



O-CITY PROJECT

MODULE IV.1 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



Erasmus+

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1. Lesson Document

Lesson 3 Topic 5 Conversation

Moving the conversation along

Introduction

One skill is to kick off a conversation with a good start. Another is the capacity to maintain this conversation, and make it flow or go forward. In a debate, and if the discussions get tense, you might face a situation when you struggle to decide or move to the next point, the conversation being stuck in some point where it seems impossible to go ahead. Thus, it is important to apply conversational techniques that will help to go out of this situation and achieve the results that are expected from the conversation.

Once this lesson is completed and approved, learners will be able to:

1. Maintain the conversation on track.
2. Apply techniques that support the conversation flow.
3. Get out of stuck situations.

In this lesson, we will learn how to use different conversational techniques that facilitate the discussion's efficiency.

1. Prevent conversational struggle situations from happening.

The first element to help you move the conversation forward is preventive. Before you need to apply techniques that will help you to get out of difficult situations, you might simply apply techniques that will help you maintain the conversation on track.

- a. Take care about the conversation framework.

For this, a basic would be to make sure that people are concerned by the topic, and that you instill a participative process so each one can express his feelings. People tend to be more passive, aggressive, or assertive. A good conversational framework will help them to build constructive dialogue and assertiveness (see topic 3 – lesson 2). Respect and trust among participants will make a good framework to proactivity,

participation and decision taking. Setting decision making processes, like voting in case of not reaching a consensus will also help moving forward.

b. Manage a conversation by the clock.

Watching the clock is important in an effective meeting. In your agenda, you might have allocated specific time for each topic, according to your estimation. When nobody manages time, it is easy to get distracted by other topics. Also, as people attending to the conversation cannot dedicate to other issues, this will become time waste meaning loss of productivity. Starting the meeting on time and ending on time will enhance your performance and efficiency. Then, regularly check the agenda and how you are going with respect to the different items to be discussed. If you are running a large or complex meeting, consider asking a colleague to serve as timekeeper.



<https://www.canva.com/photos/MADQ5NyH3j4/>

2. Move forward a conversation that get stuck.

Despite your efforts, the conversation enters in a loop and participants are not able to focus, find an agreement, or move along? Then it is time to apply some conversational techniques that will help getting out of this situation.

a. Summarise positions

A good technique to apply when the conversation struggle is to take some time to summarise the situation and position. Then, it is an occasion to reformulate the opinions that have been expressed by the different participants and ask for clarification if needed. Maybe the struggle is just due to a misunderstanding? Then this summary will help clarify the panorama and understand clearly the differences

in the positions taken. You might also ask for examples that will illustrate the positions given.

b. Asking for inner reasons and exercise of empathy

Once you have clarified the positions, the next steps, if those stand on a strong disagreement, would be to understand the inner reasons that are behind the different positions. Why do people defend this point of view? Their personal situation, background or culture might justify a particular point of view. Also, and if you need to reach a consensus, you might ask the different participants in the conversations to put themselves in other's shoes to understand their point of view. And of course, apply this to yourself. Then, you might work on a compromise – intermediate position.

c. Make a break

Despite all the above, you remain unable to make this go further. Well then, you might just stop the conversation, take a break, go for some fresh air, have a coffee... whatever is needed to change people's mind and go for a new start. Some experts have found that taking a break is good for creativity. So, it can help with maturing a topic, spin around it, and come back later with new, fresh ideas that will help you find a suitable answer.

Conclusion

Moving the conversation forward is not always an easy task. But there are some tips that can help you to make sure that you will achieve the goals set for the conversation when it starts to struggle.