

**MODULE - III**

## ORAL PRESENTATION

### 3.1. Voice Modulation

In basic terms, "voice modulation is adjusting your pitch and volume while speaking & give stress (intonation) to the particular word which should sound different". Voice modulation is a very important part of communication. Even though you might not have heard of it, you modulate your voice in general conversation every day. You do it when you change pitch, like when your voice goes up at the end of a question. Sometimes you do it to express sarcasm, and other times you modulate your voice to put emphasis on certain words.

Without voice modulation, you would continuously speak in a single pitch or tone. You would not be able to express doubt or ask questions, and you certainly couldn't crack a joke. Your speaking voice is a very malleable tool. Just like with music, its rhythm and tone can convey a meaning that may be different than the literal interpretation of your words.

Given below are the 5 important elements which complete the voice modulation & can bring more colors in your voice.

**Pitch:** Pitch, in speech, the relative highness or lowness of a tone as perceived by the ear, which depends on the number of vibrations per second produced by the vocal cords. Pitch is the main acoustic correlate of tone and intonation

**Volume:** Volume is the loudness of the speaker. It is the psychological characteristic of physical strength (amplitude). It is perceived as an auditory sensation by the listener which can be ordered on a scale from quiet to loud. Loudness is then a subjective measure of the listener, which is often confused with objective measures of sound strength such as sound pressure level (in decibels), sound intensity, or

sound power. Amplitude is the strength or power of the wave signal. Higher amplitudes on the wave graph are interpreted as a higher volume, hence the name "amplifier" for a device that increases an amplitude.

**Pausa:** Pauses is the place where we speaker stops speaking for a sec or two. It helps the speaker to gain the attention of the listeners.

**Tempo:** Tempo is the speed which defines how fast speakers is speaking, so you have to choose the proper tempo/speed according to your script.

**Expression:** Expressions is important for a speaker to convey his message to the listeners, so you have to choose a correct expression so that you can express yourself clearly.

If you keep a proper balance of all the above-given elements, you will sound like a professional. Your voice will get a different texture and people will love to listen to you.

### **3.2. Tone of Voice**

Your voice does more than combine sounds to form words: It conveys your mood, emotion and perspective. Tone of voice is your ability to change the meaning of the words you say by changing your pitch, intonation, volume and tempo. Because listeners use sound to interpret your message, being sensitive to how your tone of voice affects what they hear can make you a better communicator.

A trip to the bank, grocery store or dry cleaners can lead you to rely on different tones of voice. For example, you had to say, "Excuse me," four times, in four different ways. Your "friendly" tone of voice expressed concern as you said, "Excuse me" to get the attention of someone who had just dropped a glove. A louder voice and emphasis on the word "me" showed your indignation at the teen who jumped the line. When the person behind the counter said she couldn't help

you, you indicated your disbelief in a query: "Excuse me?" and a higher-pitched voice. Finally, when you saw a shoplifter in action, you repeated the phrase quickly and more loudly each time to convey urgency and to get the manager's attention.

When you text friends, you rely on words and punctuation to get your point across. But, without hearing your voice, your friends may misinterpret the message.

Sensitivity to tone of voice becomes important when meeting people. A soft voice tells you the person with whom you're speaking is shy, while a loud, strong voice lets you know he's overconfident or aggressive. You can put a new acquaintance at ease by speaking slowly and indicate your happiness when you speak melodically. Tone of voice is a two-way street, however. If your partner responds to you in a monotone voice, you may be boring her.

### 3.3. Describing a Process

#### **Audience:**

Focus your presentation on the audience. Your presentation is not about how much you can say, but about how much your audience can understand.

**Organize your information into three to five points/categories.**

Audiences can only easily remember a maximum of three to five points.

**Build repetition. Listening is much different than reading.**

Your audience cannot go back and read over something they missed or did not understand. Build repetition through internal summaries, transitions, analogies, and stories.

**Introduction:**

- ◆ Introduce yourself if needed, providing your affiliation and/or credibility.
- ◆ Create an effective opening that will interest your audience: pose a question, give an amazing fact, or tell a short, interesting story.
- ◆ Reveal your topic to the audience and explain why it is important for them to learn about.
- ◆ Give a brief outline of the major points you will cover in your presentation.

**Main Body:**

- ◆ Explain your points. Give clear explanations. Provide sufficient evidence to be convincing.
- ◆ Use transitions between sections of your presentation (introduction, body, and conclusion) as well as between points in your main body section. The Writing Studio's hand out on Roadmaps provides a great explanation of how to create clear signals and "sign posts" that will guide the audience through your presentation.
- ◆ Use analogies and stories to explain complicated ideas and to build repetition.

**Conclusion:**

- ◆ Signal your conclusion with a transition.
- ◆ Summarize your points.
- ◆ Refer to future action if needed.
- ◆ End with, "Thank You."
- ◆ If answering questions, tell your audience, "I'll now be happy to answer any questions."

### **Practicing**

Practicing your presentation is essential. It is at this stage of the process that you figure out word and phrase emphasis and the timing of your sections and overall presentation.

### **Presenting**

As the person in charge of the situation when presenting, it is your job to make your audience feel comfortable and engaged with both you and the material of the presentation.

## **PRESENTATION SKILLS**

### **3.4. Oral presentation & Public speaking skills**

#### **(i) Oral Presentation**

Oral presentation means delivering an address to a public audience. It also refers to public speaking and/or speech-making. It is a brief discussion of a defined topic delivered to a public audience in order to impart knowledge or to stimulate discussion. The skill in oral presentation is equally as important as effective writing. Almost every oral presentation contains an introduction, main body and conclusion like a short paper. Though it is a formal speech in nature or vocal performance to an audience, it may occasionally require adequate planning and thorough preparation in using one's voice, body language and visual aids such as slideshows to present and illustrate the points more effectively and to achieve the desired results.

Whatever your profession is, you may be asked on various occasions to participate in a seminar, conference, panel discussion and/or meeting and to deliver an address to the audience present there. If you are an effective speaker, you can take this opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, enhance your prestige, influence decisions, and occupy more important positions in your organizations. So, the acquisition of oral presentation skills is essential for success in any profession.

What you need most for an effective oral presentation is to take a thorough preparation. Only a thorough preparation can help you control your nervousness and give an effective oral presentation.

**Oral presentations typically involve three important steps:**

- ◆ Planning
- ◆ Practicing
- ◆ Presenting

### ◆ **Planning**

Oral presentations require a good deal of planning. Scholars estimate that approximately 50% of all mistakes in an oral presentation actually occur in the planning stage (or rather, lack of a planning stage).

### ◆ **Practicing**

Practicing your presentation is essential. It is at this stage of the process that you figure out word and phrase emphasis and the timing of your sections and overall presentation.

### ◆ **Presenting**

As the person in charge of the situation when presenting, it is your job to make your audience feel comfortable and engaged with both you and the material of the presentation.

**The principle of the "four Cs":**

- ◆ Be calm
- ◆ Be confident
- ◆ Be clear
- ◆ Be concise.

## **(ii) Public speaking**

Public speaking involves talking in front of a group of people, usually with some preparation. It can be in front of people that you know (e.g. at a family celebration) or a crowd of strangers. Unlike a presentation there normally isn't a lot of opportunity for interaction

between the audience and the speaker – the speaker speaks, and the audience (hopefully) listens.

### These are the Six Steps to Successful Public Speaking:

- ◆ Clarify your objective.
- ◆ Analyze your audience.
- ◆ Collect and organize your information.
- ◆ Choose your visual aids.
- ◆ Prepare your notes.
- ◆ Practice your delivery.

First and foremost, it is important that you know the various types of public speaking because each type of public speaking requires different approaches and skills. Knowing these will definitely take you a step closer to achieving your dream of becoming a proficient public speaker.

### The four main types of public speaking or speech purposes are:

- ◆ The entertaining speech
- ◆ The informative speech
- ◆ The persuasive speech
- ◆ The inspirational speech

(i) **The entertaining speech** usually comes in the form of a story of some sorts. Many people confuse an entertaining speech as a presentation only to be used for stand-up routines and the like. Although that is one example of how an entertaining speech purpose could be used, it is not the only way. Entertaining speeches are stories full of word pictures and other strategies to evoke sensory recall. Stories which bring you right into the moment as if you are actually there.



(ii) **The informative speech** is a presentation that's mainly technical in nature. In this sort of speech you would be delivering facts, statistics, algorithms, etc. An instructor teaching a course on rebuilding engines or explaining the inner workings of your computer would be giving an informative style speech.

(iii) **The persuasive speech** is giving presentations in arenas where you would like people to take some kind of action. Buy a certain product, vote a certain way, donate money to a certain cause. These speeches are employed by salespeople of all kinds, politicians, etc.

(iv) **The inspirational speech** is a presentation which calls on the audience to be the best that they can be. These speeches are made at high school graduations, inaugural addresses, etc.

### 3.5. Business Presentations

A business presentation is a formal tutorial or introduction of business practices or products. A business presentation is typically carried out using audio/visual presentation material, such as projectors and statistical documents created with presentation software, or more rudimentary materials such as flip charts and whiteboards.

**The two most common types of business presentations are:**

- ◆ **Sales Presentations**
- ◆ **Intra-Organization Presentations.**

**Sales Presentations** are conducted by suppliers in front of a potential client or customer, with the express purpose of pitching their product or service. The sales presentation should begin by identifying the needs or deficits of the organization that the supplier plans to fill. The supplier should come prepared with pre-researched information on the specifics of the organization's needs; or, in lieu of such details, statistics on the industry that the organization is a part of.

**Intra-Organization Presentations** are conducted by one or more members of an organization to their co-workers, and are often for the purpose of introducing new policies or operations. An intra - organization business presentation is typically conducted by whichever department or personnel is spearheading the new operations that are being introduced to the organization.

### PREPARATION

Preparation is the single most important part of making a successful presentation. It is an absolutely crucial foundation, and you should dedicate as much time to it as possible, avoiding short-cuts. Good preparation will ensure that you have thought carefully about the messages that you want (or need) to communicate in your presentation and it will also help boost your confidence. There are a number of aspects that you need to consider when preparing a presentation. They include the aim of the presentation, the subject matter, the audience, the venue or place, the time of day, and the length of the talk.

#### 3.6. Organising the Material

Regardless of whether your presentation is going to be delivered formally, such as at work or informally, for a club or perhaps a Best Man's speech. You should always aim to give a clear, well-structured delivery. That is, you should know exactly what you want to say and the order in which you want to say it.

Having thought about and planned a good structure will also help to alleviate any nervousness you may be feeling in the build up to your talk.

Organising the presentation material may include:

- ◆ Blue Sky Thinking (the ideas).
- ◆ Selecting the main points.
- ◆ Deciding whether to illustrate.
- ◆ Introduction and conclusion.

**(i) Blue Sky Thinking (The Ideas)**

Keeping your objectives in mind, write down all the points you wish to make, irrespective of order.

**(ii) Select Your Main Points**

The talk/presentation should be divided into three sections:

- ◆ Introduction (beginning)
- ◆ Main Content (middle)
- ◆ Conclusion (end)

A useful structure would be the following:

Tell the audience in the introduction what your subject is and how you have organised the presentation (by stating the key elements).

Then tell them the details of the key elements and/or messages (by expanding and qualifying the key points in more detail and providing supporting evidence).

Then tell the audience what you have just told them (by summarising the key points, concluding with the main subject again).

**(iii) Decide Whether to Illustrate**

Most talks benefit from personal anecdotes, real-life situations or hypothetical examples to bring them to life.

If the presentation is short and informal it is probably not necessary to use any visual aids. Use visual illustrations if anything requires expanding, clarifying or simplifying. Illustrations of any type should be relevant and fully explained. Bear in mind that a talk will last longer if visual aids are used.

**(iv) Introduction and Conclusion**

The introduction should give a preview of what you are going to say and should gain the attention of the listeners with a statement of

purpose. Make it clear whether you wish to accept questions as they arise during the presentation, thereby breaking your flow and risk being side-tracked, or will invite questions at the end.

The conclusion should repeat the main points but this time try to use different words and summarise the main point and argument. End decisively, so that no-one is in any doubt that your presentation is finished. This is also the time to ask the audience whether they have any questions.

### **3.7. Self Introduction**

The introduction is the most important part of your presentation. Introducing yourself in a presentation is more than just saying your name. It's an opportunity for you to share relevant details about yourself and connect with your audience. How you introduce yourself will influence how your audience receives the message you want to get across. Make your next introduction flawless by presenting the most engaging information about yourself. Be sure to prepare the introduction in advance and start with an attention-grabbing technique to connect to the audience.

State your name clearly. You want the audience to remember who you are, so don't mumble or rush through saying your name. Speak loudly and confidently, and make sure you enunciate every syllable.

Communicate your contribution to get the audience excited. Think about how you will help your audience and briefly communicate that rather than just listing your credentials or job title. Your basic credentials will probably be listed on the presentation program, anyway. Ask yourself what special skills and experience you have that would interest your audience and introduce yourself with those.

### **3.8. Introducing the Topic**

Provide an overview of your topic early on to show your listeners why they should be interested in your speech.

### Key Points

- ◆ Describe the scope of your speech when you introduce your topic.
- ◆ State your thesis or purpose clearly and with emphasis in one to three sentences.
- ◆ Provide an overview of your main points before you launch into the body of the speech.

Public speakers should introduce a topic as soon as possible. After the attention-grabbing opening, there is only a small window of time in which to convince the audience that you have something useful to say.

### 3.9. Answering Questions

Oral presentations are usually followed up with a question and answer session. To many people this can be the most exciting part of the presentation. To some others, it can be a nightmare. This is, actually, why many of the presenters try to avoid the question and answer session altogether.

Listen to the entire question BEFORE you begin to answer any questions: Too many people start responding to a question before the entire question is even asked. Not waiting to hear the entire questions can result in you providing a response which had nothing to do with the question. Force yourself to LISTEN to the entire question and make sure you understand the question.

Pause and allow yourself time to value the question and listener: REPEAT the question out loud so the entire audience can hear it. It is important that everyone "hear" the question or the answer you provide may not make sense to some of the people. By repeating the question, this will allow you some additional time to evaluate the question and formulate a response.

Credit The Person for asking the question: You may say something like, "That was a great question" or, "Glad you asked that question" or even, "I get asked that question by many people". One word of caution. If you credit one person with asking a question, be sure to credit EVERYONE for asking a question. You don't want people to feel their question was not as important.

Respond to the Question honestly and the best you can: If you do NOT know an answer to a question, do not try to fake it. Be honest, and tell them you do not know but DO promise to research the answer for them and DO get back to them.

Bridge to the next question by asking them a question: "Does that answer your question?", "Is that the kind of information you were looking for?". This is critical. Once they respond to you, "YES" you now have permission to go on to the next person. This also gives them one more opportunity to say, "No" and allow them to clarify their question more by asking it again.

### **3.10. Individual Presentation Practice**

Practicing a presentation is a personal process and one that a speaker has to experiment with to find the process that works best for them. Here is my own 8-step process for preparing to present:

Preparation begins with conceptualization - When you begin writing your speech, you are in the process of practicing it. Sit down with your PowerPoint or notes. Think about what one thing you want the audience to remember from each point and how to transition between points.

Internalize don't memorize - Speakers often ask if I memorize my presentations. The answer is that I internalize not memorize. I know the stories I want to tell or the points I want to highlight but my goal is to present it in a conversational tone and not to recite from a script.

Present out loud – Many speakers tell me that they read through their presentation but never speak it out loud. Reading and speaking your presentation are two different things. You need to say your speech out loud to know how it sounds, where transitions are rocky, and to discover any points or stories that don't fit.

Present standing up – I practice my presentation standing up in my hotel room. If room service were to enter, they would think I have lost my mind. However, I want to practice my gestures and how I am going to move.

Present in the clothes you are going to wear – To me this makes my practice real. It also tells me if the arms of suit jacket are too tight and I can't raise my arm above my head.

Time it – Plan out how much time you want to spend on each point or slide. Then time it when you practice. Too short? Too long? Remember audiences do mind if you go over time!

See where you are presenting – If there is any way to see the room where you are presenting, do it! It will better prepare you to do well and also test the technology in the room.

Visualize your success – Whether I am practicing in my hotel room or in the car, I visualize that I am on the stage and can see the audience. I visualize doing well. By the time I take the stage, I've given my presentation successfully numerous times.

This is my process for practicing a speech or presentation. All speakers are different.

### **3.11. Presenting Visuals Effectively**

A visual aid supplements words with pictures, charts, graphs, or other visual information. They are important because they help the audience understand and remember, increase audience interest, and act as notes or reminders for the speaker.

Visual aids help your presentation make things happen. Visual aids help you reach your objectives by providing emphasis to whatever is being said. Clear pictures multiply the audience's level of understanding of the material presented, and they should be used to reinforce your message, clarify points, and create excitement.

Visual aids involve your audience and require a change from one activity to another: from hearing to seeing. When you use visual aids, their use tends to encourage gestures and movement on your part. This extra movement reinforces the control that you, the speaker, need over the presentation. The use of visual aids, then, are mutually beneficial to the audience and you.

Visual aids add impact and interest to a presentation. They enable you to appeal to more than one sense at the same time, thereby increasing the audience's understanding and retention level. With pictures, the concepts or ideas you present are no longer simply words - but words plus images.

Visuals add an important dimension to a presentation, and you, the speaker, must capitalize on this dimension. It is critical that you prepare visual aids that reinforce your major points, stimulate your audience, and work well in the physical setting of your presentation.

## **DEBATE AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

### **3.12. Introduction to Group Discussion (GD)**

Group Discussion is a methodology or in a simple language you may call it an interview process or a group activity. It is used as one of the best tools to select the prospective candidates in a comparative perspective. GD may be used by an interviewer at an organization, colleges or even at different types of management competitions.

A GD is a methodology used by an organization to gauge whether the candidate has certain personality traits and/or skills that it desires



in its members. In this methodology, the group of candidates is given a topic or a situation, given a few minutes to think about the same, and then asked to discuss the topic among themselves for 15-20 minutes.

**GD 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.

**GD is structured:** the exchange of ideas in a GD 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.

**GD evaluation** is done by the subject experts based on the discussions. A report will be prepared on analyzing the facts at the end of the discussion.

A Group Discussion helps problem solving, decision making and personality assessment. Whether one is a student, a job seeker, a professional engineer or a company executive one needs effective GD skills. Students need to participate in academic discussions, meetings, classroom sessions or selection GDs for admission to professional courses. A job-seeker may be required to face selection GDs as part of the selection process. Professionals have to participate in different meetings at the workplace.

The importance of GD has increased in recent times due to its increasing role as an effective tool in a) problem solving b) decision making and c) personality assessment.

### 3.13. Differences between Group Discussion and Debate

A Group Discussion is an exchange of ideas, information, opinions between a group of people. It can also be viewed as a type of conversation between several people. A discussion can have different goals; for example, a group of students who start a discussion over a lesson has the objective of sharing and understanding facts and information. A

group of people who get together to discuss a film or book is united by the common goal of sharing their personal opinions and ideas.

Although opposing views may be presented during discussions, the speakers will not usually engage in a debate about this contrast. Both will explain their stances and will acknowledge the others' right to have his own opinion. This happens because there is no competition or the need to prove his standpoint.

Debate is a formal contest of argumentation between two individuals or teams. In a debate, there are two opposing sides and these opposing sides attempt to prove each other wrong. Each side listens to the other side to find flaws and spot differences in order to produce counter-arguments. In simple words, one side searches for weaknesses on the other side. Debates, unlike arguments, have a conclusion. At the end of a competitive debate, one side is declared the winner and the other side becomes the loser. The winners are selected by a board of judges based on a list of criteria that usually includes content, style, and strategy. Competitive debating is carried out in local, national and international level.

In parliaments and other legislatures, debates are conducted before making laws and amendments. Here, the members of parliament discuss the positive and negative sides of the proposal and cast votes. Debates are also a part of the US presidential elections; it is customary for the main candidates from the largest parties to engage in a debate.

**The main difference between discussion and debate is :**

- ◆ A Discussion is an exchange of opinions and ideas
- ◆ A Debate is a form of formal contest of argumentation between two people or groups.

**Some Definitions on differences between Group Discussion and debate:**

- ◆ **Group Discussion:** A Group Discussion is an exchange of ideas, information, opinions between a group of people.
- ◆ **Debate:** A debate is a formal contest of argumentation between two individuals or teams.

### Opposing Views

- ◆ **Group Discussion:** People may express different views during Group Discussions, but Group Discussions do not necessarily have two opposing sides.
- ◆ **Debate:** A debate always has two opposing sides.

### Conclusion

- ◆ **Group Discussion:** Group Discussion do not have a conclusion; there is no tidy, accepted ending.
- ◆ **Debate:** Debates often have a conclusion; one side is declared as the winner or the proposal being debated is either accepted or rejected.

### Formality

- ◆ **Group Discussion:** Group Discussion are more informal than debates.
- ◆ **Debate:** Debates are more formal than discussions.

### Purpose

- ◆ **Group Discussion:** The purpose of a Group Discussion includes sharing knowledge, information, experiences, and opinions.
- ◆ **Debate:** The debaters attempt to persuade the listeners and the other side that their view is correct.

### Competition

- ◆ **Group Discussion:** Group Discussions are not usually competitive.
- ◆ **Debate:** Debate is competitive.

### 3.14. Participating GD

As you have to participate in a Group Discussion, several questions spring across your mind. You want to know what actions and gestures can get you positive points and what can cost you the selection. Here's a list of Dos and Don'ts of participating in the GD.

Do's of participating in a GD:

- ◆ Listen to the subject carefully
- ◆ Put down your thoughts on a paper
- ◆ Initiate the discussion if you know the subject well
- ◆ Listen to others if you don't know the subject
- ◆ Support your point with some facts and figures
- ◆ Make short contribution of 25-30 seconds 3-4 times
- ◆ Give others a chance to speak
- ◆ Speak politely and pleasantly. Respect contribution from other members.
- ◆ Disagree politely and agree with what is right
- ◆ Summarize the discussion if the group has not reached a conclusion.

Don'ts of participating in a Group Discussion

- ◆ Initiate the discussion if you do not have sufficient knowledge about the given topic.
- ◆ Over speak, intervene and snatch other's chance to speak.
- ◆ Argue and shout during the GD
- ◆ Look at the evaluators or a particular group member
- ◆ Talk irrelevant things and distract the discussion
- ◆ Pose negative body gestures like touching the nose, leaning back on the chair, knocking the table with a pen etc.
- ◆ Mention erratic statistics.

- ◆ Display low self confidence with shaky voice and trembling hands.
- ◆ Try to dominate the discussion
- ◆ Put others in an embarrassing situation by asking them to speak if they don't want

### 3.15. Understanding GD

- ◆ Better understanding of the subject : GD offers a great opportunity to the discussants to take a deep dive into the subject, and understand it profoundly. It expands the horizon of knowledge and learning. In addition, it extends a chance to the participants to improve their abilities to think critically and develop their analytical skills.
- ◆ Solve problems : Since GD brings together a group of people holding diverse opinions, it also perceived as one of the sought after ways to arrive at solutions to problems. Because of the fact that people bring in a wide range of insights, GDs help in changing the thought process from a narrow to a wider view, thereby paving the way to solutions.
- ◆ Improve listening skills and confidence : Since GDs necessitate the contribution of ideas and thoughts, the participants are required to be listen keenly to others' observations. In this sense, group discussions are a fantastic way to enhance listening skills, and also boost the confidence of speakers by engaging them and encouraging them to express their thoughts.
- ◆ Enhance communication and interpersonal skills : While one aspect of GDs is that it encourages people to share their knowledge, the other important aspect is that it gives an opportunity to people to build their communication skills. The participants, in the process, learn how to express their ideas while also respecting viewpoints of others. This in turn contributes to the development of interpersonal skills among the peer group.

◆ Team building exercise : GDs help in developing teamwork and leadership attributed in people, which are extremely important in the current context. Working in a group helps them increase tolerance and respect towards others, and also how to unanimously arrive at conclusions.

### 3.16. Brainstorming the Topic

Brainstorming is a technique for triggering creativity. As you can probably guess, it's about simulating the brain in order to come up with original ideas. Its primary objective is to get your mind out of the box by producing as many solutions (or ideas) as possible. Later, you can evaluate all those options and decide which one is more suitable for the situation you're trying to work out.

Madison Avenue advertising executive Alex Osborn developed the original approach and published it in his 1953 book, "Applied Imagination." Since then, researchers have made many improvements to his original technique. He found that conventional business meetings were inhibiting the creation of new ideas and proposed some rules designed to help stimulate them. He was looking for rules which would give people the freedom of mind and action to spark off and reveal new ideas. To "think up" was originally the term he used to describe the process he developed, and that in turn came to be known as "brainstorming". He described brainstorming as "a conference technique by which a group attempts to find a solution for a specific problem by amassing all the ideas spontaneously by its members". The rules he came up with are the following:

- ◆ No criticism of ideas
- ◆ Go for large quantities of ideas
- ◆ Build on each others ideas
- ◆ Encourage wild and exaggerated ideas

Using these new rules, people's natural inhibitions were reduced,

inhibitions which prevented them putting forward ideas which they felt might be considered "wrong" or "stupid". Osborn also found that generating "silly" ideas could spark off very useful ideas because they changed the way people thought. He found that when these rules were followed, a lot more ideas were created and that a greater quantity of original ideas gave rise to a greater quantity of useful ideas. Quantity produced quality. In Spanish, brainstorming is called "lluvia de ideas", which literally means "rain of ideas".

### 3.17. Questioning and Clarifying

Questioning for clarification (or paraphrasing) is one of the major reasons we encounter difficulties in communications. In a nutshell, people neglect to ask questions or seek clarification on a subject matter or conversational point. Hence, assumptions are often made based on a small piece of information.

Secondly, people fear asking questions lest they appear 'not to know or appear stupid' in the eyes of the other person.

Thirdly, people just don't care enough to give the time to get a full understanding of the situation from the other person's viewpoint. They just want to jump in with their solution or attack — debate, confront, counter the person.

The golden rule is 'never assume' because it makes an ass out of u and me.

Clarification is a form of reflection that seeks to eliminate ambiguity, confusion or misunderstanding. Clarifying questions are tools used by active listeners to ensure understanding and obtain essential information. These types of questions are simple inquiries of fact. They require brief or concise answers that don't typically provide new information, simply a more concrete understanding of the matter at hand. Clarifying questions are used in interviews, interrogations, class discussions, presentations and pretty much anywhere there is

information being given to an audience. They require little thought to answer and attempt to shore up any confusion in the information already present in the discussion or presentation. In short, clarifying questions remove ambiguity from a situation to promote accuracy and create a smoother path to new information.

Knowing when to ask open, closed or probing questions is a skill worthy of development to engage people and elicit the required responses. Stop, think, and ask even if you think you understand what is being said. Ask at least two more questions to establish total clarity before jumping to conclusions, decisions, actions.

Eliminate the phrase: 'I thought you meant' from your vocabulary by getting clarification. Show you care by questioning for clarification.

### **3.18. GD Strategies**

Every individual must learn the successful tips of group discussion to fair well in the interviews as well as the screening process of educational institutes.

#### **◆ Read voraciously**

Make a habit of reading voraciously on every subject. This will keep you ready for any topic for a discussion in GD. Your knowledge is your most important weapon in a discussion.

#### **◆ Initiate the discussion**

Most of us have a misconception that initiating the discussion would give you an advantage over others. It does give you an advantage but only if you know the subject well and have something relevant to start the discussion otherwise it is a disadvantage.

#### **◆ Speak politely and pleasantly**

As you speak make sure that you do not speak at the top of your voice. You should be audible and clear. Remember that you are



participating in a discussion which is different from a speech given out by the leaders in their rallies. Even if you disagree with the other's point of view, disagree politely.

◆ **Be précised**

Abstain from using irrelevant information and data from your talks during a GD. Speak precisely so that others also get a chance to put across their point of view.

◆ **Acquire and apply knowledge**

Stay attentive to the ideas put forward by other group members and keep writing the important points discussed during the GD. As you get a chance to speak, put forward your views about the topic. You can also agree or disagree with other's ideas, based on your knowledge about the subject.

◆ **Agree with the right**

Don't take a stand on either extreme when the discussion begins. It might happen that you get convinced by other's argument and want to change your stand. Respect other's opinion as well and agree with what is right, even if you initially had a different opinion.

◆ **Speak confidently**

Maintain your confidence as you speak. Establish eye contact with other members of the group and do not let your voice tremble.

◆ **Moderate**

Try to moderate the discussion if any arguments arise. This is necessary to ensure that the group doesn't wander from the goal of the GD.

◆ **Use positive body language**

Your body language should not demonstrate dominance or low self confidence. Show your interest in the discussion through your gestures like bending forward a bit, nodding your head.

- ◆ **Be a team player**

Last but not the least, be a team player as this is a group activity. Be comfortable with the group members and vice versa.

### 3.19. Activities to improve GD skills

- ◆ **Make sure that you read as much news as possible:**

Generally the topic is chosen from some of the current happenings. Hence you should make sure that you have a look at all of them.

- ◆ **Make sure that you speak loudly and clearly:** This is one of the most important things and you could find yourself in difficulty if you do not speak loudly and clearly in a GD.

- ◆ **You should know that you are not really bounded to think in one way:** You are free to think on your own and put forward some new ideas. It is good for your chances and also for the GD since new ideas will definitely make it interesting.

- ◆ **You should know what the topic is really about:** If you have some confusion then you should wait for some time and let the other speak at first. When the matter is quiet clear and the GD is in midst then you should start speaking with new ideas in mind.

- ◆ **Knowledge:** Knowledge about the subject can never be replaced in a GD. No matter how good you might be communicating, but if your sentences don't reflect that you are knowledge bank then it's probably not going to work out. You are required to talk in a GD but inputs that don't contain any substantial value will not help in any way. One has to keep himself updated by knowing what all is happening around the globe.

- ◆ **Alertness and presence of mind:** In a GD you are required to carefully listen to the other person's thoughts and keep an argument, example or a supportive statement, fact, example ready to participate in the discussion. This shows how alert you are, how much

importance you give to when someone is putting his or her point forward. This also shows how good listener you are, at time, things turn up to be a mess when you feel that what is being said is not making sense. Don't get irritated. Remember that you need to be calm and composed. Many times after a mess happening in a GD, candidates who are calm are selected.

◆ **Out of the box thinking:** Yes! This is something that can help you get further selected because this reflects that you have a different way of looking at things. You need to be creative and have to put points that might amaze the panel. Remember, while working there are times when we need to find out solutions to the problem in a better way, thinking out of the box helps you finding smart and good solutions at times.

**Here is a list of what should be done and what should be avoided at a Group Discussion (GD)**

- ◆ Be as natural as possible. Do not try to be someone you are not. Be yourself. In an attempt to be someone else, your opinions will not be portrayed.
- ◆ Sit with a straight and confident posture.
- ◆ Be assertive yet humble. You need to stick to your values and beliefs, but learn to respect the values and opinions of others too.
- ◆ Grab the opportunity to speak first, i.e. to start the group discussion with your opinion. It generally leaves a good impression on the evaluator, but take the move only if you have complete knowledge of the subject.
- ◆ Do not repeat a point, or be lengthy or irrelevant. Also intervene, if someone else is going on an irrelevant track.
- ◆ Facilitate contribution from others. Do not just go on and on and on with only your opinionated view. Remember, it is a group

discussion. Allow others to speak too.

- ◆ Make an eye contact with all the participants. It creates more room for conversation. Also keep nodding, when others speak, it shows receptivity.

- ◆ Be an active and dynamic participant. The examiner wants to hear you speak. So do put forth your views.

- ◆ Be positive and prepare your thoughts well but do not be over-confident.

- ◆ Think well before you speak. You are being heard and judged upon.

- ◆ When raising an objection to a point kept by another speaker, back it up with a solid reason to get the point across.