

NEED FOR COGNITION SCALE – NCS

We are interested in knowing how students feel about different situations in which they must think, reason, make decisions, or solve a problem. A number of such situations are listed below.

Instructions: For each statement listed below, circle the number that indicates the extent to which you feel it is characteristic of you. For example, if the statement is not at all like you, circle number 1 under “Extremely Uncharacteristic,” or if you really can’t decide if the statement is or is not characteristic of you, circle number 3 under “Uncertain.”

	Extremely Uncharacteristic	Somewhat Uncharacteristic	Uncertain	Somewhat Characteristic	Extremely Characteristic
1. I would prefer complex to simple problems.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Thinking is not my idea of fun.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is likely a chance I will have to think in depth about something.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I only think as hard as I have to.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I prefer to think about small, daily projects to long-term ones.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I like tasks that require little thought once I've learned them.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Learning new ways to think doesn't excite me very much.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles that I must solve.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort.	1	2	3	4	5
17. It's enough for me that something gets the job done; I don't care how or why it works.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally.	1	2	3	4	5

Items 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, and 17 are reverse scored.

References

Cacioppo, J. T. & Petty, R. E. (1982). The need for cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *42*, 116–131.

Cacioppo, J. T., Petty, R. E., & Kao, C. F. (1984). The efficient assessment of need for cognition. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *48*, 306–307.

Sadowski, C. J. & Gulgoz, Sami (1992). Internal consistency and test-retest reliability of the Need for Cognition Scale. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *74*, 610.