

Lesson 0.3: Decisions Step by Step

Unit: Unit 0, Welcome to the FACS Room (Launch; no content module) **Topic:** Day 3 of the five-day launch **Grade:** 6 to 8 (written at grade 7; see Differentiation for the grade 6 support and grade 8 stretch) **Days:** 1 class period of 40 minutes **Room:** Either (classroom or FACS lab; tables of four)

Standards

- NYS module line: NYS IGLR 3. Employability b) Show understanding of interpersonal dynamics
- CTE theme line: CTE PSI 1. Problem Solving e) Demonstrate personal development of problem-solving skills through practice of these skills in a variety of classroom applications
- CTE theme line: CTE CIR 1. Communication e) Understand the role of communication skills in establishing cooperation, compromise, and collaboration in relationships
- NYS FACS Learning Standard 3 (Intermediate), Key Idea: Students will understand and be able to manage personal resources of talent, time, energy, and money and make effective decisions in order to balance their obligations to work, family, and self.; Performance Indicator: Students understand the resources available to them, make informed decisions about the use of those resources, and know some ways to expand resources.
- CDOS Standard 3a Universal Foundation Skills: Interpersonal Skills (Students demonstrate the ability to work with others, present facts that support arguments, listen to dissenting points of view, and reach a shared decision.)
- CDOS Standard 3a Universal Foundation Skills: Thinking Skills (Students evaluate facts, solve advanced problems, and make decisions by applying logic and reasoning skills.)
- National FCS 3.0: 1.2.4 Work productively on teams at school, at work, and in the community, including with people different from yourself.
- National FCS 3.0: 13.5.7 Show how to cooperate, compromise, and collaborate.

Enduring understanding and essential question

Big idea: A group usually decides better than one person, but only when everyone talks and the group follows a process instead of the loudest voice. The process has five steps, and this room uses the same five all year. **Essential question:** When a team disagrees, how does it decide?

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. (Low) Name the five steps of the decision model in order (name the choice, list options, weigh each against what matters, decide, look back) and match each to a moment in the simulation.
2. (Mid) Rank ten survival items alone, then again as a team, and calculate a difference score for each ranking against the expert key.
3. (High) Judge whether the team ranking beat the individual rankings, explain which step made the difference (or which step the team skipped), and defend one item the team ranked differently from the key.

Vocabulary

Tier 2 (general academic): rank, option, consequence, defend, compromise Tier 3 (FACS): decision model, criteria (what matters), difference score, consensus, expert ranking. See the unit vocabulary list for Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Materials and setup

- Handout, one per student: Handout 00.03 - Survival Ranking Sheet.md (the scenario, the ten items, an alone column, a team column, an expert column, and the scoring rows)
- Slides: Slides 00.03 - Decisions Step by Step
- Ten item cards per table (the ten items printed large, one per card, from the handout) so a team can move cards around instead of erasing
- A timer; the reset cue
- Setup notes: tables of four from the seat chart. The scenario, the items, and the expert ranking on this handout are written for this course; do not swap in a published survival exercise's list or key, because the point is the process, and the reasons on the key are the ones this class argues. Write the do now on the board.

Pre-assessment

The do now asks how the student's family decides something small. Most answer "my mom decides" or "we argue." Count the hands for "we vote" and "we talk it out"; those are the students who will keep a team honest in Step 2. Watch the loudest voice at each table during the alone ranking; that is the person the team step will test.

Do now and hook (Time: 4 min)

On the board: "Your family has to pick one thing for dinner tonight and everyone wants something different. How does it get decided in your house? One sentence. Be honest."

Debrief: four answers on the board (usually: one person decides; the loudest wins; we vote; we take turns). Then the hook: "Today your plane goes down in the north woods. Ten things survived the crash. You will rank them alone, then with your table, and then we will see who decided better: you, your team, or the loudest person at it."

Procedure

Step	Teacher will	Students will	Time
1. The scenario and the alone ranking	Read the scenario from the handout aloud (a small plane down on a lake shore in late October; everyone unhurt; the pilot's distress call went out so searchers know the general area; 40 miles to the nearest town; 35 F by day, below freezing at night; ten items survived). Show the ten items on the slide. Rule: silence, no looking at a neighbor, rank 1 (most important to survive until rescue) to 10.	Rank the ten items alone in the Alone column. Write one word of reason for their number 1.	8 min
2. Learning activity: the team ranking	Give the team rule: one team ranking, and every person has to be able to say why for the top three. No voting on the whole list; talk through each item. Put the item cards on the table. Circulate and note, for each table, who talks first, who does not talk, and whether anyone asks a quiet person what they think; bring one observation per table to Step 4. Use the reset cue at 9	Talk. Move the cards. Reach one team ranking and write it in the Team column on every sheet.	10 min

	minutes.		
3. The expert ranking and the scores	Reveal the expert ranking one item at a time with the reason (from the key). Show the scoring rule: for each item, the difference between your rank and the expert rank, ignore the minus sign, add the ten differences. Lower is better. Do one item on the board.	Copy the expert column. Score the Alone column and the Team column. Write both totals. Compare: did the team beat your alone score? Did it beat the best alone score at the table?	7 min
4. Direct instruction: the five steps	Ask each table for its two numbers (average alone, team). Write them on the board; in most rooms the team beats the average and often the best individual. Then name what the class just did: name the choice (what do we need to survive until rescue?), list options (the ten cards), weigh each against what matters (cold kills first, then thirst, then hunger; searchers are coming, so being seen matters), decide (the team ranking), look back (the score and the reasons). Say the line: "This is how we decide in this room	Write the five steps on the handout next to the moment in the simulation that matched each. Circle the step their team did worst.	6 min

	all year: a recipe, a budget, a design, a product. Five steps, same words.” Share one observation per table from Step 2 without names (“at one table, nobody asked the quiet person until minute six”).		
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Questions to ask

Monitor understanding:

- What was the choice, in one sentence? What were the options?
- Why is food ranked low when everyone is hungry? What kills first in the cold?
- What is your alone score? Your team score? Which is lower?

Deepen learning:

- Your team beat everyone’s alone score. What did the team do that no one person could?
- Your team did not beat the best person at the table. What happened to that person’s idea?
- The map is ranked last. Half of you ranked it in the top five. What did you weigh it against, and what did the key weigh it against?
- Where in your life this week is there a choice you could run through the five steps?

Check for understanding

Two checks. During Step 2, the clipboard note per table: “everyone speaks at least once,” “someone asks a quiet person,” “the team gives a reason, not a vote, for the top three.” During Step 3, walk and read totals; a student whose two totals are the same has copied the team column into the alone column, and gets a quiet “put your own first list back.”

Closure (Time: 5 min)

Exit card, three lines: the five steps in order (from memory; the handout is turned over); my alone score and my team score; the one item I would still rank differently from the expert and my reason. Three students read line three aloud. Collect the team ranking sheets (one per student, with both columns and both scores) as the day’s check. Sort exit cards: “got it” has five steps in order and two scores; “needs more” is missing steps, and those students get the five-step poster pointed out again during tomorrow’s do now.

Differentiation and supports

- ELL: the ten items are on cards with a picture each (described on the handout); the scenario is on the slide in short lines with a picture (a lake, a plane, snow at night); the five steps are on a poster with an icon each and the words in Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish (see Vocabulary 00.md, [check with a native speaker]); sentence starter for the team: "I think ___ is number ___ because ___."
- IEP and 504 (general): rank the top five and bottom three instead of all ten; the scoring is a fill-in table with the subtraction set up; a student can be the team's card mover instead of the speaker; extended time by scoring the alone column as tomorrow's do now.
- Grade 6 support: rank six items (the key marks which six); the team must agree on the top three only.
- Grade 8 stretch: the team writes a one-sentence rule for what a group should do when one member is sure and the rest are not; the student ranks the items again for a different situation on the handout (a hot desert road in July, town 5 miles away, no distress call) and explains which two items change place and why.
- UDL checkpoint used: multiple means of engagement (a team game with a score; a defensible disagreement with the key is rewarded, not corrected) and multiple means of action and expression (cards moved, ranking written, reason spoken).
- No-room alternative: this lesson runs anywhere with tables. No materials beyond the sheet and the cards.

Assessment

Objective	Standards met	Learning task	Assessment (formative or summative; tool)
1. Name the five steps and match each to the simulation	PSI 1. e); Std 3 PI B	Step 4 handout box	Formative; exit card line one
2. Rank alone and as a team; calculate difference scores	IGLR 3. b); CIR 1. e); CDOS 3a Thinking Skills	Steps 1 to 3	Formative; team ranking sheet collected (two columns, two scores)
3. Judge the team result, explain the step, defend one item	IGLR 3. b); CDOS 3a Interpersonal Skills; National FCS 1.2.4; National FCS 13.5.7	Step 4 discussion; exit card line three	Formative; exit card; the clipboard note on who spoke feeds tomorrow's team norms

The five-step model is assessed summatively on the Unit 2 Test (item 6) and in every project rubric's planning row.

Homework

None. Optional: run one small choice at home through the five steps (what to make for breakfast, what to do Saturday). Write the five steps with your answers on an index card.

Connections

Inside the building: social studies, which teaches how governments and groups decide (majority, consensus, one leader); FACS gives social studies a simulation students remember, social studies gives FACS the words. Science: the rule of threes (three hours without shelter in cold, three days without water, three weeks without food) and why boiling lake water matters, if a science teacher wants a five-minute guest spot. Community: none needed.

Sources

- NYS Middle Level CTE FACS Content Module 01, Individual Growth and Life Readiness (nycotecenter.org, June 2018), line 3. b). Copy in 02 Standards/NYS Module PDFs/.
- NYS Middle Level CTE Theme Module 05, Problem Solving and Innovation, line 1. e), and Theme Module 02, Communication and Interpersonal Relationships, line 1. e). Same folder.
- NYS Learning Standards for Health, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences (1996), Standard 3, Intermediate, FACS strand, and NYS CDOS Standard 3a, Intermediate, Interpersonal Skills and Thinking Skills. Wording per 02 Standards/STANDARDS SOURCES - web research.md.
- National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education 3.0 (LEAD FCS Education, 2018), competencies 1.2.4 and 13.5.7.
- Sal's own materials: the plane crash decision simulation and "five steps to a good decision," as listed in his April 2026 Brentwood unit overview under Decision Making (01 Source Analysis/Brentwood Work and Simulations.md). The original file is in his Brentwood OneDrive and was not available; this lesson writes the simulation fresh with its own scenario, its own ten items, and its own expert key and reasons. The rule of threes used in the key is common survival guidance, not taken from any one exercise.

Teacher notes

- If the period runs short, cut Step 3's scoring to the team column only and have students score the alone column as tomorrow's do now. Never cut Step 4; the five steps are the reason for the day.
- Common mistake: teams vote on the whole list in two minutes and sit there. The rule "every person can say why for the top three" stops it. Enforce it by asking the quietest student at the table for the reason on number 2.
- Common mistake two: students argue with the expert key as if it were a test answer. It is not. A team that ranks the whistle above the tarp and gives a reason (searchers are close) is doing the lesson right. Say so.

- The map is the teaching item. Almost every group ranks it too high because walking out feels like doing something. The key's reason (the town is 40 miles away and searchers know where you are) is the "weigh each against what matters" step made visible.
- *[Sal: your Brentwood version had survivors choosing "who to bring to an island." If you prefer the people version, keep the five steps and the scoring the same and swap the item list; the handout's structure holds either way.]*
- Post the five steps on the wall today and leave them up all year. Every project sheet from Unit 1 on has a "five steps" box that points at this poster.