The college application process was long and tedious. Students poured their lives into little text boxes and spent countless hours writing introspective essays to be read by underpaid, tired employees at the school of their dreams. This process, while unfathomable, teaches us a valuable lesson about one of the many topics discussed in the “Problem Solving” Lecture: the “Paradox of Choice.” It is described as a situation where there are many good or appropriate options available (Onesti). The college application promise is one relatable example of this as there are countless universities across the United States, and even in other nations, that could be the “right fit” for a student. The correct choice can be made by utilizing problem solving: a process that identified a problem, analyzes it, and finds a solution.

An article published by Educational Business Articles details a similar problem-solving process to the one discussed in lecture. The title of the article is Systematic Problem Solving Strategies: Improving Customer Satisfaction and Efficiency. The article elaborates on a five-step problem-solving process. The first step is to “Identify the Problem” or the phase of selecting the best issue to improve on. It suggests focusing on the issue that is making the biggest negative impact on the company, ranging from number of times the issue has arrived or the financial penalties. The next step is to “Identify the Root Causes” where tactics such as flow charts, histograms, and other diagrams can be utilized. After that, the author suggests to “Brainstorm Alternate Solutions” where a simple meeting to identify possible causes of the issue to avoid in
the solution would be acceptable. Once a solution is selected, one should “Select the Most Appropriate Solution” by continuously narrow down previously brainstormed option until the best option is reached. The fifth and final step is to “Implement and Check [the] Solution” by calculating the impact the solution will have and determining whether the root causes are gone. The article concludes by encouraging people to act hastily on possible problems within a company so that a positive loop of improvements on issues can have exponential betterment of the company’s functionality (Educational Business Articles).

As a business student, the information provided by the lecture and Educational Business Articles regarding problem solving is very relatable as it can be easily applied to the world and business problems. I was intrigued by the topic because I realized how often there is a situation in my daily life that I use, or should use, the methods detailed in both. From the classroom to the gym to council meetings, I can use problem solving to be more successful in my work.

When I am tasked with a hefty assignment, I can use problem solving to devise a plan of attack for the best and most efficient way to do it. For example, the Midterm Project assigned in I101. My first step would be to “Identify the Problem” by reading over the requirements and rubric listed on Canvas. Next, to “Identify the Root Causes” or create a baseline for the project, I would map out when I am going to spend certain amounts of time on it. After that, I would “Brainstorm Alternate Solutions” by thinking of different layouts and resources I can use for my personal website. Once this is complete, I would “Select the Most Appropriate Solution” and eliminate the options that I was not fond of or could not realistically execute. Finally, to “Implement and Check the Solution”, I create the webpage based on the last remaining idea
and work on it during the designated time periods until I ultimately submit it for a grade (Educational Business Articles).

One of the specific topics in the lecture that sparked my interest was the cognitive biases, as I remembered learning about many of them during my AP Psychology class my junior year of high school. One of them in particular, the “Bandwagon Effect” stood out because it is similar to the psychological term, “groupthink” that we discussed a lot in my class (Onesti). Not only did we learn a lot about it and how it can cause very polarized thinking between two parties or further embed a status quo into society, but it is also very relevant to our modern day society. According to another article written by BBC, the eruption of controversial “fake news” epidemics arose just months before the 2016 election in Eastern Europe (Wendling). The lack of trustworthiness in media clearly resulted in many of these Bandwagon effects found in citizens all over the nation.

One of the professions I am very interested in is Management Consulting. Problem solving is an enormous factor in this field as the primary job of a management consultant is to be hired by a company to come in and analyze the current problems in the company’s infrastructure, functionality, and sales, in order to propose a suggestion for how the company can improve and be more successful in the future. A Management Consultant could easily utilize this ten step process detailed in the lecture, especially the steps of Identifying, analyzing, formulating, creating a plan, and implementing.

I feel that the Problem Solving lecture and the research done by Educational Business Articles supports my idea of what the best problem solving methods are. I am a very logistical
person, so breaking down a very complicated situation into different smaller tasks is very much a part of my personality and work style. I know that when I enter the work force, a job that revolves around an orderly progression of problem solving steps will be the best fit for me.

Onesti, Nina. “INFO I101 Lecture Week 05 - Problem Solving.”