Building a constructive discussion

Support Pack

Contents

What's in it for me?

Q: *In what situations might the framework and language from the course be useful?*

A: In a variety of situations:

- In <u>team meetings</u>, to share ideas, provide feedback, and make decisions collectively. It helps create a positive environment for idea generation, problem-solving, and goal alignment.
- In <u>project planning</u> and <u>execution,</u> to engage in open and constructive communication to clarify objectives, allocate tasks, and discuss potential challenges or risks.
- In <u>client meetings</u>, to understand their requirements, address concerns, and provide effective solutions. It helps build rapport, manage expectations, and maintain a positive relationship with clients.
- During <u>performance reviews</u>, to provide feedback, set goals, and identify areas for improvement.
- In <u>brainstorming sessions</u>, to share diverse ideas and perspectives.

Emergency Aid

Q: I have a meeting in 15 minutes. How can you help me prepare?

A: Feel free to take inspiration from the example responses provided below. You can also use the brief Info Boxes for a quick review.

Sample answer 1

Martin: Hey team, I've been thinking about ways to improve our project efficiency, and I'd recommend introducing regular code review sessions.
Mia: Hmm, well, I'm kind of split on this. On the one hand, code reviews could improve code quality and knowledge sharing, but some team members might find it time-consuming.
Martin: That's a valid point. How about we start with a small pilot project to see how it goes?
Joanna: Sounds reasonable to me.
Lucy: I have no objections. We just need to document our experiences and lessons learned to inform future initiatives in terms of time management and productivity.
Mia: Will we also set up regular feedback sessions to ensure everyone's voices are heard?
Martin: Absolutely.
Joanna: Okay then, let's give it a try.
Martin: It's decided then. Going forward, we'll start with a pilot project and evaluate its effectiveness before making any further decisions. Thanks everyone for the discussion.

Sample answer 2

John: Alright team, I'd suggest we implement a new feature that allows users to customize their profiles. This could enhance user engagement and satisfaction significantly, as it provides users with a sense of ownership and personalization within our platform. How does it sound to you, team?

Sarah: Hmm, I'm a bit leery of adding more complexity. It might complicate user interface.

Ali: I see where you're coming from, Sarah. However, I believe we can mitigate that complexity by implementing a user-friendly interface with clear guidance and options. Additionally, offering this feature could give us a competitive edge in the market and attract new users who are looking for customization options.

Sarah: My concern here would be that introducing too many customization options could overwhelm users, leading to decision fatigue and ultimately, a decrease in user satisfaction

Ali: I'm afraid that by not implementing this feature, we might fall behind our competitors who are already offering similar customization options. Additionally, user feedback indicates a strong desire for personalization features, which could lead to increased retention and user loyalty if implemented effectively.

John: There are a couple of contrasting views here. Let's table this discussion for now and revisit this in a month. In the meantime, let's gather more data on user preferences and conduct some usability testing to make an informed decision. Thank you all for your input.

Brief Information Boxes

L3. Putting forward an idea:

I'd [like to] suggest/recommend [doing / we do]
How about we [do]?

would / could / might

How do you feel about that?
How does that sound to you?
Any thoughts on that?

L4. Reacting to ideas:

Sounds reasonable to me.
I have no objections.
Let's give it a try.

I see where you're coming from.
That's a valid point.

I'm a bit leery of …ing (because)
I'm kind of split on this. (On the one hand, … but …)
My concern here would be that …

would / could / might

L5. Finalizing the discussion:

[Can we try and] find middle ground [here?]
Let's revisit this [later].
There are a couple of contrasting views here.

Let's recap [the main points].
It's decided then.
We've agreed on the following: …

Going forward, …
will …

How can I revise it?

I have more time and want to revise. What would you recommend?

You can continue exploring this support pack and:

- Review the course lessons (go through the **sways**).

- Do the **optional homework activities** at the end of sways, especially if you haven't done them yet.

- Use the **Quizlet sets** in different learning modes to remember the target language better.

- Revise the target language with the help of the **detailed Information Boxes.**

Links to sways and Quizlet sets

Lesson	In this lesson you have...	Sway	Quizlet set
L1. Kick-off	Met your new groupmates and learnt about the course.	link	
L2. Introduction	Familiarized yourself with the course strategies and practiced listening and reading skills.	link	link
L3. Putting forward an idea	Learnt how to put forward an idea, accurately and appropriately using the given phrases, framework and forms.	link	link
L4. Responding to ideas	Learnt how to constructively respond to ideas, accurately and appropriately using the given collocations.	link	link
L5. Finalizing the discussion	Learnt how to finalize the discussion, accurately and appropriately using the given collocations.	link	link
L6. Revision 1	Revised the language of the course.	link	link
L7. Revision 2	Revised and consolidated the language of the course.	link	

Detailed Information Boxes

L3. Putting forward an idea

When **putting forward an idea**, you should:

1. make a <u>suggestion</u>	**I'd** [like to] **suggest / recommend** [doing / we do] * **How about we** [do]?	*I'd like to suggest an initial approach for the architecture design – the services and their responsibilities. **I'd suggest** breaking down our monolithic application into five services.* ***I'd recommend** we do Scrum.* ***How about** we split it into two - Order Creation and Order Fulfillment?*
2. describe its <u>potential effects</u>	**would / could / might** ...*	*Given the nature of our project, with its potential for changing requirements, Scrum **would** allow us more flexibility. We **could** iterate quickly and make adjustments as needed.*
3. ask for <u>opinions</u>	**How do you feel about that?** **How does that sound to you?** **Any thoughts on that?**	*We could iterate quickly and make adjustments as needed. **How do you feel about that?*** ***How does that sound to you**, team?* *We've narrowed it down to Scrum and Kanban. **Any thoughts on that?***

Note!

☑ When making a suggestion, you can use '*I'd suggest*' or '*I'd recommend*' interchangeably. Pay attention to the verb pattern: after these verbs, we either use **[doing]** or **somebody [do].**

'*I'd recommend **we do** Scrum*'   '*I'd suggest break**ing** down our monolithic application'.*

☑ When suggesting something to be decided by a group of people, it is polite to always use '**would**' to talk about its potential effects: this way you sound <u>more open to discussion</u>. If you use '*will*', you sound like the decision has already been made, and you don't actually need anyone's opinions:

*How about we split it into two - Order Creation and Order Fulfillment? This **would** focus on specific tasks and avoid a single point of failure.*

*So, we've agreed on the following: 1) bringing in a scrum master to help us start 2) supporting each other in the process. I'**ll** outline the initial sprints and schedule our planning meetings.*

(=the team hasn't made a decision yet, and you are just hypothesizing about the future effects)

(=the team has already made a decision, and you are summarizing it)

L4. Responding to ideas

When **responding to an idea**, you can:

<u>accept</u> the idea	**Sounds reasonable to me.** **I have no objections.** **Let's give it a try.**	*Sounds reasonable to me. From a quality assurance standpoint, Scrum lets us test more frequently, which means we can identify and fix issues earlier in the process.* **I have no objections.** *Okay, **let's give it a try.***
acknowledge <u>another viewpoint</u>	**I see where you're coming from.** **That's a valid point.**	***I see where you're coming from,** Leonardo, but my concern here would be that integrating both methods might complicate our development process.* ***That's a valid point**. Dividing the Order Processing service into two could improve maintainability.*
express <u>doubts</u> and <u>concerns</u>	**I'm a bit leery* of** …ing (because) **I'm kind of split on this.** (On the one hand, … , but …) **My concern here would be that …**	*Well, **I'm a bit leery of** having just one Order Processing service.* ***I'm kind of split on this**. On the one hand, Scrum is great for incorporating user feedback iteratively, but I worry about the learning curve.* *I see where you're coming from, Leonardo, but **my concern here would be that** integrating both methods might complicate our development process.*

To **sound more constructive** when you don't fully agree, you should:

mention <u>potential</u> <u>consequences</u>	**would / could / might** …	*That's a valid point. However, with proper training and support, the team **could** adapt quickly.* *Hmm, as far as I understand, Kanban is less prescriptive than Scrum. So, it **would** be easier to adopt it for teams with diverse workflows like us.*

Note!

☑ The phrase '*I'm a bit leery of…*' is more informal in nature. If you want to choose a more formal expression to communicate your concerns, you can say '*My concern here would be that…*' instead.

L5. Finalizing the discussion

When **finalizing a discussion**, you can:

navigate <u>disagreement</u>	[Can we try and] **find middle ground** [here]? **Let's revisit this** [later]. **There are a couple of contrasting views here.**	▪ *It's a complex issue, so let's dive deeper into that and evaluate if we can **find middle ground** that ensures both efficiency and simplicity. **Let's revisit this** in our next call.* ▪ *Well, **there are a couple of contrasting views here.***
<u>summarize</u> the key points	**Let's recap** [the main points]. **It's decided then.** **We've agreed on the following:** …	▪ ***Let's recap** the main points. Scrum offers … while Kanban …* ▪ *Great! **It's decided then**.* ▪ *So, **we've agreed on the following:** 1) … 2) …*
point out <u>next steps</u>	**Going forward,** will* …	▪ ***Going forward, we'll** adopt Scrum as our framework.* ▪ *I'**ll** outline the initial sprints and schedule our planning meetings.*

Note!

☑ Once a decision has been made by the team, 'will' is used to indicate a definite future action. This shift from 'would' to 'will' shows we're moving from guessing to deciding, highlighting our promise to follow a certain plan.