



Prifysgol Cymru  
Y Drindod Dewi Sant  
University of Wales  
Trinity Saint David

# *Certificate of Higher Education in Employability Skills*

## *Problem Solving and Innovation (BMSW4014)*

*Lecturing team: Jaliya de Silva/ Arpu Kumar  
September 2025*

*Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau  
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives*



[www.uwtsd.ac.uk](http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk)

# Agenda

- Introduction to the module
- Overview of learning outcomes
- Expectations session
- Module Handbook
- What is problem solving?
- IDEAL problem solving model
- Problem of the week

# Learning outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Identify and evaluate contemporary issues and their impact on today's environment.
- Gather and interpret information to understand a problem.
- Demonstrate understanding of approaches to innovation and generate solutions.
- Evaluate options to make a decision.

# Student Support Services

- Support with academic writing
- Study skills
- Counselling services
- Extenuating Circumstances
- Full details on the Hwb

Any issues – you are welcome to contact me in the first instance.

# Student Conduct

- Student Charter and Code of Conduct
- [Student Charter | UWTSD](#)
- [UWTSD Strategic Equality Plan Update – Sept 2021 – YouTube](#)
- Use of AI – Specific reference handbook.  
Please speak to me with any questions.

# Expectations

- Attend lectures on time every week.
- Notify me if you are unable to attend or running late.
- Reach out for support if you need it.
- Ask questions if you are unsure (after the lecture if you would prefer).
- Act with integrity. What does this mean?
- Reference your work accordingly.

# Expectations

- In groups, discuss your expectations for this module?
- Consider your experiences from last term, what do you expect from the lecturing team?

# What is a problem?

- “A situation, person, or thing that needs attention and needs to be dealt with or solved” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).
- A problem can also be summarised as a circumstance where there is a gap between the situation as you perceive it and what you believe the situation should be.
- A perceived gap between the existing state and a desired state, or a deviation from the norm, standard or status quo (Edgar, 2021).

# Examples of problems

- Consider your working life, what problems have you experienced?
- How have you overcome these?
- What did you learn?

# Problems

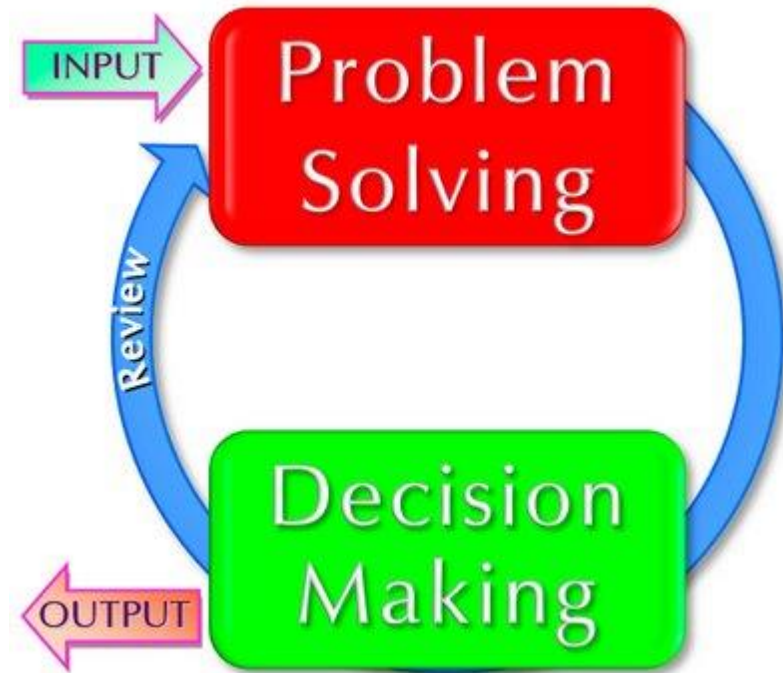
- First stage is to recognise a problem exists.
- Many day-to-day problems can easily be resolved by taking decisive action.
- Problems that are more complex often require lengthy deliberation.
- Workplace problems can be diagnosed through continuously monitoring performance, listening to the team and observing behaviours.

# What next?

- Decide to do nothing.
- Keep the problem under surveillance and review at a later date.
- Contain the problem.
- Find a solution.

# What is problem solving?

- Understanding the problem.
- Analysing the root cause.
- Identifying suitable solutions.
- Making a decision – choosing a course of action.



# Initial analysis

- Gather information.
- Define the scope of the problem.
- Define the impact of the problem.
- Determine the consequences.

# Problem solving

- Problem solving is a task best performed by teams and reliant on effective communication.
- In groups, discuss this statement. Is it true or false? Why?
- Be prepared to discuss your conclusions with the rest of the class.

# Problem solving

- Knowledge – of people, tasks and organisational influences (policy/objectives/procedure)
- Skills – in identifying, analysing and finding solutions to problems.
- Judgement – to assist in decision making throughout the problem solving process.

# Bransford and Stein (1993)

- IDEAL model proposed as an approach to improving problem-solving skills.

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| I | Identify problems and opportunities |
| D | Define goals                        |
| E | Explore possible strategies         |
| A | Anticipate outcomes and act         |
| L | Look back and learn                 |

Proctor (2018, p71)

# Identifying problems and opportunities

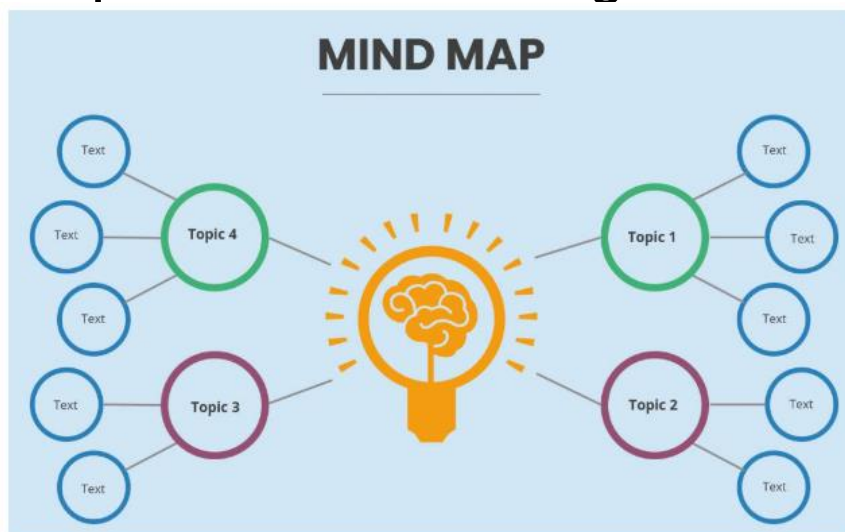
- Identify potential problems and treat them as opportunities to do something creative.
- Important to actively look for problems as well as to respond when they become critical or noticed.
- This approach can lead to a strong competitive advantage.

# Defining goals

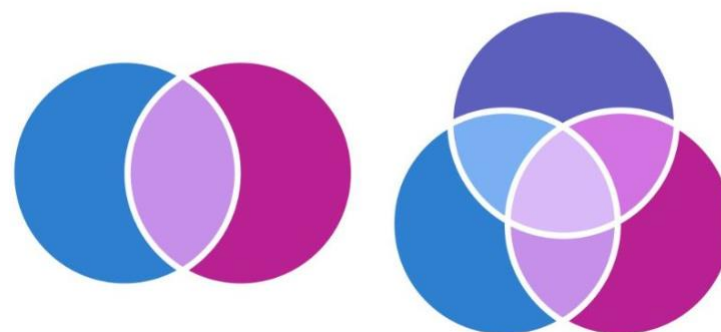
- Different goals often reflect how people understand or perceive a problem.
- Alternative goals should be considered to ensure a relevant goal is set.
- What is the desired outcome?
- If goals are not specified, could lead to an inappropriate solution.

# Exploring possible strategies

- Involves re-analysing goals and considering options or strategies that can help to achieve those goals.
- Many ways of recording and analysing complex problems including mind maps and Venn diagrams.



## VENN DIAGRAM



# Anticipating outcomes and acting

- Once a strategy has been selected, contingency plans should be drawn up and the strategy implemented.
- It is often necessary to actively test strategies before possible outcomes can be anticipated.
- An example of this is the building and testing of a prototype, which can help anticipate the outcomes of a particular strategy.

# Looking back and learning

- Review the effects and learn from the experience.
- Emphasis should be on the first step to solving the problem than an immediate solution.
- It is then possible to plan subsequent steps.



# Problem of the week

- You run a small retail business, employing 5 people.
- You have completed your weekly stock take and have identified that £500 worth of stock is missing.
- What do you do?

Individually, consider the above problem applying the approaches from today's lecture and send your work to your lecturer by the end of the week.

This will be marked as your attendance.

# What have we covered today?

- Introduction to the module
- Overview of learning outcomes
- Expectations session
- Module Handbook
- What is problem solving?
- IDEAL problem solving model
- Problem of the week



Prifysgol Cymru  
Y Drindod Dewi Sant  
**University of Wales**  
Trinity Saint David

# Thank You

*Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau*  
*Transforming Education; Transforming Lives*



[www.uwtsd.ac.uk](http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk)