

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Self-Paced Module

EDUCATOR GUIDE



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BACKGROUND

According to a 2019 U.S. News and World Report survey, while only 2% of U.S. high school seniors had completed an internship, 70% of those internships resulted in a job offer.¹ These statistics should encourage more students to consider professional internship experiences as part of their pathway towards their future careers. Internships allow students to earn *and* learn in an environment that is structured to help bolster their future success. Moreover, internships provide students with an opportunity to try a career path or industry before committing time, studies, and funding towards higher education. They have also been shown to send students to college and trade schools more prepared than they would be otherwise.

The 21st-Century Skills are a set of knowledge and skills that help you be successful in every part of life—school, work, community, and relationships. They include life skills, career skills, habits, and traits. There are five skills that consistently appear in surveys asking companies what they look for when choosing interns or offering employment: information processing, teamwork, planning/prioritizing, decision making/problem solving, and verbal communication.² These align with four of the 21st-Century Skills known as the 4Cs: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. By teaching, enhancing, and giving students the opportunity to practice these valuable skills, educators are setting them up for success in professional internship experiences and future careers.

MODULE SUMMARY

Are today's students prepared with the 21st-Century Skills needed to be a successful intern or employee? In this self-paced module, students will work to prepare themselves for the internship experience by exploring the 21st-Century Skills sought after by employers. Students will take a deep dive into the 4Cs: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity, as they consider how to best prepare themselves for a professional internship experience.

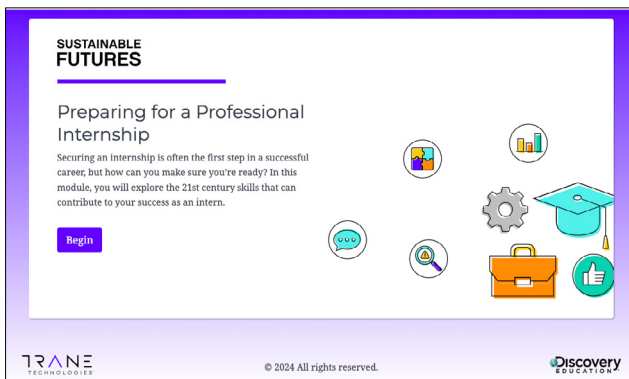
¹ <https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/articles/the-rise-of-high-school-internships>

² <https://ebiztest.naceweb.org/store/2017/internship-and-co-op-report/>

Using the Self-Paced Module

This section provides strategies for incorporating the self-paced module into instruction and screen-by-screen suggestions for facilitating discussion before, during, and after each module.

PREPARING FOR A PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW



Securing an internship is often the first step in a successful career, but how can students make sure they are ready? In this module, they will explore the 21st-Century Skills that can contribute to their success as interns.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- identify 21st-Century skills.
- describe characteristics of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.
- consider actionable steps they can take to prepare themselves for a professional internship.

SETTING THE STAGE

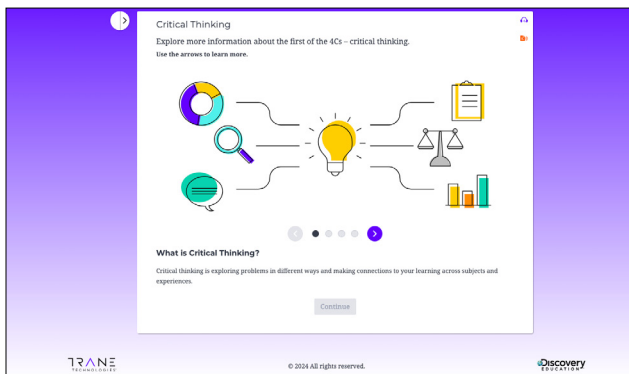
Engage students before the module with one or more of the following questions:

- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- What are some skills that you think will be most important for you to be successful in your future career?
- What is more important: the knowledge you have, or your ability to work well with others?
- Do you think you would make a good employee? Why or why not?

SCREEN-BY-SCREEN EDUCATOR TIPS

Prepare

- **21st-Century Skills:** The module begins with students learning what 21st-Century Skills are and details about four specific skills (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity). Which of the four skills do students think of as a personal strength? A personal weakness?
- **How Prepared are You?:** Students are asked to think about how prepared they are for professional internship experiences. Take an informal poll by raised hands about who feels always, sometimes, and never prepared.
- **Show What You Know:** The pre-test consists of three questions. Students have one opportunity to answer each question correctly. Feedback is provided for both correct and incorrect answers. If using the module in a classroom setting, consider having students vote on answers or call on different students for each question. The correct answer is visible once an answer is submitted.
- **What Do You Think?:** Students are asked to rank how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statement: "I am confident in my understanding of 21st-Century skills and how they affect my success in a professional internship experience or future career." Ask students to share their opinions regarding their confidence levels and record any questions students have on the board or a sheet of paper.



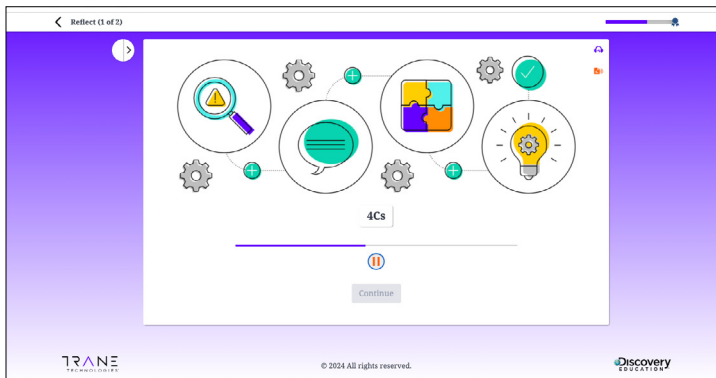
Learn

- **21st-Century Skills and the 4Cs:** Students will view a slideshow explaining nuances of 21st-Century Skills and their importance. Facilitate a discussion that gives students an opportunity to share their feelings about the importance of these skills.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students will click through slides to explore information about the characteristics of critical thinking. Invite students to share situations when they had to demonstrate critical thinking. How do they regard the importance of this skill in a professional internship experience or future career?
- **Communication:** Students will swipe through cards that explain the multiple facets of good communication. Challenge students to play a game of "Telephone" to practice clear and effective two-way communication.

- **Collaboration:** Students will consider a series of statements reflecting possible benefits of collaboration and be asked to rank them in order of importance. Have students walk to one area of the room as you read each statement aloud if they feel that benefit is the most important.
- **Creativity:** Students click on a series of hotspots to reveal various facets of creativity. Challenge students to think of situations that might require creativity as it is defined on the screen.

Wrap-Up

- **Importance of 21st-Century Skills:** The module ends by summarizing the key takeaways about 21st-Century Skills. Take this time to answer any remaining questions students might have.
- **Now, What Do You Think?:** Students are asked to rank how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statements: "I am confident in my understanding of 21st-Century skills and how they affect my success in a professional internship experience or future career." Did more students agree with the statement after completing the module than before? If students still disagree at the end, ask them what they still need to know to agree with the statements.



Challenge

- There are five post-test questions for this module. Students are encouraged to review the information in each section, if needed, before beginning the post-test.
- Students will encounter a variety of question types including fill-in-the-blank, multiple response, and multiple choice.
- For each question, students have two opportunities to answer correctly. Full credit is given for correct answers on the first try. There are five total points available in this module's post-test. If students answer incorrectly, they are given an opportunity to try again or skip and continue to the next question. No additional points are given to students who either do not retry the question or retry the question and again answer incorrectly. Partial credit is given for students who correctly answer a portion of a multi-part question or who give the correct answer on a second try.

Key Terms

21st-Century Skills

skills that help people be successful in every part of life—school, work, community, and relationships—that include life skills, career skills, habits, and traits

Collaboration

working and cooperating with others to produce or create something

Communication

sharing information in different ways and understanding information shared by others

Creativity

forming something new and valuable

Critical Thinking

exploring problems in different ways and making connections to learning across subjects and experiences