

VEV733 : Special Module on Leadership-I

(1 credit course of NRCVEE : 0.5-0-1)

The Socratic Method

Instructor : Dr. Kushal Shah, EE Dept

Being able to hold meaningful discussions is a very important aspect of being a good leader. In this course, we will discuss various aspects of this process of discussion and specially focus on those aspects that determine the effectiveness of a discussion. In any discussion, the leader or moderator plays a very important role. We will also discuss the various skills required to become a good moderator. Lastly, we will take up the teaching method based on discussions (instead of lectures) and discuss how one can effectively teach by this method.

Q: What is the importance of discussions in leadership?

A: The answer depends on the kind of organisation/group one is leading. In a hierarchical or orthodox organisation/group, leadership does not really require any discussion skills. But in a democratic organisation/group, good discussion skills make a huge difference. In IT companies, start-ups and academic institutes, having good discussion skills can make a huge difference in the effectiveness of the leader. Nowadays we are seeing the emergence of the concept of 'Mohalla Sabhas' which are local discussion meetings organised by political leaders in India. Gathering people for such events is easy, but to actually hold an effective discussion is very very challenging! In the MBA admission process also, group discussions play a very important role.

Q: How are discussions related to 'value education'?

A: Values are usually defined as principles or standards of behaviour. Now one can choose one's value system either from the point of view of morality or from the perspective of consciousness. The eastern philosophical traditions have always laid more emphasis on the latter. According to this perspective, the more our consciousness expands, the better our value system will be. And one of the ways to expand our consciousness is to be able to have meaningful exchange of ideas with other people. Also, the more we learn to accommodate other people's views in a healthy way with a sense of expansion instead of compromise, the better leaders we will be.

Modules :

1. Introduction
2. Importance of discussion in our personal life
3. Importance of discussion in our professional life
4. Difference between 'discussion' and 'interactive session'
5. Measure of effectiveness of a discussion
6. Basic ingredients of an effective discussion I
7. Basic ingredients of an effective discussion II
8. Role of the moderator
9. Skillset of an effective moderator I
10. Skillset of an effective moderator II
11. Aspects of discussion in large groups
12. Teaching through discussions
13. Pros and cons of the Socratic Method
14. Summary

Grading :

Only Pass/Fail.

Pass criteria : Attendance in 12 out of 14 sessions.

Maximum Class Size : 30 students