

► DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn about four types of group decision-making processes and determine when to use each process appropriately.

TIME

45 minutes (10 minutes to discuss the four group decision-making processes and provide instruction for the activity, 20 minutes for the activity, 15 minutes to review/discuss results)

MATERIALS

16 sheets of large easel paper

4 markers for each station

masking tape or scotch tape

ACTIVITY

Before students enter the room, prepare the easel paper with the decision-making processes (i.e., write “Autocratic” at the top of four sheets of paper, “Democratic” at the top of four sheets, and so forth for a total of 16 sheets). Hang one of the respective topic sheets in each corner of the room, with the three other same-titled sheets at a nearby table/desk.

When students enter the room, tell them that the purpose of this activity is to align each of the four decision-making processes with various situations. Discuss each decision-making process (below). Have students take notes in their leadership portfolios.

1. **Autocratic**—one person makes the decision on behalf of the group

2. **Democratic**—the group participates in the decision-making process by voting on the process to use in a given situation

3. **Consensual**—after thorough discussion, the group arrives at a resolution that each member can endorse

4. **Laissez-faire**—decision making is left to the initiative of the group; if the group chooses to make a decision, it will; if not, a decision will not be made

Divide the students into four teams of equal size and have each team stand and move to a decision-making process corner. Provide instructions to the group:

At the word “go,” students are to think of example situations and/or occupations for which a given decision-making process is best suited. (For example, a doctor may need to make an autocratic decision during surgery.)

Students will have five minutes to record brief notes on the easel paper.

After five minutes, students will remove their completed sheet of easel paper and replace it with a new sheet from the remaining pile of three topics. Students will move clockwise to the next station. Once the teams are in place, a new round will begin.

This process will be repeated at each station.

DISCUSSION POINTS

When the activity is complete, each team will be responsible for presenting the notes (from all four sheets) for one of the group decision-making processes. Encourage students to offer thoughts and examples related to their daily lives as

students and leaders, and as participants in TSA's competitive events.

- How did the process used in a given situation gain or not gain the desired result?
- Did the process cause friction among the group members? Explain your answer.
- Was the process used the obvious choice, or was there a better choice? Elaborate.
- Would the use of a different group decision-making process have resulted in a better competition outcome? Explain your answer.
- Knowing what you now know about group decision making, which process would you have chosen in a given circumstance?
- How did working in groups help you reach a specific course of action?
- Have students share and record their thoughts and examples in their leadership portfolios.