

CHAROTAR UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS

CS 102: COMMUNICATION SKILLS – 2

B.TECH II Semester

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(Left side is kept blank to write-down points and remarks by the students. Some practice topics of GD are given at the end of the material.)

READING NOTES : UNIT 5 Group Discussion

Unit Topics

5.1 Introduction to Group discussions

5.2 Group Discussion as a part of the selection process

5.3 Guidelines for group discussion

5.4 Roles and functions in group discussion

**5.1
Introduction**

 **What is GD ?**

- A Group Discussion is an exchange of information, opinion, views, perspectives and ideas about a topic among members of a group.
- In the GD, a particular number of participants meet face to face and through oral interaction originate and discuss ideas to arrive at a decision, summarization or solution to a problem.
- The GD can be divided into following types :

<i>Forms of GD</i>	<i>Categories of GD</i>	<i>Topic-style of GD</i>
1. Meetings	1. Organizational group discussion	1. Concrete and factual topic
2. Seminar	2. Group Discussion as a part of a selection process	2. Abstract topic
3. Conference		3. Problem-solution topic
4. Panel Discussion		4. Controversial topic
5. Group Discussion		

■ *Typical Format of a GD:*

A. How does a GD Take Place ?

Before a GD, the observer announces the topic for discussion and informs candidates about the time-limit. He may also draw attention towards the etiquette, rules and regulation, procedure to be followed. He also clears any doubts/queries. The examiner observes the proceedings of the discussion from a distance without directly interfering into it.

B. What is the normal duration of and member in a GD ?

A GD is generally of 15-20 minutes duration, normally there can be 6 to 15 members in a GD.

C. Is there time given for preparation after the topic is given and before starting the GD ?

Usually 2-5 minutes is given to collect one's thoughts, but there could be instances when this does not happen, so it is best not to bank on this.

D. What is the seating arrangement like ?

It could be semi-circular, or circular, or seating along side a rectangular table, depending upon the venue.

Group Discussion & Selection Process :

**5.2
GD as a
Part of
Selection
Process**

GDs have become very important in job selections as well as for admission to professional courses. GDs are widely used as a personality test for evaluating several candidates at the same time. During the discussion, the candidates are judged for 360 degree performance and activities.

Here is a sample list of skills assessed during a group discussion:

1. KNOWLEDGE -

The participating candidates will be assessed in terms of *knowledge about the topic* and related *information on the topic*. It checks *intellectual ability*.

Example: To be able to refer to and apply knowledge, information and intellectuality.

2. COMMUNICATION SKILL –

The participating candidates will be assessed in terms of *clarity of thought, expression and aptness of language*. One key aspect is *listening*. It indicates a willingness to accommodate others views.

Example: To be able to use simple language, appropriate tone and voice.

3. LEADERSHIP -

Ability to take *leadership* roles and *ability to lead, inspire* and carry the team along to help them achieve group's objectives.

Example: To be able to initiate the group discussion, or to be able to guide the group especially when the discussion begins losing relevance or try to encourage all members to participate in the discussion.

4. CREATIVITY AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS –

The participants are assessed for the *ability to come out with differing and innovative solutions* and use one's own *creativity*. This is to see how much maturity the candidate is displaying by keeping his temper in check, by *rationally and logically arguing* his point of view without getting personal and emotional.

Example: While thinking of solutions, don't be afraid to think of novel solutions. This is a high- risk high-return strategy.

6. APPROACH TO TOPIC -

The participants are assessed for the approach they take towards the topic of the discussion. It shows attitude of the person and awareness about the topic.

Example: To support or defense the topics which have universal recognition is considered as a positive attitude approach.

7. GROUP BEHAVIOR/ INTERPERSONAL SKILLS -

This reflected in the ability of the individual to interact with other members of the group in a brief situation. Emotional maturity and balance promotes good interpersonal relationships. The person has to be more people centric and less self-centered.

Example: To remain cool even when someone provokes you with personal comment, ability to remain objective, ability to empathize, non-threatening and more of a team player.


8. PERSUASIVE SKILLS -

Participants are assessed for the ability to analyze and persuade others to see the problem from multiple perspectives without hurting the group members.

Example: While appreciating someone else's point of view, you should be able to effectively communicate your view without overtly hurting the other person.

5.3
Guidelines
for
Group
Discussion

Guidelines for group discussion

 A group discussion can be categorically divided into three different phases:

1. Initiation/ Introduction
2. Body of the group discussion
3. Summarization/ Conclusion

1. Initiation Techniques

Initiating a Group Discussion is a high profit-high loss strategy.

When you initiate a Group Discussion, you not only grab the opportunity to speak, you also grab the attention of the examiner and your fellow candidates.

If you can make a favorable first impression with your content and communication skills after you initiate a Group Discussion, it will help you sail through the discussion.

But if you initiate a Group Discussion and stammer/ stutter/ quote wrong facts and figures, the damage might be irreparable. If you initiate a Group Discussion impeccably but don't speak much after that, it gives the impression that you started the Group Discussion for the sake of starting it or getting those initial kitty of points earmarked for an initiator!

When you start a Group Discussion, you are responsible for putting it into the right perspective or framework. So initiate one only if you have in-depth knowledge about the topic at hand.

There are different techniques to initiate a Group Discussion and make a good first impression:

- i. Quotes
- ii. Definition
- iii. Question
- iv. Shock statement
- v. Facts, figures and statistics
- vi. Short story
- vii. General statement

~ Quotes

Quotes are an effective way of initiating a Group Discussion.

If the topic of a Group Discussion is: Should the Censor Board be abolished?, you could start with a quote like, 'Hidden apples are always sweet'.

~ Definition

Start a Group Discussion by defining the topic or an important term in the topic.

For example, if the topic of the Group Discussion is Advertising is a Diplomatic Way of Telling a Lie, why not start the Group Discussion by defining advertising as, 'Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services through mass media like newspapers, magazines, television or radio by an identified sponsor'?

For a topic like The Malthusian Economic Prophecy is no longer relevant, you could start by explaining the definition of the Malthusian Economic Prophecy.

~ Question

Asking a question is an impact way of starting a Group Discussion.

It does not signify asking a question to any of the candidates in a Group Discussion so as to hamper the flow. It implies asking a question, and answering it yourself.

Any question that might hamper the flow of a Group Discussion or insult a participant or play devil's advocate must be discouraged.

Questions that promote a flow of ideas are always appreciated.

For a topic like, Should India go to war with Pakistan, you could start by asking, 'What does war bring to the people of a nation? We have had four clashes with Pakistan. The pertinent question is: what have we achieved?'

~ Shock statement

Initiating a Group Discussion with a shocking statement is the best way to grab immediate attention and put forth your point.

If a Group Discussion topic is, The Impact of Population on the Indian Economy, you could start with, 'At the centre of the Indian capital stands a population clock that ticks away relentlessly. It tracks 33 births a minute, 2,000 an hour, 48,000 a day. Which calculates to about 12 million every year. That is roughly the size of Australia. As a current political slogan puts it, 'Nothing's impossible when 1 billion Indians work together'.'

~ Facts, figures and statistics

To initiate the Group Discussion with facts, figure and statistics requires surety and accuracy.

Approximation is allowed in macro level figures, but micro level figures need to be correct and accurate.

For example, you can say, approximately 70 per cent of the Indian population stays in rural areas (macro figures, approximation allowed).

But you cannot say 30 states of India instead of 28 (micro figures, no approximations).

Stating wrong facts works to your disadvantage.

For a Group Discussion topic like, China, a Rising Tiger, you could start with, 'In 1983, when China was still in its initial stages of reform and opening up, China's real use of Foreign Direct Investment only stood at \$636 million. China actually utilized \$60 billion of FDI in 2004, which is almost 100 times that of its 1983 statistics.'

~ Short story

Use a short story in a Group Discussion topic like, Attitude is Everything.

This can be initiated with, 'A child once asked a balloon vendor, who was selling helium gas-filled balloons, whether a blue-colored balloon will go as high in the sky as a green-colored balloon. The balloon vendor told the child, it is not the color of the balloon but what is inside it that makes it go high.'

~ General statement

Use a general statement to put the Group Discussion in proper perspective.

For example, if the topic is, Should Sonia Gandhi be the prime minister of India?, you could start by saying, 'Before jumping to conclusions like, 'Yes, Sonia Gandhi should be', or 'No, Sonia Gandhi should not be', let's first find out the qualities one needs to be a good prime minister of India. Then we can compare these qualities with those that Mrs Gandhi possesses. This will help us reach the conclusion in a more objective and effective manner.'

2. Body of the group discussion

During the discussion, participants should not move from the topic. Participants should be careful about the approach towards the topic and direction of the discussion.

3. Summarisation Techniques

Most Group Discussions do not really have conclusions. A conclusion is where the whole group decides in favor or against the topic.

But every Group Discussion is summarized. You can summarize what the group has discussed in the Group Discussion in a nutshell.

Hit Point : Keep the following points in mind while summarizing a discussion:

1. Avoid raising new points.
2. Avoid stating only your viewpoint.
3. Avoid dwelling only on one aspect of the Group Discussion.
4. Keep it brief and concise.

5. If the examiner asks you to summarize a Group Discussion, it means the Group Discussion has come to an end. Do not add anything once the Group Discussion has been summarized.

Discussion Etiquette

In order to successfully negotiate tutorial discussion, courtesy is important. The following are a few ground rules for good conduct.

Do –

1. Respect the contribution of other speakers. Speak pleasantly and with courtesy to all members of the group.
2. Listen well to the ideas of other speakers; you will learn something.
3. Acknowledge what you find interesting.
4. Remember that a discussion is not a fight. Learn to disagree politely.
5. Respect differing views. Those who hold them are not necessarily wrong.
6. Think about your contribution before you speak. How best can you answer the question/ contribute to the topic?
7. Try to stick to the discussion topic. Don't introduce irrelevant information. If the discussion does digress, bring it back on topic by saying something like 'Just a final point about the last topic before we move on' or 'that's an interesting point, can we come back to that later?'
8. Be aware of your body language. Keep it open and friendly. Avoid gestures that appear aggressive.
9. Speak clearly. Don't whisper; even if you're feeling uncertain about your ideas or language.

Don't –

1. Don't take offence if another speaker disagrees with you. Putting forward different points of view is an important part of any discussion. Others may disagree with your ideas, and they are entitled to do so.
2. Never try to intimidate or insult another speaker or ridicule the contribution of others.
3. Don't use comments like 'that's stupid' or 'you're wrong'. Learn to disagree and argue appropriately.
4. Take care to use a moderate tone of voice. If you sound angry or aggressive others will not want to listen to you.
5. If you are a confident speaker, try not to dominate the discussion. Pause to allow quieter students a chance to contribute.
6. Avoid drawing too much on personal experience or anecdote. Although some tutors encourage students to reflect on their own experience, remember not to generalize too much.

7. Don't interrupt or talk over another speaker. Let them finish their point before you start. Listening to others earns you the right to be heard.

**5.4
Roles and
Functions in
Group
Discussion**

Roles and functions in group discussion


What role or function the participant is playing during the GD decides the participant's personality trait.

Every member of a group plays a certain role and functions within that group. Some roles relate to the task aspect of the group, while others promote social interaction.

Task-Oriented Roles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiator-contributor: Generates new ideas. 2. Information-seeker: Asks for information about the task. 3. Opinion-seeker: Asks for the input from the group about its values. 4. Information-giver: Offers facts or generalization to the group. 5. Opinion-giver: States his or her beliefs about a group issue. 6. Elaborator: Explains ideas within the group, offers examples to clarify ideas. 7. Coordinator: Shows the relationships between ideas. 8. Orienter: Shifts the direction of the group's discussion. 9. Evaluator-critic: Measures group's actions against some objective standard. 10. Energizer: Stimulates the group to a higher level of activity. 11. Procedural-technician: Performs logistical functions for the group. 12. Recorder: Keeps a record of group actions.
Social Roles	<p>Groups also have members who play certain social roles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourager: Praises the ideas of others. 2. Harmonizer: Mediates differences between group members. 3. Compromiser: Moves group to another position that is favored by all group members. 4. Gatekeeper/expediter: Keeps communication channels open. 5. Standard Setter: Suggests standards or criteria for the group to achieve. 6. Group observer: Keeps records of group activities and uses this information to offer feedback to the group. 7. Follower: Goes along with the group and accepts the group's ideas.
Individualistic Roles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These roles place the group member above the group and are destructive to the group. 2. Aggressor: Attacks other group members, deflates the status of others, and other aggressive behavior.

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Blocker: Resists movement by the group. 4. Recognition seeker: Calls attention to himself or herself. 5. Self-confessor: Seeks to disclose nongroup related feelings or opinions. 6. Dominator: Asserts control over the group by manipulating the other group members. 7. Help seeker: Tries to gain the sympathy of the group. 8. Special interest pleader: Uses stereotypes to assert his or her own prejudices. |
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**F A Q
about GD
And Best
Scoring**

 ***F A Q about GD***

Q. What should I do if one member is very stubborn and aggressive ?

A. Don't get into a argument with the member – “Don't let his virus INFECT you”. Objectively and calmly present your point of view vis-à-vis his. You could ask other group members to comment (to break the deadlock) and take the discussion forward

Q. How do you participate when the noise level is high ?

A. Every group discussion has a High noise level– when most people are talking – This is when you should listen and your mind should think and evaluate the plethora of others thoughts. You can interject when the group is on a low (you will be able to observe it if you are alert) – Then present your evaluation of others thoughts and perhaps take the discussion on to a more positive platform, this would show a clear structure in your thinking. Sometimes you can bring the group to a refocus, when the group digresses from the topics. These are all positive traits of a manager and naturally give you plus points.

Q. What is summarization ?

A. Converting the entire discussion into 4 or 5 points without any bias to fully represent the thoughts of the group. In some cases, everyone might be asked to summarize so you must form a habit of summarizing.

 ***Best scoring points are:***

1. Initiation of discussion
2. Always keeping/trying to keep discussion on track
3. Conclusion on time
4. Your capability to keep your cool and listen as well as putting your points.

