

A group discussion is an occasion where a group of people who share the same goals comes together to brainstorm and share ideas on a specific topic. These discussions do not necessarily need people to meet physically. A discussion can take place through a conference call, face to face or via a website where people comment on a particular issue. In an educational setting, group discussions are carried out by student's sharing a subject or an entire course. The whole idea behind students forming discussion groups is ensuring that a person who understands a given topic better than the rest has a platform to share the knowledge with his/her peers.

Members of an organization can also form a discussion group that will help in outsourcing ideas. A look at the advantages and disadvantages of group discussions will help one understand what to expect from a group discussion.

Advantages

One key advantage of participating in a group discussion is the fact that an individual will develop communication skills as well as the ability to work as part of a team. Such skills are beneficial when one is in a corporate environment.

In the case of studies, discussions help reinforce the content they learn in school. As the students work together and teach one another, their understanding is improved as a result of discussion and explanations.

The content under discussion is often broken down. Thus it becomes easy for the individuals involved to tackle more extensive and complex problems more efficiently than they would have done if they addressed the issues alone.

Discussion groups are essential as they foster accountability. The group members hold each other accountable. As a result, a lot of careless errors are avoided because everyone is responsible for the success or failure of the outcome they are trying to achieve.

Discussions help in pooling together knowledge, skills, and expertise needed to achieve a specific goal.

The involved parties can learn how to efficiently utilize time and resources since every member will be working towards the same goal as the rest. Thus, if a discussion is to take place at a specific time, group members will strive to ensure that they keep time unless they want to be left out.

Disadvantages

Sometimes other participants may not contribute to the discussion yet they will benefit from the outcome. In school, an assignment may be assigned to a group, but only two people will work on it. However, everyone will be graded based on these two individuals even though they did not contribute.

Instructors are often tasked with the monitoring of discussion groups and ensure that their progress is uniform and no member lags behind.

Another challenge may be the fact that people may have a different attitude towards collaborative work. Thus participating in group discussions will be less helpful.

Students may be shy in a group setting, and this will limit their contribution. Sometimes they may fail to contribute, and this will render the discussion unhelpful.

The project must be formulated in a way that will ensure every group member is an active participant. Thus, the instructor may have a hard time preparing instructions that fulfill this criterion.