

Cooking Solutions for Indian Homes

Students' testimonials of their experience¹

Group1

Moderator:

4 kinds of the engineers' suggestions to solve the cooking problems in India are debated in our group. Every solution has both advantages and disadvantages. By comparing both merits and drawbacks, the environmental engineer's solution is the best.

This debate was valuable and interesting. Everyone in my group played his or her own rules in the debate. In individual process everyone holds different opinions. After the debating process, some people are persuaded by others. All of the solutions' advantages and disadvantages have been debated. Finally we choose to use the solar energy as our final solution.

As a moderator, I recognize the necessary to manage the time taken for each process from this experience. When my group members were debating, they always only focused on one point and never stop discussion. It is moderator's responsibility to stop the discussion of this part and move to next part. This can improve the efficiency of the group working. This is the main idea I learned, but there are still some points I need to learn and improve.

Student 1(Mechanical engineer)

In general, the debate run well since everyone in our group was fully prepared with materials. And we finally got an agreement on, the environmental engineer, opinion which was to replace the energy by clean energy, i.e. solar energy, and to transform the entire domestic energy system for family use.

As a mechanical engineer, I realized that no matter how the mechanism behind the function of a facility or equipment was perfect, it is vital to ensure the technology is not only utilized for present, but for the future. I need to consider further improvements to strengthen my point which was to make change in terms of the mechanical configuration instead of the whole structure of the stove.

However, getting familiar with the topic, my own point of view, and my opponents' opinions is the best way to persuade the others. Throughout the debate, I felt that I was not really confident with my point of view. Sometimes I hedged when my opponents asked me tricky questions corresponding to my point. Thus, I need to prepare more for the Q&A part in a debate.

¹ Students' whose experiences appear on this document authorized the anonymized publication of their opinions for teaching and research purposes

Student 2 (Energy engineer)

My experience in this debate was rather interesting as my views as an environmental engineer directly contradicted with those of the energy engineer. This led to both of us going at each other, trying to convince the other why our opinion is better. This experience taught me that in any debate there are no right or wrong answers, each person has his/her own opinion and while one may not always agree with it; He/she must be professional about it and respect that opinion.

This debate also taught me what it's going to be like in the real world. When we graduate and get a job, we might be responsible to present our opinion to a much larger group. Even though in this debate the group was small but it gave me an idea how I am supposed to present my opinion and how I can improve myself in the future.

Student 3 (Environmental Engineer)

My experience in this debate was interesting considering that my role as an environmental engineer directly opposes those from the energy engineering group. With each of us trying to convince the other, this made the debate interesting and enjoyable. After my first debate, I concluded that everybody has his/her own point of view, no one is wrong. Debating is a big thing in the world of engineering, we should have the respect for others opinion even if it was totally contradicting to our beliefs.

This was my first debating others about something that I don't think is true. It taught me that I will need to persuade others about my ideas, and that's a good thing. Although it was a small group debating something that they don't totally understand, it gave me a good idea of how I should present my ideas to the world. Having more time to get ready would make everything much better.

Note: Student 4 in this team did not authorize the publication of personal opinions on this simulation.

Group 2

Moderator:

Our group reach a consensus on "Cooking solution for Indian homes". We chose to use natural gas as the source of energy for its low cost and convenience to utilize.

As for the experience, personally, every member of our group provided a successful individual presentation and we had an impressive debate after that. In individual stage, everyone stated their own ideas from what kind of engineers they act accordingly. During each of the presentation, I recorded key points of solutions to the problems and constructive questions raised by our group member. Then in the debate stage, everyone spoke freely and defended their opinions by listing facts and reasons. However, the simulation would be better if the moderator managed the time and connected each statement.

The simulation contributed to my ability to listen, organized others ideas and attempt to organize the whole process. As a moderator, through this experience, I learned how to use language to encourage the participation of each member in an orderly manner and reach a conclusion. Conclusively, I learn a lot, and there are still lots of things to learn

Student 1 (Environmental Engineer)

I was not good in this debate because I think my preparation was not sufficient. Prepare a debate, I need to collect the information about this topic. I did not collect enough information so that I cannot use data to support my opinion and refute other viewpoints during this debate.

From this debate, I got practice and knew that many aspects need to be improved. First, I need to improve the language organization ability. I should make my language more logical. Make a point logically can more easily convince others because this is a debate. Second, preparation is also very important. Preparation not only need to collect information, but also need to guess that how would other people refute my point. Hence, I would not be speechless even other debaters give a powerful point.

Student 2 (Mechanical Engineer)

My colleges and I read through the instructions together and researched for background information, then wrote a draft script. I was fully prepared for this debate. While during the debate, the inefficient amount of preparation was shown on other group mates,

which reduced the intensity of the debate. I thought this debate would be a great chance for us to practice speaking skills and know other classmates better, it turned out to be not working so well. Despite of that, our group had a generally organized debate and opinions from each aspect was heard.

This experience did contribute my learning; what I learned from it was that I should do the background research and prepare for every task in each case. Full preparation could help me understand each topic better and help me for any questions others might have for me. Also, I might be able to help my group mates for better group work.

Student 3 (Industrial Engineer)

My colleges and I exchange our different idea from different brunches of engineering. I am the representative of the industrial engineers. Basically, we believe in that it is impossible to solve the environmental and health problem at the same time. And we think that there are many problems along with the other engineers' solutions. Firstly, we think that because of the many work-class family in India, and many of them cannot afford the expensive price of a new high-end technological equipment. Secondly, we believe that building a system that using nature gas is a long-term project that will cost huge amount of money and another problem is the transfer pipes could damage the soil and environmental system of India land.

This experience helps me a lot with understanding how engineers solve the problem and how engineers do the team work together with different experts from different study areas. Coping with your college is the most important thing and communication can contribute a lot in terms of team work.

Group 3

Moderator

A brief summary of our group debate is that we have come up with three main solutions to solve the cooking problem. Respectively, they are uses of solar energy, uses of natural gas, and applying a chimney.

In general, the debate was organized and interesting. It strictly focused on the topic and everyone in the group contributed to the debate by giving comments or creative ideas which adds a lot of fun to the debate. Although we did not reach a conclusion, there are three possible solutions provided. And to improve the debate, in my opinion, we should enhance time management so that there will be enough time to come to an agreement on one final solution.

This experience provides me a clear understanding of the responsibility of a moderator and a new method to study. As a moderator, it is very important to coordinate other's opinions and make an adjustment to the discussion. And through this experience, many other's opinions have broadened my horizons and I start to think about that group debate may be an effective and interesting way to learn especially when the task is complicated to fulfill.

Student 1 (Mechanical Engineer)

This Friday me and my group have a debate about "Cooking Solutions for Indian Homes". As a role of mechanical engineer. My main objective was to improve the airflow by changing the structure of chulha. This debate is an excellent practice opportunity since I never have a debate before. I was not that good during the debate because I do not like to argue with other people, however in this situation I have to debate with them. Yes, I was feeling a little bit nervous but luckily I finished that debate successfully. This debate clearly provides me a chance to be a debater and to expound my opinion to my group members. It also lay the groundwork for my next debate. Although me and my group members did not come out a final decision for the improvement of the chulha, the whole debate was successful and organized and I think we can do better next time.

Student 2 (Environmental Engineer)

This experience is good but I am not that good. Because as a debater, I should know what I will saying, how to persuade others people, and how to find the weakness of others idea. But, to be honest, I did not prepare very well and I did not spend too much time thinking ideas. I did not take the advantage of two minutes very well. And I was mad during the discussion. Professor told me before that I should respect rather than

interrupt others. I cannot tell others why my ideas is greater than others people. I just can say my ideas is best.

This experience contributes a lot of things. In next debating, I should spend more time preparing my ideas. What is more, I think I should take advantage of time. such as at the one minute, I should focus on Indian's situation and in the last one minutes I should focus on why my idea is better.

Student 3 (Industrial Engineer)

This debate is a good experience, it gives us general idea with what debate looks like, and let us see how are our oral English and debating skill. During this experience, realize I didn't give a good convincing speech. I have lots of mispronunciation, and my voice is not confident. In the end of my speech, I said something that I didn't prepare before to expand my speech, because of that the last part is not even related to my topic. I believe that is my biggest problem in my speech.

With all the problems above, I know what I need to improve in the next presentation. The most important thing is to fully understand and remember the speech you prepared, so you can go through your speech fluently. Another thing is control of the speak speed, so your voice can be more convincing. In conclusion, this is helpful experience.

Student 4 (Energy engineer)

This debate was an interesting experience, everyone had a different approach to the same issue. We could learn a lot about different solutions during the debate because people did research on different topics. Generally, people are more willing to participate because of the feeling of competition, and made the whole debate very enjoyable.

Although I had all the ideas prepared before the debate, I did not order them well during the debate due to feeling the pressure from the time limit. I believe the reason of this is the lack of preparation. Therefore, this debate gave me a precious experience of the importance of practicing. Also, we learnt the process of a debate and the words that would be used in a debate, In the field of engineering where there is no correct answer for a question. We would encounter more debates and this experience will be really beneficial during those situations.

Group 4

Moderator

After the debate, our group drew out a conclusion that depending on the financial situation, we should combine two ways to solve the problem. For the family who is rich, they can use natural gas instead of the traditional way. For the poor family, they can continue using the traditional way, but they should add a connector to clear the air. Natural gas is better than solar gas because the amount of natural gas is larger than solar gas and it is cheaper to get natural gas. A connector is also a cheaper one because it is not a high technology. We consider using a not-high technology component to change traditional gas into natural gas.

As for the experience, it is very useful for me because I have never been in this kind of activities and it provides me a good chance to learn how to debate and listen to others. Every member in my group participated fully during the debate and they discussed many useful questions that may help us to solve the problem. However, what we can do better is we should record some key points while others are presenting so that we can do better in the debate section.

Student 1 (Environmental engineer)

This debate simulation provides us an opportunity to learn, but also has its limitations as a simulation. With this simulation, we are able to learn basic debate knowledge and skills and had a chance to immediately apply them. However, as a simulation, we debated for the opinion assigned to us and does not have much time to do research.

This experience of debate provides me a general idea and process of debate. We 'decided' our opinion and preferred solution for the cooking problem in India, and we prepared for it. During the debate, everyone spent two minutes presenting the opinion and started debating. This experience allows us to feel the conflict in the debate and practice the language often used in debate. I also realized that a true success debate usually does not have a winner, but comes up with an idea better than any idea from debaters.

Student 2 (Energy engineer)

I think I paid a lot of effort to the debate; however, the result was not quite as I expected and there were still more things to do. Before the debate, my teammates and I have searched online for a lot of information about our task. We have searched the advantages and disadvantages of solar energy and natural gas. We also searched the solutions for the disadvantages of natural gas and the corresponding drawbacks to the advantages of solar energy. When I did the debate, I found that, because of the nervousness, I cannot express the ideas we prepared before completely and accurately.

I think this experience did contribute to my learning. From this experience, I learned that I need more practices for the debate. I also need to control my emotion to speak more smoothly and passionately. More importantly, I learned that when we deal with a problem, we need to consider the possible consequences as many as possible, from different aspects.

Student 2 (Industrial Engineer)

I am grateful for this meaningful debate experience. As for myself, it is the first time to have a debate with others in English. I have found many aspects that can be improved after this debate. When I displayed the audio, I realized there were too many pauses during the presentation which I did not notice at the time I was speaking. This is caused by the unfamiliarity of the material and topic. Next time I should make full preparations and practice before talking instead of just having a vague concept. Besides, I should practice speaking English much more in daily life. Even I can use some difficult words in writing, I cannot bring them into oral English naturally, which is another factor that contributes to the incoherent speaking. To sum up, the sentence "practice makes perfect." suits every aspect of study. Therefore, not only for the oral presentation, I will practice more for all subjects in the future, which is the most valued thing I have learned from this debate.

Student 3 (Mechanical Engineer)

This simulation offers me a good opportunity to share my opinions within a group. I think I tried hard in this debate but I am still making progress on this. As one of the members in a group, it is important to listen to others' opinions instead of being stubborn.

This simulation does contribute to my learning and I have learnt from this a lot. I will try my best to cooperate better in the next group work.