



## THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZING GROUP DISCUSSION FOR IMPROVING EFL LEARNERS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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**Annotation:** *Obviously, communication is one of the most important aspects of the language learning process. Communication skills are essential in various aspects of life, playing a crucial role in personal relationships, academic success, professional development, and social interactions. By developing strong communication skills, individuals can navigate personal and professional challenges, express themselves effectively, build meaningful relationships, and contribute to their personal growth, academic success, and others. To develop communication skills, teachers can apply diverse methods in the classroom. One of the most effective approaches to improving learners' speaking abilities is organizing small group discussions in lessons. This paper includes information about the effects and importance of organizing group discussions. Group debates provide valuable opportunities for students to practice and refine their communication abilities in a supportive and interactive setting.*

**Key words:** *group discussions, communication skills, speaking abilities, language learning, interactive environment*

Speaking is one of the most important skills that we need to practice a lot to master. It is obvious that effective communication skills are essential in various aspects of life, playing a crucial role in personal relationships, academic success, professional development, and social interaction. In addition, communication skills are at the core of language learning, as students must develop the ability to speak, listen, read, and write effectively in English to express themselves clearly and accurately. English classes provide opportunities to practice verbal communications and improve communication skills through dialogues, discussions, presentations, and role-plays, enabling students to articulate their thoughts and ideas fluently in English. Organizing group discussions is a beneficial educational strategy for fostering the development of students' communication abilities in various ways. Small group discussions play a pivotal role in improving the oral performance of EFL students. (Anthoni, 2014) According to researchers, there are three reasons why group discussions in English class are important for enhancing speaking skills. Firstly, small group discussions can foster student-teacher and student-student interactions in the classroom, increasing the activeness of students. Secondly, group discussions promote meaningful learning content and interaction among learners. Finally, teachers organize group discussions as they help students embrace a responsible and independent mode of learning. Group discussions



are used for several purposes, including social, intellectual, and emotional. When it comes to the social purposes of group discussions, they help students build their inner skills and confidence for offering their own opinions on the topic in small group discussions. Intellectually, language learners acquire profound knowledge on a given topic by listening to the diverse opinions of their peers. The emotional purpose of organizing discussions is that when students participate in discussions, they may have a sense of involvement in the learning process.

The research employed qualitative and secondary data analysis to investigate the potential benefits of organizing group discussions in English classes. By investigating different studies regarding the importance of group discussion, lots of information was gathered, including information about organizing small discussions to enhance the oral abilities of EFL learners. Here are some key points highlighting the importance of group discussions for improving students' speaking skills:

- **Enhanced verbal communication.** Group discussions offer a dynamic setting for improving verbal communication skills through interactive dialogue, active listening, and the collaborative exchange of ideas. Small discussions in classrooms provide opportunities for students to practice speaking in a supportive and interactive environment, allowing them to express their thoughts, share ideas, and engage in conversations with their peers. Group discussions challenge students to articulate their ideas clearly, organize their thoughts effectively, and convey their points of view in a coherent and structured manner, promoting clarity and precision in verbal expression.

- **Active listening.** Group discussions play a significant role in promoting active listening skills among participants. Obviously, active listening is a crucial component of effective communication and involves attentively processing and understanding what others are saying. During group discussions, participants are encouraged to focus their attention on the speakers, listening carefully to the content of their messages, demonstrating respect, and showing interest in what is being communicated. Active listening in group debates involves paraphrasing or summarizing others' points to demonstrate understanding, clarify meaning, and reflect back the speaker's message accurately, ensuring effective communication and mutual comprehension.

- **Critical thinking.** Small group discussions serve as a powerful tool for fostering critical thinking skills among participants by encouraging analysis, evaluation, problem-solving, and the synthesis of ideas in a collaborative setting. Organizing group debates brings together individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, levels, and viewpoints, fostering a rich exchange of ideas, opinions, and perspectives that challenge participants to consider alternative viewpoints and think critically about complex issues.



- **Vocabulary expansion.** Group debates expose students to a diverse range of vocabulary, language structure, and communication styles by providing opportunities for exposure to new words and language use in a contextually rich environment. Group discussions introduce participants to a variety of vocabulary words, idioms, phrases, and expressions used by peers, facilitating exposure to diverse language usage and expanding the participants' lexical repertoire. They can encourage participants to practice using vocabulary words in speech, reinforcing memorization, pronunciation, and application of new terms in communicative settings, which strengthens vocabulary retention and fluency.

- **Feedback and reflection.** Group discussions offer valuable opportunities for participants to provide feedback to one another and engage in reflective practices that enhance learning, communication skills, and collaborative interactions. Debates enable learners to provide peer feedback on ideas, contributions, presentations, and communication skills, offering constructive criticism, suggestions for improvement, and praise for effective communication strategies. Participants in group discussions can seek clarification, elaborate on ideas, ask questions, and respond to comments, fostering a dialogue that encourages deeper understanding, nuanced explanations, and collaborative exchange of ideas.

- **Real-world communication skills.** Group discussions play a pivotal role in promoting real-world communication skills by simulating authentic interpersonal interactions, enhancing collaboration, and fostering effective communication strategies applicable in various professional, academic, and social contexts. Group discussions encourage participants to engage in persuasive communication by presenting compelling arguments, supporting claims with evidence, and influencing others through logical reasoning and persuasive techniques, skills essential for real-world persuasion and advocacy.

Group discussions can increase engagement and participation in the lesson, boosting a sense of confidence among learners. Group discussions are likely to provide efficient usage of "speaking time" as they can enable learners to exchange their opinions. (Fauzi, 2017)

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