



Can the new demands be accepted?

■ Case briefing

Case overview

In this case, Johnson Education Association wants its partner GTech to improve their robot interpreter by making three new demands. Amy, the product manager of GTech, is asked to hold a meeting to discuss the new demands for improving the robot in Unit 1. In Unit 2, Amy needs to give feedback to Johnson Education Association on the new demands by writing a rejection email.

Ss are to play the part of Amy and complete the tasks in this case.



Teaching plan

The following teaching plan is designed for an eight-period teaching session and is adaptable to a shorter or longer teaching session to suit varied pedagogical situations and needs.

	Before class	In class	After class
Periods 1&2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previewing the case (Case briefing) • Previewing Taking in (Unit 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the case (Case briefing) • Starting up (Unit 1) • Taking in (Unit 1) • Building up (Unit 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out (Unit 1) • Looking beyond (Unit 1)
Periods 3&4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing Taking in (Unit 1) • Reviewing Building up (Unit 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborating on the required structure, skills and strategies • Asking Ss to present the biz practice and giving comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on and summarizing Unit 1
Periods 5&6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previewing Taking in (Unit 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting up (Unit 2) • Taking in (Unit 2) • Building up (Unit 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out (Unit 2) • Looking beyond (Unit 2)
Periods 7&8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing Taking in (Unit 2) • Reviewing Building up (Unit 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborating on the required structure, skills and strategies • Asking Ss to present the biz practice and giving comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on and summarizing Unit 2 and the case

Reference answers

- 1**
- 1) three new demands for the robot
 - 2) opinions from the customers
 - 3) performance
 - 4) appearance
 - 5) language and style

2 The following answer is for the T's reference.

Before the meeting, I would make good planning and preparations about its time, venue, agenda, etc. I would start the meeting by introducing the topic, and then discuss the agenda items one by one. I would end the meeting on time. After the meeting, I would send minutes to everyone who participated in the meeting.



Scripts

Amy Li: Hello.

John Peters: Hello, Amy. This is John. I have a difficult project for you. As you know, Johnson Education Association and our company have developed and launched a robot interpreter together. I received an email from the Association talking about three new demands for the robot. They hope we can evaluate those demands and make necessary improvements.

Amy Li: So you want me to evaluate those demands?

John Peters: Yes. I want you to deal with it. I'll forward the email to you. First, you need to understand their new demands clearly, and then get opinions from the customers. After that, hold a meeting to discuss whether we should accept these demands or not. After we reach an agreement, you can write an email to express our opinions.

Amy Li: Is there any principle for the new demands?

John Peters: Certainly. You should take two things into consideration. First, it is necessary to consider whether the new demands can improve the performance of our existing robot. Since there are continuous improvements and innovations in technology and robot production, we should take advantage of these benefits and build them into our robot. Second, you need to keep in mind whether the new demands can improve the appearance of our robot. As there is a strong connection between appearance and functions, a robot's appearance will influence its likeability.

Amy Li: That sounds fine. Is there anything else?

John Peters: Yes. One more thing. Don't forget to write a reply to the Association after your discussion, showing whether we'd like to accept these demands and our reasons for the decision. Pay attention to your language and style.

Amy Li: Sure, no problem.

John Peters: Great! Go ahead.

Amy Li: Bye.



UNIT 1

Discuss the new demands for improving the robot

Starting up

About the unit

Products are frequently improved by companies. There are various pressures upon a company to do so, particularly pressures from its competitors, changing customer needs and technology improvements. However, there are an array of benefits and challenges involved in improving an existing product in the marketplace. This unit mainly focuses on this issue. Unit 1 is about getting information on the three new demands, collecting opinions from different customers, and hosting a discussion about the demands for improving the robot. After learning this unit, Ss will achieve a profound understanding of how to host a business discussion.

Teaching objectives

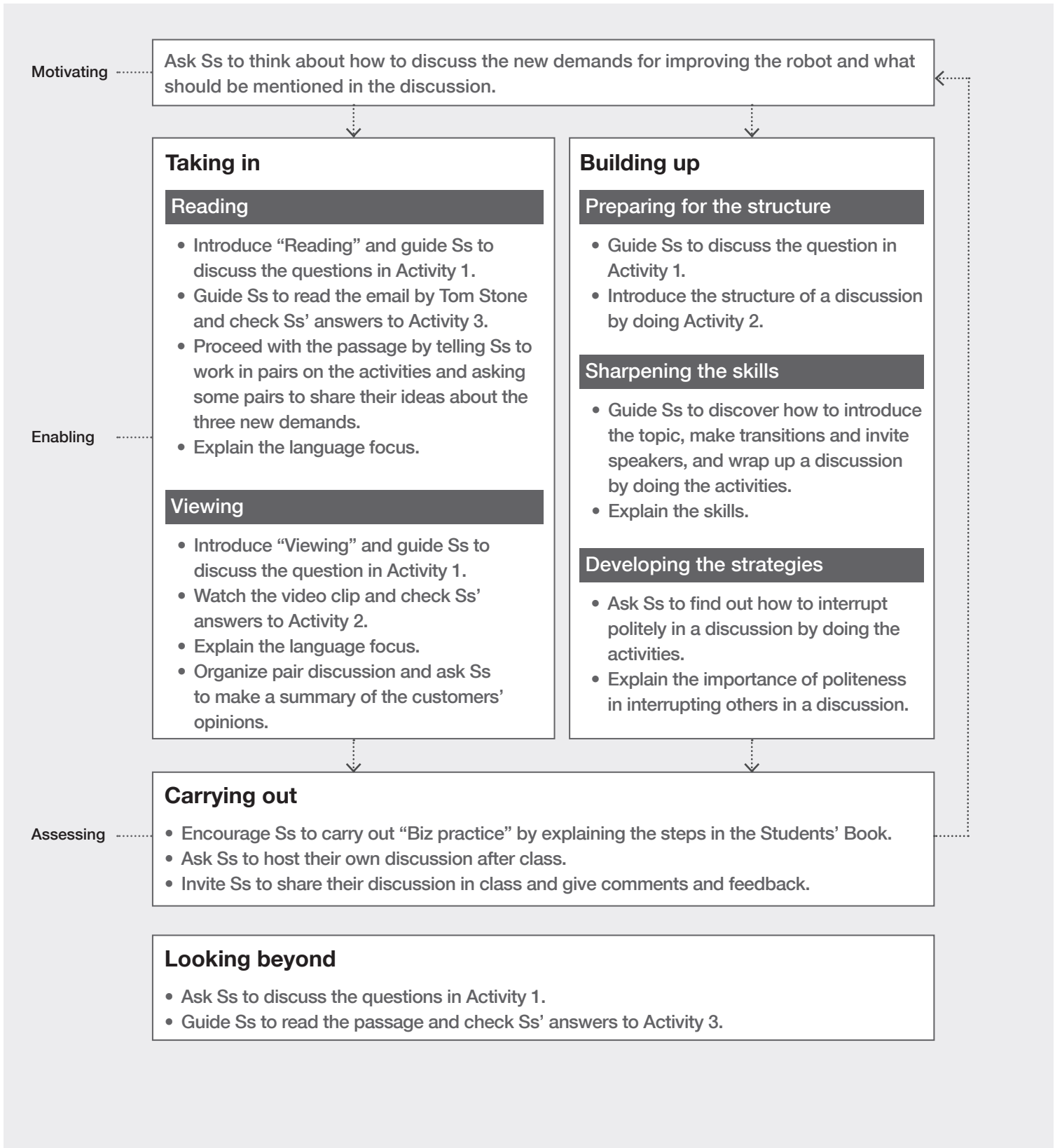
Upon completion of this unit, the T is expected to enable Ss to:

- get information about product improvements from various sources (Reading&Viewing)
- get familiar with the structure of hosting a discussion (Preparing for the structure&Sharpening the skills)
- interrupt others politely in a discussion (Developing the strategies)
- host a discussion (Biz practice)



Teaching suggestions

The T can approach this unit in different ways. Here we suggest a production-oriented approach. By adopting this approach, the T can prepare Ss with the output task before learning, so they will have a clear purpose – looking for information and learning skills needed to complete the output task.



Taking in

Reading

Language focus

- 1** I'm forwarding the email by Tom Stone of Johnson Education Association.
forward *v.* 转发; 转寄
e.g. Would you make sure that you forward my email promptly?
- 2** Based on our keen attention to our competitors and customers' needs now and in the future, we feel it is necessary to modify and advance our product in the following three ways ...
1) modify *vt.* 修改; 更改
e.g. The software we use has been modified for us.
2) advance *v.* (使)发展
e.g. The group's research has done much to advance our knowledge of this disease.
- 3** However, we can still apply such new technologies as solar charging, mobile power supply accessories and fast charging to further increase our robot's working hours, which may enhance its competitiveness.
1) apply *v.* 运用; 应用
e.g. Some of the children seem unable to apply what they have learned.
2) enhance *vt.* 提高; 增强
e.g. We're using technology to enhance our levels of service.
This sentence can be paraphrased like this: *However, in order to increase our robot's working hours, we can still use some new technologies like solar charging, mobile power supply accessories and fast charging. This may help make our product more competitive.*
- 4** We all know that a robot's appearance can affect the user's expectation, perception and evaluation of its behavior and capability.
perception *n.* 理解; 看法
e.g. We have to change the public's perception that money is being wasted.

Reference answers

- 1** The following answers are for the T's reference.
- 1 The purpose of the email is to ask GTech to improve the robot interpreter according to the proposed new demands.
 - 2 New demands for improving the robot interpreter and the reasons behind.
- 3**
- 1) working hours
 - 2) solar charging



- 3) appearance
- 4) more human-like appearance
- 5) language coverage
- 6) interpretation services

4 The following answer is for the T's reference.

Increasing the robot's working hours is the most important. In some places such as a hotel or an airplane, maybe a 24-hour interpreter is needed. If the robot can work for a longer time, it can take the place of human interpreters. After all, humans have limited energy.

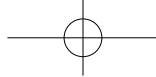
TIPS FOR READING

Reading for specific information: identifying causes

Identifying causes is a strategy to find a causal relationship between or among events and behaviors. This strategy gives reasons and explanations for events and behaviors. To determine the cause of something, ask why it happens. The following are some useful expressions:

- Because ...
- This leads to ...
- Due to ...
- The reason/cause is that ...
- Since ...

For example, in "Reading", the writer uses "Our robot interpreter has drawn great attention recently, because ...", "Since our robot now only has a functional appearance, ...".



Viewing

Language focus

- 1** If the price increases, we prefer to employ a human to interpret for us when we want to close a business deal in a foreign country.

close a deal 完成一项交易

e.g. After trying for weeks to close the deal, we finally brought it to pass.

- 2** Thus, from our point of view, we don't think it is essential to give the robot interpreter a human-like appearance. However, longer working hours and broader language coverage will benefit us.

This sentence can be paraphrased like this: *Therefore, we don't think we should change the robot interpreter's appearance to make it look like a human, but a more enduring battery and more language services will do good to us.*

Reference answers

- 1** The following answer is for the T's reference.

I would like to get the following information: 1) the purpose of the interview; 2) the identity of the interviewer and interviewee; 3) the questions asked in the interview; 4) the answers from the interviewee.

- 2**
- 1) higher price
 - 2) better
 - 3) different countries
 - 4) scary
 - 5) good
 - 6) still small

- 3** The following short summary is for the T's reference.

Customer A does not think it is necessary to increase the working hours of the robot interpreter while Customers B and C think that longer working hours is beneficial to them. As for appearance, Customers A and B do not hope the appearance is changed while Customer C welcomes the improved appearance. Customers A and B believe that broader language coverage will do them good but Customer C holds a different idea.



TIPS FOR LISTENING

Listening for specific information: opinions

Listening for opinions, in other words, is listening to identify the opinions of certain speakers. Opinions often follow the expressions below:

- In my opinion, ...
- In my eyes, ...
- To my mind, ...
- As far as I am concerned, ...
- Speaking personally, ...
- From my point of view, ...
- As for me / As to me, ...
- My view/opinion/belief/impression/conviction is that ...
- I hold the view that ...
- I would say that ...

For example, in “Viewing”, Customer A uses “I would say that ...”, Customer B uses “from our point of view, ...” and Customer C uses “in my opinion, ...”.

Scripts

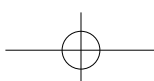
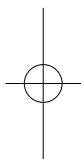
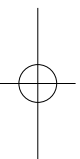
Customer A: We are an import&export company and we use a robot interpreter from your company. I would say that we don't think it is necessary to improve the robot's battery life and appearance, because that will increase the cost. We don't want a higher price. If the price increases, we prefer to employ a human to interpret for us when we want to close a business deal in a foreign country. When we do our business in other countries, humans are much better at interpreting because they know the culture better. We don't want to sound rude when closing a business deal with our foreign partners. So, for now we still need to count on humans until robots become smarter. However, we welcome the expansion of language coverage, because our customers are from different countries and that will help us a lot.

Customer B: Our hotel is in an amusement park, so there are many children coming in and out. We have asked some children about their preference for the robots' appearance. They think the robots with human features such as a human body, human eyes, and a human mouth are scary while those with machine-like features like wheels and tracks are friendly. Thus, from our point of view, we don't think it is essential to give the robot interpreter a human-like appearance. However, longer working hours and broader language coverage will benefit us.

Customer C: The robot is useful for our tour company by serving foreigners when we don't have staff with the necessary language skills. However, in my opinion, it is unnecessary to expand the language coverage of the robot. Even though the number of foreign tourists has grown rapidly over the past three years, the



number of tourists who speak such foreign languages as Japanese, Korean and Russian is still small, and most foreign tourists can speak some of our language with the use of a phrasebook. However, longer working hours and an improved appearance would be good for our business.





Building up

Preparing for the structure

Structure extension

A discussion can provide a chance for employees to get together and reach an agreement. There are some reasons for holding a discussion such as providing information, making decisions and getting feedback.

When hosting a discussion, the host should initiate the discussion by introducing its topic or purpose. In the process, the host should encourage each member to speak and keep the discussion moving. In the end, the host should wrap up the discussion by reviewing it and lead the group to reflect on what has been discussed.

Reference answers

1 The following answer is for the T's reference.

- 1) Be prepared. Carefully consider your objectives of the discussion.
- 2) Set guidelines. Provide clear guidelines for the discussion and stick to them during the discussion.
- 3) Facilitate the discussion instead of dominating it. Use open-ended questions and ask the members to share opinions, give examples, etc.
- 4) Create a good atmosphere for discussion. An encouraging environment for discussion can significantly improve the quality of the members' participation.

2 The following answer is for the T's reference.

The steps of hosting a discussion are as follows:

- 1) Introduce the discussion and state the purpose of it.
- 2) Invite speakers to express their opinions by asking them questions.
- 3) Make transitions so that each point can be discussed.
- 4) Conclude the discussion.

Scripts

Hostess: Hello, everyone. Our partner thinks that it is wise for us to improve the robot interpreter to meet the market desire. Today we are going to talk about whether we should improve our robot or not. What's your opinion about their first demand, Andy?

Andy: Our partner's first demand is to extend the robot's working hours. Of course, extending the robot's working hours is quite essential for our product to attract customers.



Hostess: Excuse me, could I just jump in here for a minute? I think adding new features is risky. Tim, do you think so?

Tim: Yes, I agree with you. One of our main customers thinks that the higher cost is not worthwhile, and claims that if the price of our robot rises, they will employ a human to interpret because humans know the local culture better. Thus, we should think well before taking action. For the second demand, I also hold a different opinion. To decide if we should improve the appearance of our robot, we should make further market research and know better about our customers' preference.

Hostess: OK, let's move to the third demand of expanding the robot's language coverage. What do you think of it, Emma?

Emma: I think it is not necessary to expand the robot's language coverage. Some customers believe some languages are not frequently used, and many foreign visitors can speak English with the help of a phrasebook.

Hostess: Thanks for the ideas you have contributed. It seems that the three new demands are not essential to the sales of our robot. I will give feedback to our partner based on our discussion.



Sharpening the skills

Introducing the topic

Skills extension

To start a discussion, the host has to share its theme and goal. Moreover, asking some questions that inspire a productive conversation is very important. Good questions are neither too open-ended nor too limited because yes/no questions halt discussion while overly broad questions tend to discourage discussion. For example, “In what way does the appearance of the robot have to be improved?” is a good question because it is open enough that there seem to be a few good answers, and closed enough that people know how to approach it and feel motivated to start talking.

Reference answers

1 The following answer is for the T’s reference.

In a discussion, we can introduce the topic like this: Today we are going to discuss ..., The topic of our discussion today is ..., Today we will focus on ..., etc.

2 The T can divide the whole class into several groups and ask them to discuss how to host the discussions based on the situations in the Students’ Book. The T can remind Ss that their focus should be put on how to introduce the topic of the discussions. After their discussion, the T can ask representatives of at least three groups to share with the class how they introduce their topics. The following sentences are for the T’s reference.

Situation 1 Today we are here to discuss the arrangements of our New Year Party.

Situation 2 The goal of our discussion today is the business English training.

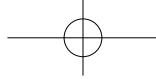
Situation 3 Today we are going to talk about the opening of a new branch abroad.

Making transitions and inviting speakers

Skills extension

Savvy speakers use transitional expressions as the glue that holds the discussion together so they can move seamlessly from one point to another. When moving to another point, you can use the following useful expressions:

- Now let’s consider ...
- I’d like to move on to / look at ...
- My next point is ...
- Now let’s turn to ...



- Now what about ...?
- Let me move on to ...

When inviting speakers, you can use the following useful expressions:

- What is your opinion, A?
- Do you agree with B's opinion, A?
- A, what do you think we should do?
- A, what are your views regarding this point?

Reference answers

1 The following answer is for the T's reference.

In a discussion, such expressions can help make transitions: Now let's move to the next point, It's time to talk about ..., etc. Such expressions can help invite speakers: Can you tell your opinion? What's your opinion?

2 The following answer is for the T's reference.

Sentences for making transitions	Sentences for inviting speakers
OK, let's move to the third demand of expanding the robot's language coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's your opinion about their first demand, Andy? • Tim, do you think so? • What do you think of it, Emma?

Wrapping up a discussion

Skills extension

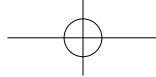
When wrapping up a discussion, you can use the following useful expressions:

- I think we've covered everything on the list. Now let's sum up the discussion.
- If no one has anything to add, then we'll wrap up this discussion.
- Now let's review the whole discussion and draw a conclusion.
- From the discussion, we can conclude that ...

Reference answers

The following answer is for the T's reference.

In a discussion, such expressions can be used to wrap up a discussion: Now let's sum up the discussion..., After the discussion, we can come to the conclusion that ..., In brief, our discussion can be summed up like this: ..., In short, ..., etc.



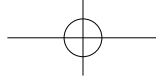
Developing the strategies

Interrupting politely in a discussion

Strategies extension

The most important thing you should remember when interrupting a conversation is that you interrupt in order to create connections with the person you are talking to. If you interrupt politely and with the purpose of connecting with him/her by sharing your interests, ideas or experiences, interrupting can actually show that you're actively participating in the conversation and thus can make the conversation even better. The following are some good reasons for interrupting a conversation:

- 1 You can interrupt to ask for clarification or further details. The following are some useful expressions:
 - Sorry, but could you go over that again?
 - Sorry, but could you be more specific?
 - Excuse me for interrupting, what do you mean by ...?
 - Sorry for interrupting, but I'm not sure what you mean. Could you explain in greater detail?
 - Sorry for interrupting, so you are saying that ...?
- 2 You can interrupt to agree. The following are some useful expressions:
 - Yes, I couldn't agree more!
 - I agree with your point.
 - I agree!
 - That's true!
- 3 You can interrupt to show interest and enthusiasm. The following are some useful expressions:
 - Sorry for interrupting, but I've been wondering how ...
 - Sorry, but I've wanted to know how ...
 - Excuse me for interrupting, but I'm curious about ...
 - I'm interested in hearing more about ...
- 4 You can interrupt to mention that they've reminded you of something. The following are some useful expressions:
 - That reminds me of ...
 - Ooh! I also want to talk about ...
 - You remind me of my experience that ...



Reference answers

1 The following answers are for the T's reference.

- 1 Yes, I have. I wanted the person I was talking with to give me a detailed explanation.
- 2 I feel embarrassed and nervous when interrupting others.

2 The following answer is for the T's reference.

The hostess and A are polite while B is impolite, because B just jumps in and cuts off the other person, which is rude, frustrating, and ultimately counterproductive.

Scripts

Hostess: Let's start to make some arrangements for the team building program. If you have any opinion, please feel free to share it here.

A: I think how to group the participants is the essential part. If we group them randomly, the program will be a mess.

B: But I want to add that the members of the program must have something in common and meanwhile something unique. Thus, they can learn from each other and depend on each other.

Hostess: Yes. We can ask the HR about their educational background, their specialty, etc. Now, let's move on to the next issue – what activities should we offer?

A: Do you mind if I come in here? Since it is a trip designed to enhance teamwork and communication, we should have some group activities such as boat racing and ball games. In this way, they can get to know each other better and ...

B: Please stop. I need to say something. Boat racing and ball games are cool, but I'm thinking about something more innovative because there are organizations which provide more interesting programs to enhance teamwork and communication.

Hostess: I agree with you on this point. My former company once had team building in the suburb and we had a lot of fun because they provided activities full of imagination and excitement.



Carrying out

Biz practice

Teaching suggestions

This is the revision and application session, in which Ss can put into action what they have learned in the previous sessions of this unit and try to host a discussion by themselves.

The T can help Ss prepare for the project in four aspects: content, structure, language and strategy.

1 Content

The T can divide Ss into several groups and ask them to summarize the information about the three new demands for improving the robot in “Reading” and the customers’ opinions on the demands in “Viewing”, and then choose representatives of two or three groups to report to the rest of the class.

2 Structure

The T can review the process of a discussion by asking Ss: What is the process of a discussion? After Ss review the process of a discussion, the T can highlight the process by showing it on a slide of PPT or on the blackboard. A discussion may move forward like this:

Process of a discussion	Introduce the topic at the beginning of the discussion
	Make transitions in the discussion to make sure all the points are discussed
	Invite speakers so that all the participants can speak out their opinions
	Wrap up the discussion

3 Language

For language, Ss need to be prepared in two aspects: expressions they’ve learned from “Taking in” and expressions for introducing the topic, making transitions and inviting speakers, and wrapping up a discussion. The T should encourage Ss to make full use of the expressions they’ve learned. However, when quoting sentences, Ss should paraphrase rather than simply copy them.

4 Strategy

When hosting a discussion, it is necessary for the host to interrupt to make the discussion go smoothly forward. The T should remind Ss to be polite in interrupting others in the discussion.



Situations for interrupting	Useful expressions
Agree and change the subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. But something else I'd like to know is ... • I agree with you. By the way, ...
Disagree with the statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm sorry, but I don't agree. • I beg to differ. • I'm afraid I disagree. • Well, in my opinion, ...
Interrupt to clarify the roles of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorry for interrupting, but it's better to clarify our roles in this project.
Ask for clarification or further details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorry for interrupting, but could you say that again? • Sorry for interrupting. Are you saying ...?
Agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. I totally agree with you. • You are right! I also think ...
Show interest and enthusiasm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm quite interested in your point. • Sorry, but I'm curious about ...
Share similar memories or experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You remind me about ... • I'd like to talk about my own experience.

Suggestions for evaluation

Clear goals	Have Ss stated the basic purpose of their task clearly?
Adequate preparation	Have Ss taken in enough information from "Taking in" and bring together the necessary resources to move the task forward?
Appropriate skills and strategies	Have Ss used the skills and strategies appropriately and effectively in rehearsing the discussion?
Effective presentation	Have Ss used a suitable style and effective organization to present their work? Have they delivered their messages with clarity and integrity?

Sample and comments

A: Good morning, everyone. Our partner, Johnson Education Association, thinks that we should improve our robot interpreter to meet the market need. Today we are holding this discussion to talk about their three demands and draw a conclusion if we should improve



our robot interpreter. Let's start from the first demand, which is to increase the robot's working hours. What do you think of it, B?

B: I think it is wise to make our robot interpreter work for a longer time because it can attract more customers.

C: Sorry for interrupting, but I think adding new features is a little risky. Adding new features usually means increasing the cost, and the price accordingly. However, one of our main customers claims that if we raise the price, they would employ human interpreters because humans know better about the local culture, which helps avoid misunderstanding.

A: OK. We should think well before we act. Now let's move to the second demand – improving the robot's appearance. What's your opinion, D?

D: I don't think it is very necessary because not all customers like a robot with a human-like appearance. For example, one hotel with many children coming in and out says that children think the robots with human features are scary.

B: Yes, I agree with you on this point. So we should make further market research and know better about our customers' needs.

A: Next, let's talk about the third demand – expanding the robot's language coverage. E, what are your views regarding this point?

E. In my opinion, expanding the robot's language coverage is not wise. One of our customers, a tourism company, points out that some languages are not often used, and a big proportion of tourists can deal with the language problem themselves.

A: OK. We've covered all the three new demands made by our partner. It can be concluded that it is unnecessary to improve our robot for the moment. Thank you all for your contributions.

COMMENTS

Content: This discussion covers all the three new demands. Some participants agree with some demand while others do not. But all of them give their reasons or evidence, which well support their arguments and make the whole discussion convincing.

Language: The speakers have a good command of language skills. This discussion is fully and clearly developed. There are also a variety of sentence structures.

Structure: This discussion has a clear structure. A, the host, starts the discussion by pointing out the goal of this discussion and invites a speaker by asking a question. Then the host leads the discussion forward by making transitions and inviting speakers to show their opinions on all the three new demands. Finally, the host makes a conclusion to end the discussion.

Strategy: The speakers can use the strategy properly. They can interrupt others politely whether they want to disagree or agree.



Looking beyond

Reference answers

1 The following answers are for the T's reference.

- 1 Yes, I'm having distance learning now. The reasons why I choose distance learning are as follows: First, I could keep my job and study at the same time from the comfort of my home. Second, distance learning allows me to choose from a couple of recognized European universities.
- 2 In the classroom, we use projectors and smart boards which make our learning more effective. We also have networked learning, which enables us to access studying resources quickly.

- 3**
- 1) the cloud
 - 2) servers
 - 3) Internet connection
 - 4) set, collect and grade work
 - 5) instant access to
 - 6) connected
 - 7) paperless
 - 8) Independent learning
 - 9) resources