

Chapter 01: Decision Making, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, and Clinical Reasoning

1. What statement is true regarding decision making?
 - A) It is an analysis of a situation
 - B) It is closely related to evaluation
 - C) It involves choosing between courses of action
 - D) It is dependent upon finding the cause of a problem

Ans: C

Feedback:

Decision making is a complex cognitive process often defined as choosing a particular course of action. Problem solving is part of decision making and is a systematic process that focuses on analyzing a difficult situation. Critical thinking, sometimes referred to as reflective thinking, is related to evaluation and has a broader scope than decision making and problem solving.

2. What is a weakness of the traditional problem-solving model?
 - A) Its need for implementation time
 - B) Its lack of a step requiring evaluation of results
 - C) Its failure to gather sufficient data
 - D) Its failure to evaluate alternatives

Ans: A

Feedback:

The traditional problem-solving model is less effective when time constraints are a consideration. Decision making can occur without the full analysis required in problem solving. Because problem solving attempts to identify the root problem in situations, much time and energy are spent on identifying the real problem.

3. Which of the following statements is true regarding decision making?
 - A) Scientific methods provide identical decisions by different individuals for the same problems
 - B) Decisions are greatly influenced by each person's value system
 - C) Personal beliefs can be adjusted for when the scientific approach to problem solving is used
 - D) Past experience has little to do with the quality of the decision

Ans: B

Feedback:

Values, life experience, individual preference, and individual ways of thinking will influence a person's decision making. No matter how objective the criteria will be, value judgments will always play a part in a person's decision making, either consciously or subconsciously.

4. What influences the quality of a decision most often?

- A) The decision maker's immediate superior
- B) The type of decision that needs to be made
- C) Questions asked and alternatives generated
- D) The time of day the decision is made

Ans: C

Feedback:

The greater the number of alternatives that can be generated by the decision maker, the better the final decision will be. The alternatives generated and the final choices are limited by each person's value system.

5. What does knowledge about good decision making lead one to believe?

- A) Good decision makers are usually right-brain, intuitive thinkers
- B) Effective decision makers are sensitive to the situation and to others
- C) Good decisions are usually made by left-brain, logical thinkers
- D) Good decision making requires analytical rather than creative processes

Ans: B

Feedback:

Good decision makers seem to have antennae that make them particularly sensitive to other people and situations. Left-brain thinkers are typically better at processing language, logic, numbers, and sequential ordering, whereas right-brain thinkers excel at nonverbal ideation and holistic synthesizing.

6. What is the best definition of decision making?

- A) The planning process of management
- B) The evaluation phase of the executive role
- C) One step in the problem-solving process
- D) Required to justify the need for scarce items

Ans: C

Feedback:

Decision making is a complex, cognitive process often defined as choosing a particular course of action. Decision making, one step in the problem-solving process, is an important task that relies heavily on critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills.

7. If decision making is triggered by a problem with what does it end?

- A) An alternative problem
- B) A chosen course of action
- C) An action that guarantees success
- D) A restatement of the solution

Ans: B

Feedback:

A decision is made when a course of action has been chosen. Problem solving is part of decision making and is a systematic process that focuses on analyzing a difficult situation. Problem solving always includes a decision-making step.

8. Why do our values often cause personal conflict in decision making?

- A) Some values are not realistic or healthy
- B) Not all values are of equal worth
- C) Our values remain unchanged over time
- D) Our values often collide with one another

Ans: D

Feedback:

Values, life experience, individual preference, and individual ways of thinking will influence a person's decision making. No matter how objective the criteria will be, value judgments will always play a part in a person's decision making, either consciously or subconsciously.

9. Which statement is true concerning critical thinking?

- A) It is a simple approach to decision making
- B) It is narrower in scope than decision making
- C) It requires reasoning and creative analysis
- D) It is a synonym for the problem-solving process

Ans: C

Feedback:

Critical thinking has a broader scope than decision making and problem solving. It is sometimes referred to as reflective thinking. Critical thinking also involves reflecting upon the meaning of statements, examining the offered evidence and reasoning, and forming judgments about facts.

10. How do administrative managers make the majority of their decisions?

- A) After gathering all the facts
- B) In a manner good enough to solve the problem
- C) In a rational, logical manner
- D) After generating all the alternatives possible

Ans: B

Feedback:

Many managers make decisions that are just “good enough” because of lack of time, energy, or creativity to generate a number of alternatives. This is also called “satisficing.” Most people make decisions too quickly and fail to systematically examine a problem or its alternatives for solution.

11. What needs to be considered in evaluating the quality of one's decisions?

- A) Is evaluation necessary when using a good decision-making model?
- B) Can evaluation be eliminated if the problem is resolved?
- C) Will the effectiveness of the decision maker be supported?
- D) Will the evaluation be helpful in increasing one's decision-making skills?

Ans: D

Feedback:

The evaluation phase is necessary to find out more about one's ability as a decision maker and to find out where the decision making was faulty.

12. Which statement concerning the role of the powerful in organizational decision making is true?

- A) They exert little influence on decisions that are made
- B) They make decisions made that are in congruence with their own values
- C) They allow others to make the decisions however they wish
- D) They make all the important decisions with consideration to others

Ans: B

Feedback:

Not only does the preference of the powerful influence decisions of others in the organization, but the powerful are also able to inhibit the preferences of the less powerful. Powerful people in organizations are more likely to have decisions made that are congruent with their own preferences and values.

13. One of the nurses on the unit said, "Male patients have a low threshold for pain." This is an example of what type of illogical thinking?

- A) Affirming the consequences
- B) Arguing from analogy
- C) Deductive reasoning
- D) Overgeneralizing

Ans: D

Feedback:

This type of "crooked" thinking occurs when one believes that because *A* has a particular characteristic, every other *A* also has the same characteristic. This kind of thinking is exemplified when stereotypical statements are used to justify arguments and decisions.

14. What effect of organizational power on decision making is often reflected in the tendency of staff?

- A) Making decisions independent of organizational values
- B) Not trusting others to decide
- C) Desiring personal power
- D) Having private beliefs that are separate from corporate ones

Ans: D

Feedback:

The ability of the powerful to influence individual decision making in an organization often requires adopting a private personality and an organizational personality.

15. What does a decision grid allow the decision maker to do?

- A) Examine alternatives visually and compare each against the same criteria
- B) Quantify information
- C) Plot a decision over time
- D) Predict when events must take place to complete a project on time

Ans: A

Feedback:

A decision grid allows one to visually examine the alternatives and compare each against the same criteria. Although any criteria may be selected, the same criteria are used to analyze each alternative.

16. What statement regarding management decision-making aides is true?

- A) They are subject to human error
- B) They ensure good decision making
- C) They eliminate uncertainty and risk
- D) They tend to save management time

Ans: A

Feedback:

Management decision-making aides are subject to human error. Some of these aides encourage analytical thinking, others are designed to increase intuitive reasoning, and a few encourage the use of both hemispheres of the brain. Despite the helpfulness of these tools, there is a strong tendency for managers to favor first impressions when making a decision, and a second tendency, called confirmation biases, often follows.

17. What is heuristics?

- A) Discrete, unconscious process to allow individuals to solve problems quickly
- B) Set of rules to encourage learners to discover solutions for themselves
- C) Formal process and structure in the decision-making process
- D) Trial-and-error method or rules-of-thumb approach

Ans: A

Feedback:

Most individuals rely on discrete, often unconscious processes known as heuristics, which allows them to solve problems more quickly and to build upon experiences they have gained in their lives. Thus, heuristics use trial-and-error methods or a rules-of-thumb approach, rather than set rules, and in doing so, encourages learners to discover solutions for themselves.

18. Which statement is true regarding an economic man style manager?

- A) Lacks complete knowledge and generates few alternatives
- B) Makes decisions that may not be ideal but result in solutions that have an adequate outcome
- C) Makes most management decisions using the administrative man model of decision making
- D) These managers gather as much information as possible and generate many alternatives

Ans: D

Feedback:

Economic managers gather as much information as possible and generate many alternatives. Most management decisions are made by using the administrative man model of decision making. The administrative man never has complete knowledge and generates fewer alternatives.

19. What is a characteristic of a left-brain thinker?

- A) Creative
- B) Intuitive
- C) Analytical
- D) Holistic

Ans: C

Feedback:

Analytical, linear, *left-brain thinkers* process information differently from creative, intuitive, *right-brain thinkers*. Left-brain thinkers are typically better at processing language, logic, numbers, and sequential ordering, whereas right-brain thinkers excel at nonverbal ideation and holistic synthesizing.

20. What type of brain dominance creates a management style that is highly organized and detail oriented?

- A) Upper left brain
- B) Upper right brain
- C) Lower left brain
- D) Lower right brain

Ans: C

Feedback:

Individuals with lower-left-brain dominance are highly organized and detail oriented and individuals with upper-left-brain dominance truly are analytical thinkers who like working with factual data and numbers. These individuals deal with problems in a logical and rational way. Individuals with upper-right-brain dominance are big picture thinkers who look for hidden possibilities and are futuristic in their thinking. Individuals with lower-right-brain dominance experience facts and problem solve in a more emotional way than the other three types.

21. Which problem-solving learning strategy provides the learner with the most realistic, risk-free learning environment?

- A) Case studies
- B) Simulation
- C) Problem-based learning (PBL)
- D) Grand rounds

Ans: B

Feedback:

Simulation provides learners opportunities for problem solving that have little or no risk to patients or to organizational performance while providing models, either mechanical or live, to provide experiences for the learner. While the other options provide learning opportunities that include problem solving, simulation is the most realistic while also being low risk.

22. Which statement demonstrates a characteristic of a critical thinker? Select all that apply.
- A) "Since that didn't work effectively, let's try something different."
 - B) "The solution has to be something the patient is willing to do."
 - C) "I'll talk to the patient's primary care giver about the problem."
 - D) "Maybe there is no new solution to this particular problem."

Ans: A, B, C

Feedback:

A critical thinker displays persistence, empathy, and assertiveness. The remaining options reflect limited thinking and an inability to think outside the box.

23. What is the value of using a structured approach to problem solving for the novice nurse?
- A) Facilitates effective time management
 - B) Supports the acquisition of clinical reasoning
 - C) Supplements the orientation process
 - D) Encourages professional autonomy

Ans: B

Feedback:

A structured approach to problem solving and decision making increases clinical reasoning and is the best way to learn how to make quality decisions because it eliminates trial and error and focuses the learning on a proven process. This is particularly helpful to the novice nurse with limited clinical experience and intuition. The other options are outcomes of the possession of critical thinking skills and clinical reasoning.

24. Which situation is characteristic of the weakness of the nursing process?
- A) The frequent absence of well-written patient-focused objectives
 - B) The confusion created by the existence of numerous nursing diagnoses
 - C) The ever-increasing need for effective assessment skills required of the nurse
 - D) The amount of nursing staff required to implement the patients' plans of care

Ans: A

Feedback:

The weakness of the nursing process, like the traditional problem-solving model, is in not requiring clearly stated objectives. Goals should be clearly stated in the planning phase of the process, but this step is frequently omitted or obscured. While the remaining options relate to the nursing process, they are not directly a result of the process itself.

25. What is the advantage of using a payoff table when applicable?
- A) It assures the correct decision when dealing with financial situations
 - B) It is very helpful when quantitative information about the topic is available
 - C) It assists in the visualization of the available historic and current data
 - D) It is easy to construct even for the novice decision maker

Ans: C

Feedback:

Payoff tables do not guarantee that a correct decision will be made, but they assist in visualizing data. While it does lend itself to the use of quantitative data that are not its strength, the table may not be difficult to construct that is not its strength since it is dependent on the inclusion of accurate data and effective evaluation of that data.