

Soft Skills for Business Negotiations and Marketing Strategies
Prof. Uttam Kumar Banerjee
Department of Architecture and Regional Planning
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

Lecture – 37
Group Discussions (GD) And Verbal Communications

Dear friends, good morning, in the last week we discussed about interviews, I hope you have gone through it, and it had been of some use to you, if you have any queries feel free to ask any clarifications any doubts. Interview is one such thing where is going to decide about your future, means how you are going to be placed in your carrier, but today I am going to discuss about another set of interview, but that is very clearly categorized as group discussions.

So, today I am going to discuss about group discussions followed by verbal communication, now here let me make a little bit of clarification you remember that when I was talking with a soft skill in which there was a last set of skills called verbal communication which I deliberately deferred, because I thought that let this be discussed when it is appropriately being applied, and this is a situation where appropriately this verbal communication is going to be more meaningful, body language I have discussed normal communication in which I have discussed this during the interview.

Now, what happens is in the group discussion, it is more of a verbal communication and less of a body language, but both are important in this. So, I will be discussing about the verbal communication just after I discuss over the group discussions, then you will find in the following weeks when I will discuss about the negotiations, marketing strategies, and also the time management, in such cases you will find that all your skills are going to be used combinely. So, the next 3 weeks lectures are going to be making applications of anything that you have learnt till today.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:18)



Now group discussions very commonly known as GD, I have advice at one point that usually do not use acronyms.

So, if you say that I have the interview and then I have a GD of course, your fraternity yours to friends they will understand, but it is always better that you can always say that there is going to be an interview followed by a group discussion, it is courteous to say that, but; however, since most of you are familiar with this word called GD I used it.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:51)



Additionally, the first thing is to be understood is what is the general structure of a group discussion, group discussion simply comes to a stage when you have applied for a job, through very rigorous scrutiny, you have been then shortlisted for calling for the interview, then you have been interviewed gradually by sieving you will find the number of candidates applied and then number of candidates shortlisted, and then number of candidates invited for interview and the number of candidates in invited for group discussion, gradually the list will become smaller shorter and shorter and shorter.

Finally after this you will find that there will be a selection made, in some cases group discussion is held before that they do the first short listing of the candidates from the group discussion, then they call them for individual interview, it makes a quite a good sense during group discussion people are observed and then they are brought in here, it is essentially to see that how those people are performing in groups whether they are now worthy of calling for the interview. So, it is I am not pressing on a situation that interview first in the group discussion next it is only I have placed it here interview I have discussed now I am going to discuss over the group discussion, it is the discussion of the organization who is conducting this selections process in which they will decide when is going to be, before interview and group discussion there had been a stage where they had in a written test, and I mentioned about it the written test is nothing but testing your hard skills, and then when it comes to group discussion and the interview it is a soft skill that matters the most what is a structure.

Usually say 10 12 persons in a group what they will do is if there is a large number of candidates, then they will divide into multiple groups, and they will conducts the group discussions parallely maybe, if they have gravity of time and if the time is fine time is adequate, then they might have it one after another, when this 10 to 12 persons are selected for a group, there may be some process by which they will be selecting it maybe by their background checks background qualifications, or it may be the kind of positions that they are buying it for, it may be the kind of classification of the candidates in terms of their primary scrutiny of the applications.

So, it is does not matter to us we need not really elaborate on why you are chosen in one of the groups, but say there is a 10 to 12 persons in a group, why the group size is kept generally small, see 10 to 12 is also a good number, but it is basically all these group discussions will be held in a room, and the room will have a central large table when the

table becomes too large, and the group becomes too large in such cases the interviewer or the I would say the examiners who are watching evaluators, who are watching all the candidates it becomes difficult for them to focus on different people, because during the group discussion you do not expect that the evaluator is evaluating the person who is speaking at that instant.

No evaluator is watching everybody's reaction, evaluator is watching that person who is speaking at this particular moment, and then also parallelly watching all others their reactions, because they are going to make a selection out of these entire set. So, 10 to 12 is a very reasonable number which you know usually in a table of say 8 to 10 feet can be all right, what is the shape of the table it can be pure rectilinear, or it can be semi circular or round. So, it is 10 to deal in a group there can be multiple such groups, see the thing is if there are more than 4 or 5 such groups, depending on the number of candidates that they are short listing and calling from the GD it may. So, happen that when they are making again a short listing of the candidates out of those groups, and then there will be a gain called for another group discussion, it is just to see the equal equivalents of the candidates stretch of the emotional intelligence or the manifestations, it is like this 5 groups of 10 each 50 candidates shortlisted out of the scrutiny and the 5 groups 10 each 50.

So now from each group say they will select 2. So now, you have 5 groups. So, it will become then 10. So, 2 from that each group now they will be called again for the GD, and then out of the 10 they will select only 2, that is how the whole GD goes on. So, there could be multiple groups the table is usually it can be a semicircular one, it can be a full circular one or it can be a rectilinear one, whatever it is also it can be over as well see what is the basic idea basic idea is during the group discussion everybody should be able to see the other person, this visibility is has to be ensured by the evaluators or the selection company members whoever are organizing. If anybody is speaking others are listening eye contacts is must you must have seen the minutes of a long rectilinear table that somebody who sits in this corner when he is speaking he is speaking diagonally, because he wants to get the attention of most of the people, but the person who is on the same edge on the left-hand side I can assure you after 2 persons after that speaker.

2 persons after the person whoever is sitting does not have any eye contact with this person, then what happens is he bends forward to look at the person the moment he

bends forward to look at the person, the other person who is sitting on the left he is being deprived of the visibility. So, he also bends. So, everybody keeps on bending on the table to have a good look of that particular person, this is resolved architecturally by making an oval table. So, if the table is oval that is the best, but quite often I have seen the group discussion has been held on a rectangular table, the reason is that wherever they are organizing they did not really realize and there was no requisition earlier for this. So, naturally the table turned out to be a rectangular which was available, but the best is the circular best, but if it is a circular table then it has to be a very large table, the moment it becomes a very large table then the pairwise distance increases.

So, the group discussion matters a lot because you have to really sense other people's reaction to interject, or to add, to collaborate, to appreciate, then comes the topics a topic is suggested by the evaluator, how depending on what is the requirement of that particular position for which people are you know vying for the evaluators will decide a topic, or maybe they may select more than one topics and then they give options to the entire group by lottery or by raising you know by consensus, general consensus common consensus or by voting, that whichever select topic you would like to select. So, ultimately that one topic will be selected. So, the topic is suggested by the evaluator, sometime not every time the evaluator is he wants to see that what is the kind of topic these candidates are going to bring forward. So, it might. So, happen very, very strategically the evaluator would ask that I do not have any topic do you want to suggest in topic, then immediately the 10 12 persons you know they have to write down that topic and evaluate will take just one or 2 minutes to review all and select one, and then float that particular topic to for group discussion that is how it goes on.

The topic generated by the group as I said. So, the topic either is selected by the evaluator or generated by the group, time limit see 2 long group discussion will make it diluted it is good enough it is 30 minutes to 60 minutes at the most, beyond that it becomes boring it becomes irrelevant people start talking irrelevantly, and it does not really converge to anything it does not get concluded. So, it is 30 minutes is a very reasonable time, and 30 minutes is not less apparently 30 minutes it just passes by, but when somebody speaks it is just like if you allow a person to speak for 5 minutes, it becomes quite a long time, within 3 minutes if anybody can put their point forward here, what happens in the group discussion each individual is going to put their points that are

going to give a lecture. So, it is not meant that they will give lecture, they will only put for their points either in favor or contesting, it or against, or objecting to somebody's opinions, or you know corroborating somebody's opinion, whatever it is 3 minutes each is good enough for time, and 3 minutes if you ever tried to speak for 3 minutes continuously you will find it is quite a long time.

Now, 3 minutes into 10, 30 minutes, but I expect that since it will be a you know back and forth discussions. So, it cannot be really concluded in 30 minutes if the size is smaller it can be 30 minutes, but the thing is if the whole day goes on for this kind of group discussions, it does not really yield any good results. So, it is the selection committee they will decide how much time they would like to give to individual, and then total it up and that is the final time. There is another thing this time which is given it is declared it is declared and if necessary the evaluator might put a time clock over there, a timer to see how much time it is taking and; that means, everybody has to really have a very clear conception of a perception of how much time he has been another 2, if it is supposed 10 candidates and 30 minutes maybe people may feel it is very short I cannot finish my talks within it, but again I said it is not a lecture that is expected, it is the viewpoints which had expected, yet suppose it is 30 minutes given to you have to do it within that 30 minutes that is all nothing beyond no extra time will be given, and in that if somebody did not get a scope to speak then it should not be always attributed to the person who spoke more, it is the attribute it can be attributed to the person who did not raise his point and ultimately penetrated the whole discussion to put his point forward.

So, that a time limit time limit is flexible depending on the a evaluators choice, in this everybody has to participate voluntarily, nobody will be there to say now this is your turn you please speak, you stop now please the other gentleman you speak no nobody is going to control nobody is going to guide this discussions, once the topic has been given and the time has been framed and declared, and then the evaluators simply sit quietly and watch and watch to see that who volunteers the first move that is also important, who want is the first move if everybody is expecting that the evaluator will give to decide the turn like say one should start from here it can be it can so happen the evaluator just to save that time of you know a little bit of doubt we amongst the mind of the participants, that who is supposed to start, evaluators may say that I am floating this particular topic it is to be initiated by this person, he may do it and then after that it is open it is open

house, he may give a kind of what we call as a kick start of the whole discussion, but most often the entering the GD once the topic has been given at the time has been declared, then the evaluator does not prefer to give any person an opportunity to begin, it is to see that who is the person who is fair has a very strong soft skill of beginning, beginning our discussion that is very, very important for any of the groups. So, everybody has to participate voluntarily nobody will be invited to say now; that means, everybody has to find out his own time to penetrate the discussion.

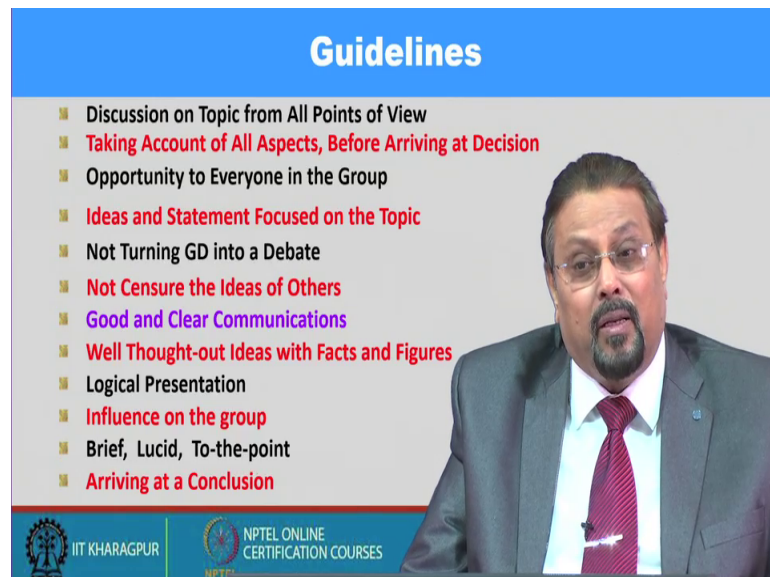
Interject by interjecting or by whatever gestures body languages, whatever without any fight, simply entering into the discussion and that starts putting point forward, in case the evaluator finds that there is somebody who did not get a chance to speak, two things will happen I said it can be attributed to his weakness of penetrating or communication skill, but at the same time evaluator also wants to see the person who may be weak in this communication skill, but does he have any strong point to say maybe he might come up with a very, very brilliant idea. So, somebody who had been remaining quite or did not get a chance to speak, then it is evaluators responsibility to poke him coax him to say something, nobody in the group discussion can ever remain quite take this point forward. Then after the group all most of the fag end of the group discussion the one of the persons one of the participants will be requested to you know volunteer to summarize, see as I said that one person may be requested to begin the group discussion here, one person may be requested to volunteer to summarize.

Now, when it is requested to volunteer; that means, is where the evaluator is not pinpointing on any person any specific person, he is simply saying now the time is coming to an end, we have only 3 minutes is there anybody who would like to volunteer for summarizing it, and then they watch who is a person who is volunteering you know all these are nothing but your manifestation of skills soft skills of how you take care and take control of the entire discussion, and ultimately volunteer, they are watching what they are watching who is volunteering for conclusion summarizing they would watch, who is volunteering for beginning, the group discussion they will watch who is volunteering to say something, they will also watch who is not volunteering to say anything, or whose viewpoints are not very strong you know. So, in the whole general structure you know you can always in your institution if you belong to an institution a before a student, then I would always suggest that let there be a mock group discussions,

the mock group discussions amongst the students are quite often held when there are impromptu debates impromptu discussions.

By which this can be you know invite. So, this learning process is internal you have to do, there may be some workshops there may be some classes who are teaching this, there may be some training group assist institutions, who are training people how to appear for the interview the way I said the way I am saying that group discussion may be that, somebody coming to me a group of students coming to me and trying to understand when I will tell them it is nothing but training this is what I am trying to forward to you.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:46)



Guidelines

- Discussion on Topic from All Points of View
- Taking Account of All Aspects, Before Arriving at Decision
- Opportunity to Everyone in the Group
- Ideas and Statement Focused on the Topic
- Not Turning GD into a Debate
- Not Censure the Ideas of Others
- Good and Clear Communications
- Well Thought-out Ideas with Facts and Figures
- Logical Presentation
- Influence on the group
- Brief, Lucid, To-the-point
- Arriving at a Conclusion

IIT KHARAGPUR | NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSES

Now there are certain guidelines that you should you know honor that guideline. It for this is you know there should be discussion on that topic from all point of view, there should be really no bias if there is a topic which has been floated by the organizer, by the evaluator then the discussion of the topic should be from all point of view, positive negative it is just like debate in debate there is one person who is for demotion another person who is against the motion, you know the person who is against the motion may be a believer of the for the motion, but he's such a good orator that he his skill is reflected through finding out the points against the motion and winning the debate.

So, it is basically all things depend on the intellectual exercises, and the communication skills and the soft skills, how one can convince others with negative points, every point in life will have one side of it which is positive there could be always another side of it

which is negative. So, the thing is that is what the debate becomes so, interesting. Today if you find that somebody who is speaking for the motion about this particular topic the next day you floated he goes to the against abortion; that means, he is intellectual is. So, strong that he knows which points are to be placed for the motion and which ones have to be placed against the motion and generally in debates, essentially here the group discussion very much tends to be debate like, but I will put a note of cautioning you will see after in debate, what happens is the person who raises the points or configures the points and then ultimately convinces the house against the motion, all these things about the points for the motion and then first he frames for the motion then he cuts each and every point that he configured as a for the motion and he creates his own logic his understanding his points against the motion.

In general, they are the winner that is how it is. So, the discussion on the topic should be from all points of view, you take account of all aspects before taking a decision, you know what happens in the group discussion when you have a topic and you are talking you are bringing forward your points, you do not be you know single minded by being single minded, it might sound to be you know pressing pushing, but the thing is when you are contested on that particular point, then you should have sufficient amount of answer or logic to you know challenge that contest. So, if suppose before you know deciding what you are going to speak, it is a split-second affair in the mind if you decide that what is what you want to speak what are the points which you are going to put forward and take account of all aspects. Give opportunity to everyone in the group, this is a very strong point daer friends please do follow it, you are being watched not only for how do you speak, you are also being watched how well you accommodate everybody in the group discussion, you yourself accommodate everybody in the group discussion your group discussion does not your speaking does not mean that you are the winner.

It may be that you spoke very little, but you accommodated everybody made everybody. So, comfortable in the group that you become a leader because the leader, is not the person like a political leader who has been always saying something on his own, the leader can be an army leader who speaks very little he gives only pinpoint instructions system, and then spread that particular instructions to the lower rungs. So, that you know the orders are executed. So, here in this you know give opportunity of everyone, your ideas and statements should be always focused to the topic I have seen in many cases not

in in group discussion even in conversations or even in just general discussions, of course, means if you sit on a you know one of the child shop tea shop and then we keep on talking on one topic, and say 5 of us in a group or discussing that is also group discussion, in such cases basically ideas and statements must be focused on the topic let there be no beating around the bush on the topic.

Let them be very focused if you want to say something say something which is very focused to this, and do not bring in any kind of examples which are relevant to this, and also do not you know there are many dos and don'ts I will talk about, but what is coming in my mind; let me share with you, now do not even if somebody is putting some point forward you if you see that it is within the domain of the topic, appreciate it if it is beyond the topic then in that case you just cut it there itself cut it saying that this is irrelevant let us not discuss about it come to the point, that is how you do it you take care of the group, for god sake never convert or turn the group discussion in an debate, this I mentioned earlier a group discussion where one person is saying something another person is contesting, there are multiple of viewpoints there are oblique viewpoints there are aligned viewpoints all these are coming, this likeliness that the group discussion will turn out to be a debate, and in the debate it is not necessary as in the debate we have a 4th emotion and against the motion in group discussion is not necessary that everybody has to say something which the others have said the opposite of that.

No, it is not necessary it can. So, happen in the group discussion that somebody has put a point forward you can always support him corroborate him, and say this is what it is what he has said I am additionally given some points. So, never turn the GD into a debate, if the evaluator finds that some people are trying to convert or turn this particular GD into debate, then immediately marks negative for them, and here you know what happens let me tell you in the group discussion how it is how it is evaluated the evaluator will have a checklist he will make his own prepare checklist, and that checklist he will never show to the candidates who are appearing for the group discussion in that checklist he will put all those points forward, first of all the volunteering skill how one volunteers, accommodating skill how is accommodating the groups, penetration skills there how he penetrates into the discussion, the concluding skill that how he concludes the positive points putting forward or stressing the points you know, there will be many such attributes a criteria that they are looking for in a candidate for during selection, and they

will write everything, and each one of them then there will be candidates name over there and they will keep on giving a grade over there, say out of 10 or out of 5 whatever is convenient for them to compute for each one of them.

Wherever somebody is speaking then immediately that particular persons assessment will start, and it will start then many of the slots will be filled up with certain points after that when another person is speaking this other person's assessment starts, but mind it also the person who spoke before is being watched not only that the person who is spoke before that also being watched. So, everybody is going to be watched and if there is any negative that comes into the eye of the evaluator you will put that negative marking in that particular point. So, ultimately, they will add it up and see that whoever earns the maximum here also, if suppose out of those attributes there are certain attributes which are having higher weightage compared to the other attributes there can be some lower weighted attributes. So, they will also put a weighted value to that and then finally, computed statistically it is a very simple excel exercise which they can do, and then by multiplying the wts of individual wts of these attributes which they are listed over here.

With the value that they have earned against each of the person then multiplied by their attributes to how much the cell value will be finally, there and then finally, added up. So, this person total is basically the overall attributes that the person has earned. So, minded throughout the GD operations you are being watched you are under scanner, some people I am talking about the evaluators what they do is they put the camera on, they do not take a decision about somebody or immediately after the group discussion, they put the camera on they put the sound on rather I would say that the whole video, on later on they sit quietly with the expert group and evaluates each person's moves. So, dear friend during group discussion every move of yours is going to be recorded or watched, be very careful. So, here this suggestion you keep in mind, you would be lucky that if there is no such recording of that or camera of that camera towards you all of you will be lucky, but at the same time if such situation occurs then the evaluator will be very strong person that instantly he is watching and evaluating and put the marks.

So, that will make that will rather decide about your fate, then comes not censure of the ideas of others, what is censuring? Is just to prove that you are right if somebody is putting upon forward you, cut it, you reject it, you object to it you contest it this is basically a censuring see a good decision maker just not necessarily a person, who

always says the right and the others are saying wrong, no good decision vehicle is a person who takes everybody's positive points adds it up, and then negates all the negativities, and all the added points he puts forward as a decision, that is a good decision made up and in the group discussion in the GD basically people are being selected for decision making, and in the decision making board when there will be multiple people speaking just like boardroom discussions, multiple people speaking it is nothing but a very, very sophisticated group discussion. So, mind it today you are sitting here for recruitment purposes, tomorrow you may be sitting in a boardroom as a director of the company or maybe I am one of the top decision maker of the company for taking decision the group discussion you are having.

So, I will never have the mindset to seneschal others in group discussion all of you at the same level; that means, all of you are contesting for a position, but in the boardroom there may be a chairman, there may be a sentry there may be other hierarchical persons, in such cases there is quite possibility that the chairman is going to censure others maybe that if he is authorized to do that it is fine, but the good chairman the very good leader will never censure others and give equal opportunity everybody to air their views and then finally, you know just pin pick up all the positive points then he makes his own statement, and ultimately gives another decision of the worlds.

That's how it is good and clear communication, you must have noticed one thing I have changed the color of this particular cell line for a reason, group discussion very much depends on your verbal communication, I said it is more of verbal communication and less of body language, in the interview it is a verbal communication, but more of a body language.

So, here in this a good and clear communication skill, especially whether it is normal verbal communication or verbal communication most often it is a verbal communication, well thought out ideas with facts and figures, whenever you are presenting your cases it should be very well thought out the facts and figures should be right never give bluff, during the GD never give bluff already during the interview I said that do not lie if you lie, your body language you will show, people can make out that you are lying, here to never give facts and figures which are wrong, and never gave false figures. Always make a logical presentation the logical presentation when you do you will find your logical presentation is going to lift you up, if you are very logical if your facts and figures are

very right if you are very to the point, then you will find the others are also likely to support you.

In the group discussion quite often I have heard that somebody takes a lead from the other person, queue from the other person, saying that yes I have to say something I will start with the point where he ended; that means, if suppose you are the person from where he is taking the lead; that means, you are now the leader first at this particular point, then he continues and keeps on adding to the whole thing, this is also very good gesture of the person who is speaking next and because he is taking the lead. So, he is a very positive minded person, he is not the person who is trying to show others that what he is saying is rubbish, and what I am saying is the right. So, logical presentation is important influence on the group how do you influence the group, you know basically your body language your speaking style, your eye contacts, your smile, your overall stature, your personality, your poise, all these keep on playing role at a time.

This is a very interesting game you know here it cannot be really mathematically expressed it, just happens the moment you find it a group that there will be one person everybody starts liking, for many reasons maybe that you have not really interacted, but the person is speaking look at him and you have a feeling that this person seems to be a gentle person, and he is having a nice personality, and he started with a respect to everybody, and once he entered the room he looked at everybody and given a smile.

So, all this does playing positive role and then when he speaks everybody stop you know first listens to him, gives a little less than a year and then if he is saying something wrong then you have a right to say opposite to it, or contest it. So, influence in the group is another's point which comes in, during the GD try to remain brief and be listen, do not use jargons do not use catchy words you remember I said this earlier there when you communicate, when you say something do not use like you know you know all these kind of thing is you know if you if I give you a choice basket do not use this kind of term no you say very clearly lucidly if I give you multiple options.

Then it is it sounds better, the point is if you are using jargons you may be expressing or you may be trying to reflect that how good you are in English speaking, but the here they are not looking for an English teacher they are looking for a person who is speaking in English, but expressing his viewpoints very lucidly to others. So, that it immediately you

know reaches the mind of the listener. So, bill list be brief be lucid and to the point you will definitely win, and arrive at a conclusion, when the guide you know whole group discussion goes on as it starts with a topic then it also has to end with a conclusion, and this conclusion you know whoever is speaking last almost coming to the last by virtue of the whole game plan, then it he should really pick up quickly the opportunity of concluding, because he knows after this little again the ball will be passed on to the person who spoke earlier. So, if the person who is starts look here the person who is starts, he has the advantage of starting of point, not being very you know concerned about who spoke who is going to speak what because he is the first opportunity he starts he is an advantage.

Whatever is in his mind he will be speaking and the person who speaks last has the has the advantage of concluding it. So, there is you know you decide where you want to be, there are persons he must have seen I have I have told earlier who wants to speak the last also I will talk about them here, the person who has to speak the last he keeps quiet all through tries to keep quiet all through take everybody's point, and ultimately you know he makes his he frames his own idea and then he puts a point forward in such a manner as if the whole people, had been talking the relevant things and he is speaking since this is also another style of the leader, this is also another style of you know various administrative bosses the bureaucrats you know they pick up they give chance to everybody they allow everybody, to speak does not mean that he cannot speak he allows everybody to speak positive negative, he keeps on noting down the positive points and the negative points and he makes a mental note you will not be able to make out they are trained for that.

They will just simply sit and listen to everybody, every individual like this and keep a make a mental note, of the positive points and negative points he does not bother who said what who is the person who said positive or negative he just picks up the positive and negative points, and ultimately end of all giving opportunity everybody he conclude saying terrible. So, you have you know you have expressed your viewpoint I have heard it now let me come up with the resolution of it, he immediately you know list back the positive points which he wants to instruct and the negative points which he wants to discard and finally, we will find everybody is trying to say yes what you are saying is

right, sir actually yes this is what it is basically who supplied the points positive or negative to this boss all of you.

So, mind it in the group discussion the person who concludes is probably the smartest person, but again I will put a note of cautioning do not try to be smart as every time, then there will be another smart person who can also catch you at that vertical point, is that all right I will discuss further on this in the next lectures.

Thank you very much.