

### TEACHER'S NOTES

#### Video 5 Worksheet: Understanding Decision-making Styles

#### Using the worksheet

It may not be necessary or beneficial to go through every exercise on the worksheet, or to use every exercise in the same way. Exercises and points marked **B1 B1+** in these notes are recommended particularly for pre-intermediate and intermediate level learners. Exercises and points marked **B2 C1** are recommended for upper intermediate and advanced level learners. Exercises which are not marked in this way are recommended for all levels. However, as a teacher, you know your own students and should choose the most appropriate activities for them.

#### Synopsis

The aim of this video is to demonstrate the pros and cons of different decision-making styles. In the first part of the video, we see Amanda tell her group of team leaders about some serious cost-cutting decisions she has made. The life coach describes her decision-making style as authoritarian, and points out that while this style is quick and decisive, it can also lead to demoralised staff and no group 'buy in'. We then see a replay of the meeting in which Amanda and the team demonstrate committee-style decision making. The life coach admits this approach takes longer and isn't wholly democratic, but points out that it gives the group a stake in the process. She comments on the group's use of distancing and conciliatory language for better diplomacy.

#### Before you watch

The purpose of this section is to introduce the students to the topic of decision making and different decision-making styles.

As a warm-up, ask the students to tell you who makes the important decisions in their place of work or study. Do they feel they have a voice when such decisions are made? Do they wish the decision-making style was different? Why?

#### **B1 B1+** Key language

The following is a list of key words, collocations and phrases that appear in the video. You may wish to pre-teach some or all of this language. In this case, you could have students guess their meanings and then confirm them by looking up the more difficult ones in their dictionary, or you could use L1, if you prefer.

**Adjectives:** *austere, authoritarian, blue in the face, committee-style, computer-based, conciliatory, democratic, demoralised, in-house, unworkable*

**Adverbs:** *diplomatically*

**Nouns / Noun phrases:** *directive, distancing language, exception, group buy-in, quarterly figures, seminar, stakeholder, suite, think tank, turnover, webinar*

**Verbs:** *cascade, evidence*

#### **A**

- Make sure the students understand the difference between 'authoritarian' and 'committee' in the context of decision-making styles. Then put the students in pairs to read the sentences and decide which style of decision making is being demonstrated. Invite them to tell you how they came to that decision, but don't go into too much detail on the pros and cons of each style at this point, as you will be discussing this again later in the lesson.

#### ALTERNATIVE

Select confident students to read the statements aloud, and discuss the styles with the whole class.

#### Answers

Authoritarian: 1, 3, 4

Committee: 2, 5, 6

#### While you watch

In this section, the students watch a video in which Amanda first demonstrates an authoritarian style of decision making, and then later she and the team show evidence of a more collaborative, committee-style approach. The students complete comprehension activities as well as analysing and discussing the pros and cons of the two different decision-making styles.

**B ▶ B1 B1+**

- Tell the students they are going to watch Amanda discuss some important decisions with her group of team leaders. Have them read the statements first so they know what to look out for.
- Stop the video at the end of the first conversation, before the life coach begins speaking at 02.25, for the students to answer. Then go through the answers with the group.

**Answers**

1 lowest 2 travel 3 external 4 awayday

**C ▶****B1 B1+**

- Elicit and discuss the answers to the questions with the whole class, playing the same section of video again if necessary.

**B2 C1**

- Put the students in small groups to discuss the questions. Go round and monitor their discussions. Finally, elicit a few answers from the groups and have a brief class discussion.

**Suggested answers**

Amanda demonstrates an authoritarian style of decision making.

Students' own answers for the second question, although you might choose to point out the following:

**Pros:** quick, shows strong leadership.

**Cons:** can leave staff feeling powerless and demoralised.

**D ▶****B1 B1+**

- Have the students read the paragraph before watching the life coach's comments so they know what to look for. Make sure that they understand the words in the box.
- Play the video of the life coach's feedback from 02.25 to 02.58. Then check the answers with the class.

**B2 C1**

- Have the students work in pairs and attempt to do the activity before they watch the life coach's feedback. Then play the video from 02.25 to 02.58 for the students to check their answers.

**Answers**

1 decisively 2 consultation 3 demoralised  
4 group involvement 5 group 'buy in'

**E****B1 B1+**

- Write two of Amanda's proposals on the board:  
*No overseas travel*  
*External training to become computer-based*
- Remind the students of the committee style of decision making that you looked at in Ex. A. Put the students in groups and ask them to think of different ways Amanda and the group could discuss the two proposals using the committee style.
- Go round and monitor. Then have a class discussion, eliciting suggestions from each of the groups.

**B2 C1**

- Put the students in groups and ask them to think of different ways that Amanda could approach her team with her decisions.
- With a stronger group, encourage them to suggest specific sentences or expressions that could be used in such a scenario.
- Go round and monitor, before eliciting some suggestions from the groups and having a class discussion.

**Suggested answers**

Students' own answers, but may include:

Amanda should make sure that she doesn't announce any decisions as already 'final'.

She could ask the others what they think, or if they have any suitable ideas.

She should acknowledge that it may be difficult for the team to explain these suggestions to their staff.

**F ▶****B1 B1+**

- Have the students read through the activity before watching the video so they know what to look out for. Then play the video, including the life coach's feedback, from 02.58 to the end. Go through the answers with the class.

**B2 C1**

- Have the students attempt to do the activity before watching the video. Then play the video, including the life coach's feedback, from 02.58 to the end for the students to check their answers.
- Invite the students to identify further examples of sentences or phrases from the video for each of the four categories (a–d). Play the same section of the video again and have the students work in pairs or small groups to compare and discuss their ideas (see *Answers*).



### Answers

1 a 2 d 3 c 4 b

Further examples may include:

- a) 'I wanted your feedback ...'; 'That's the idea.'
- b) 'Obviously your feedback will be very important.'
- c) ... usually means that decisions are properly considered and evidenced.
- d) ... may not be democratic in the strictest sense

### G ▶

- Discuss the questions with the whole class. Elicit or remind the students of the pros and cons of committee-style decision making that the life coach mentioned, and invite them to suggest further ideas.

### Suggested answers

Students' own answers, although these may include:

**Pros:** People are more likely to be enthusiastic about decisions that they have been involved in. Team leaders will feel happier 'cascading' the news about the changes.

A single decision maker will not have to take the blame if things go wrong.

**Cons:** Having too many people involved can make it difficult for a decision to be made.

There is a greater likelihood of misunderstandings and confusion.

There may be a sense that no single person is fully responsible for the changes.

### After you watch

The purpose of this section is to consolidate the students' awareness of different decision-making styles and to give them practice of using the committee style in a roleplay scenario (or alternatively a class discussion). Students then reflect on the decision-making styles shown in the video and assess the best situations in which to use each style.

### H

- Tell the students that they are now going to practise using the committee style of decision making. Put them in pairs and give them time to read and prepare for their roles. Emphasise that you want them to reach a satisfactory conclusion, and that they may need to compromise with their partner to achieve this. Remind them to use the kind of language they have seen in the video. You could allow **B1 B1+** students to prepare for the roleplay in groups with classmates who have the same role.
- During the roleplay, go round monitoring and providing assistance where necessary.
- After the pairs have reached an agreement, invite them to report back to the class. How well do they feel they adopted the committee-style approach?

### ALTERNATIVE

Hold a general discussion about decision making. Refer back to your students' own experiences that you discussed in the warm-up, and ask them if they have a preference for either the authoritarian or the committee style. How might the students use the styles shown by Amanda and her team in their own places of work or study? What happens when the wrong style is used? How is it possible to know which style to adopt for each situation?

### Reflect

Encourage the students to think about the authoritarian and committee styles of decision making and to think of situations in which each style could be suitable. This could take the form of a group or class discussion, or alternatively, it could be set as a written assignment for homework.