

Communication Skills: Lecture No. 20

Module 7

Lecture 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



In the previous lecture, you learnt about the importance of group discussion, especially in the globalized scenario, where educational institutes and MNC's compete to grab the best talent from any country for higher education or professional employment. You also understood how group discussion has become a mandatory tool in terms of eliminating poor candidates and selecting good candidates. Employers use GDs to identify certain significant personality traits

required for the organizations. Using GD, it is easy to perceive how a natural leader will emerge by restoring order from a disorderly situation.

In this lecture I will discuss the basic components of a GD, and you will come to know of the evaluation criteria by which the examiners or the employers will be actually assessing and selecting the candidates.

WHAT IS GD ALL ABOUT?



GD is all about co-ordination and co-operation. To be an effective coordinator, one needs to possess leadership qualities and management skills, both of which involve planning (time, procedure, etc.), conflict resolution skills, and harmonization. Management in a simple manner is defined as the art of getting work done by others without making them feel the discomfort of

it. A good coordinator knows how to make people work blissfully towards a common objective.

GD is also about co-operation. It is not only leadership qualities that will be checked in a group discussion but also one's ability to work in a team. One cannot be a leader all the time, one has to be a follower also. In fact, one should be a follower first, before becoming a leader. So, to be a follower does the person have the prerequisite skills? These skills will be checked under these co-operation abilities.

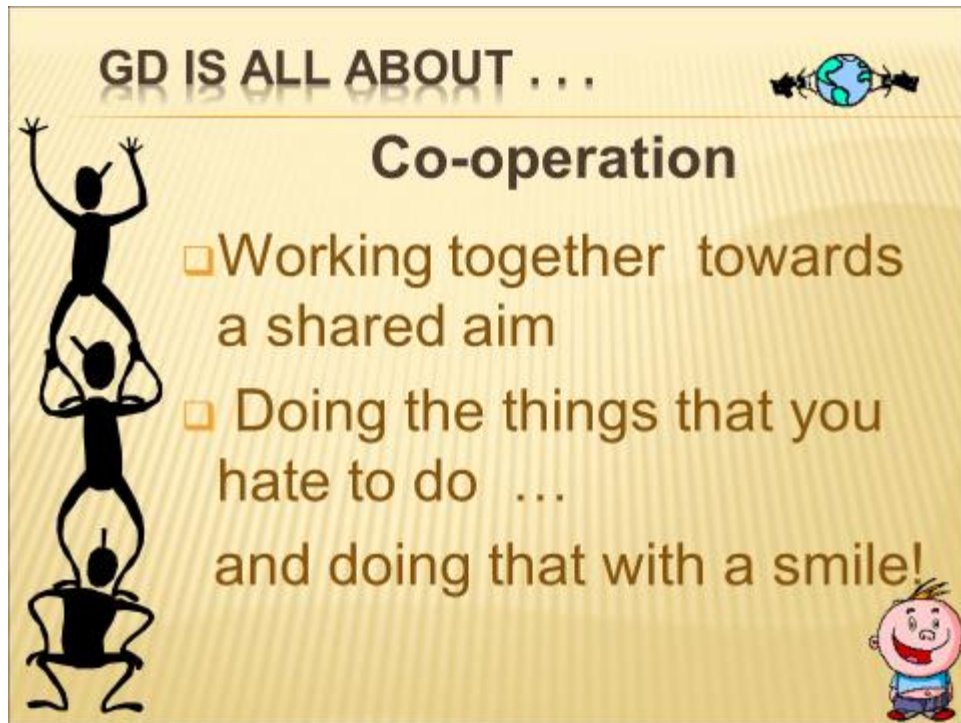
GD IS ALL ABOUT . . .

Co-ordination



- ❑ Leadership qualities
- ❑ Management skills
- ❑ Planning (time, procedure)
- ❑ Conflict-resolution skills/
harmonization

30



What is expected when we say co-operation? First and foremost, a candidate's inherent ability to work towards a shared aim. The shared aim here is to arrive at a consensus or come out with a solution within the stipulated time. And this definitely calls for cooperation skills. Cooperation is nothing but doing the things that you hate to do with a smile. This means even if your enemy competes with you in a GD, you have to be impersonal and you should not show that embittered feeling that is seething within you. If your rival comes out with a good suggestion, you need to acknowledge it. You should never let any personal enmity interfere in the general group decision making.

BENEFITS OF GROUP DISCUSSION



Group discussion offers certain benefits irrespective of whether one is trying to compete for a job. Practising group discussion increases motivation and persistence in learning. Two heads are better if they are coming out with better ideas, compared to a single one. In organizational setups if a decision is made by a single person, and if goes wrong, it will

cost millions. Besides, a cohesive group performs at high energy levels by mutually motivating its members. Mild group pressure also helps introverts to come out and perform better. Above all, group discussion helps in making individuals not to get distracted and focused on the given task.

Group discussion improves learning outcomes because learners must articulate what they know and do not know. They challenge their own assumptions and connect with each other in order to consolidate ideas. Thus, a misogynist who has firm-rooted belief about suppression of women, participates in a GD on women emancipation, but being open-minded, lets others challenge his assumptions, and being adaptable, ends up positively supporting the group consensus.

Overall, group discussion enhances communication skills. It's only when a person tries to communicate an idea, s/he knows how effective s/he is able to communicate, especially, in a group with participants of multiple mind-sets. GD facilitates empathy in communication. This means one can get into the shoes of others and perceive their viewpoints too. Actively participated, group discussion can help in changing individual values.

Now once you understood that GD has also some benefits apart from just selecting or eliminating a candidate for job situation, let me explain to you the basic components of a GD.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF A GD



- ❖ **4 Basic Components:**
- 1. **Leadership** [initiative, decision-making, planning, vision]
- 2. **Knowledge** [subject, current affairs, technical advancements]
- 3. **Communication Skills** [active listening, fluency, clarity, coherence, diction, enunciation, effectiveness]
- 4. **Personality Manifestation** [Soft skills, body language, positive outlook, pleasing mannerism]

The four basic components of a GD are leadership, knowledge, communication skills, and personality manifestation. Leadership traits include initiative, decision-making, planning, and vision. Knowledge implies thorough subject knowledge, keeping abreast of current affairs and technical advancements. Communication skills imply active listening, fluency, clarity, coherence, diction, enunciation and effectiveness. Finally, personality manifestation is perceived from soft skills, body language, positive outlook, and pleasing mannerism.

These basic components are used for evaluating the candidates. I conclude this lecture with the following tables which clearly demonstrate the evaluation criteria.

EVALUATION CRITERIA			
<i>Personality</i> 25	<i>Knowledge</i> 25	<i>Communication Skills</i> 25	<i>Leadership</i> 25
Dress/ Appearance	Depth	Active Listening	Initiative
Temperament/ Tone & Voice	Range	Fluency	Team Spirit
Gesture/ Body Language	Logical Thinking	Diction	Endurance/ Conflict- resolution skills
Mental State	Organization of Ideas	Enunciation	Decision- Making
Over-all impression	Over-all impression	Over-all impression	Over-all impression

POSITIVE TRAITS			
<i>Personality</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Communication Skills</i>	<i>Leadership</i>
Enthusiasm	Depth	Clarity	Initiative
Keeness, Curiosity	Range	Felicity of expression	Team Spirit
Participation	Analytical Ability	Categorical conclusion	Flexibility, Conflict- resolution skills
Cheerfulness	Organization of Ideas	Coherence of ideas	Decision- Making
Smartness	Co-ordination of thoughts	Effectiveness	Patience

NEGATIVE TRAITS			
<i>Personality</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Communication Skills</i>	<i>Leadership</i>
Introversion, slowness	Lack of subject knowledge	Fumbling, Muteness	Isolated, Insulated
Lack of confidence	Lack of meticulousness	Confused & unclear	Unapproachable
Apprehensive, tenseness	Poor quality of mind	Meandering	Egoistic & Agressive
Impoliteness	Lack of creative ideas	Incoherence	Weak & Wavering
Apathy, unresponsive-ness, boredom	Lack of analytical thinking	Monotony	Impatient

I will conclude this module with the next lecture in which I give you various tips for ensuring success in a group discussion.

FURTHER REFERENCES

