other and use voice and gesture effectively use clear language and persuasive style. The exchange of ideas in a group discussion takes place in a systematic and structured way. Each of the participants gets an opportunity to express his/her views and comments on the views expressed by other members of the group. Group discussion involves a lot of group dynamics, that is, it involves both -person to person as well as group to group interactions. Every group member has to develop a goal oriented or group oriented interaction. A participant needs to be aware of needs of other group

members and overall objectives of the discussion. Group discussion may be defined as – a form of systematic and purposeful oral process characterized by the formal and structured exchange of views on a particular topic, issue, problem or situation for developing information and understanding essential for decision making or problem solving.

There are several types of oral group communication. In public speaking the speaker is evaluated by the audience; however there is not much interaction between audience and speaker. Audience, for the most part would only listen to the speaker. In the interview, a panel of members would assess the candidate for the requirement of selection or promotion etc. In meetings, there are discussions on issues mentioned in the agenda. A chairperson conducts the meeting and controls and concludes the deliberations. Group Discussion differs from debate in nature, approach and procedure. Group discussion may help achieve group goals as well as individual needs. The examiner observes the personality traits of several candidates who participate in the group discussion.

Whether one is a student, a job seeker, a professional engineer or a company executive one needs effective group discussion skills. Students need to participate in academic discussions, meetings, classroom sessions or selection group discussion for admission to professional courses. Professionals have to participate in different meetings at the workplace. In all these situations, an ability to make a significant contribution to group deliberation and helping the group in the process of decision making is required. The importance of group discussion has increased in recent times due to its increasing role as an effective tool in a) problem solving; b) decision making; c) personality assessment. In any situation of problem, the perceptions of different people are discussed, possible solutions are suggested. The best option is chosen by the group. While taking a decision, the matter is discussed, analyzed, interpreted and evaluated. While using group discussion as a tool for personality assessment, a topic-a problem, a case - is given to the group consisting of eight to ten members seated in a circle.

The total time given for discussion is usually 30 minutes. Each candidate is expected to voice his opinion and offer counter arguments. The selection committee evaluates the candidates on the basis of their personality knowledge communication skills and leadership skills. Hence it is important to be able to take part in the group discussion effectively and confidently. Participants should know how to persuade their group members, how to reflect leadership qualities and how to make the group achieve its goal. For any group discussion to be successful, achieving group goal is essential. Following characteristics are necessary:

Having a clear objective: The participants need to know the purpose of group discussion, so they can concentrate during the discussion and contribute to achieving the group goal. An effective group discussion typically begins with a purpose stated by the initiator.

Motivated Interaction: When there is a good level of motivation among the members, they learn to subordinate the personal interests to the group interest and the discussions are more fruitful.

Logical Presentation: Participants decide how they will organize the presentation of individual views, how an exchange of the views will take place, and how they will reach a group consensus. If the mode of interaction is not decided, few of the members in the group may dominate the discussion and thus will make the entire process meaningless.

Cordial Atmosphere: Development of a cooperative, friendly, and cordial atmosphere avoids the confrontation between the group members.

Effective Communication skills: The success of a group discussion depends on an effective use of communication techniques. Like any other oral communication, clear pronunciation, simple language, right pitch are the prerequisites of a group discussion. Non-verbal communication has to be paid attention to since means like body language convey a lot in any communication.

Participation by all candidates: When all the members participate, the group discussion becomes effective. Members need to encourage each other in the group discussion.

Leadership Skills: Qualities like initiation, logical presentation, encouraging all the group members to participate, summarizing the discussion reflect the leadership qualities.

In any kind of group discussion, the aim is to judge the participants based on personality, knowledge, communicative ability to present the knowledge and leadership skills. Today team players are considered more important than individual contributors. Hence the potential to be a leader is evaluated and also ability to work in a team is tested. The evaluators generally assess the oral competence of a candidate in terms of team listening, appropriate language, clarity of expression, positive speech attitudes and adjustments, clear articulation, and effective non-verbal communication.

In a group discussion, greater the knowledge of the subject more confident and enthusiastic would be the participation. Participants need to have a fair amount of knowledge on a wide range of subjects. The discussion of the subject must be relevant, rational, convincing and appealing to the listeners. One needs to keep abreast with national and international news, political, scientific, economic, cultural events, key newsmakers etc. This has to be supplemented by one's own personal reasoning and analysis. People with depth and range of knowledge are always preferred by dynamic companies and organizations. The topics for group discussion tests may include interesting and relevant ideas pertaining to social, economic, political or environmental problems; controversial issues, innovations or case studies. To read daily newspapers, relevant magazines and periodicals, to watch news bulletins and informative programs on television are simple ways to gather the general knowledge. One can use the Internet to improve one's knowledge about recent developments in different areas. Internet is a valuable source to acquire information along with multimedia form. Subject

knowledge also includes the ability to analyze facts or information in a systematic way and to place them in the context of the framework of one's personal experiences. For the expertise in the group discussion, the only way is to practice wherever one can. The other members can evaluate the performance and give suggestions.

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