Module 1

Duration: 55 minutes

Scanning the World of Possibilities

This module is designed to help students understand the importance of career planning and to motivate them to use this curriculum to begin formulating career choices.

Objectives

At the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. State three reasons why it is important to spend time and energy doing career exploration.
2. List the influences on their career thinking to date.
3. List topics to be covered in the remainder of the curriculum.

Module 1: Overview

Classroom Components

1. Introduction to the Curriculum 5 minutes
2. Activity 1: The Dictator Game 15 minutes
3. Mini-Lecture and Discussion: Why Career Planning is Important 10 minutes
4. Discussion: Influences on My Career Decisions 15 minutes
5. Mini-Lecture: Summary of Remainder of Course 10 minutes

Facilitator Preparation

1. Read the lesson plan and resource material.
2. For middle school students, duplicate materials Activity 1: The Dictator Game, Handout 1: Course Description, and Activity 4: Decision Making in My Life.
3. Print one copy of the Occupational Profile Cards for use with Activity 1: The Dictator Game. These cards can be accessed online from the Administrative Database Management System.

Homework Assignments

For Middle School Students

Before the next session, have middle school students use Activity 4: Decision Making in My Life to record at least five decisions that they make between now and the next session. As indicated on the worksheet, they should describe:

1. The decision made.
2. Alternatives they had to choose from.
3. What information, if any, they collected in order to make the choice.
4. The results of the decision, if immediately known.

The Next Session

Middle school students move on to:

Module 3: Determining Your Direction

Module 1: Lesson Plan

Module 1: Scanning the World of Possibilities

*Do not tell anyone the occupation you have been assigned! Your task is to describe this occupation to a partner without telling her or him what it is. Your partner will try to guess the occupation as you give hints by answering the questions on your sheet.*

Provide two handouts to each student: 1) an occupational profile (found in the Administrative Database Management System), and 2) a copy of the questions to ask (Activity 1: The Dictator Game).

*Please divide into pairs. One of you will play the role of the person in the occupation assigned to you. The other will ask questions from the list provided. When your partner has guessed your occupation, change roles and try to guess her or his occupation. You have 10 minutes for this activity.*

After 10 minutes, say: *I’m interested in your reactions to the game you just played.*

1. *How many of you liked the occupation you were assigned? Why?*
2. *How many of you disliked the occupation you were assigned? Why?*
3. *If you had to be in this occupation, what do you think your life would be like?*
4. *How much education would you need?*
5. *How much money would you make?*
6. *What kinds of tasks would you do every day?*

Mini-Lecture and Discussion: Why Career Planning is Important

(10 minutes)

*Some of you liked your assigned occupations and some did not. However, these are real occupations, and real people do this work every day – and may like it or dislike it. Why is it important that you like the work you do and that you choose wisely?*

List student responses on a flip chart or board. Look for and encourage the following answers:

1. We spend so much time at work (daily and in a lifetime).
2. What we do determines whether we are happy at work (and unhappiness at work may spill over into family life).

Our work determines how much money we make (

this determines the kind of home, car, leisure activities, vacations, and financial needs we will have).

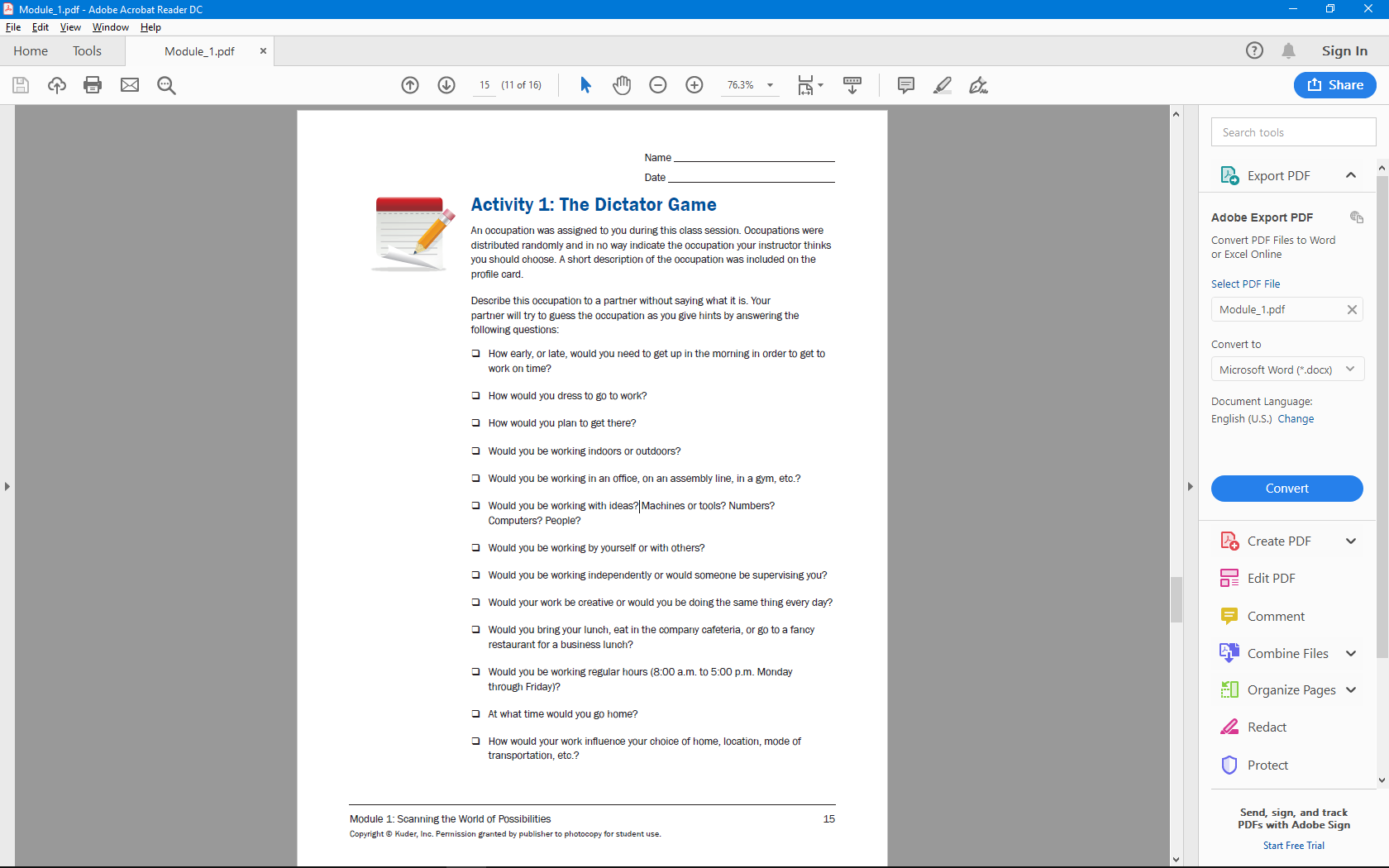
Homework Assignment: For Middle School Students

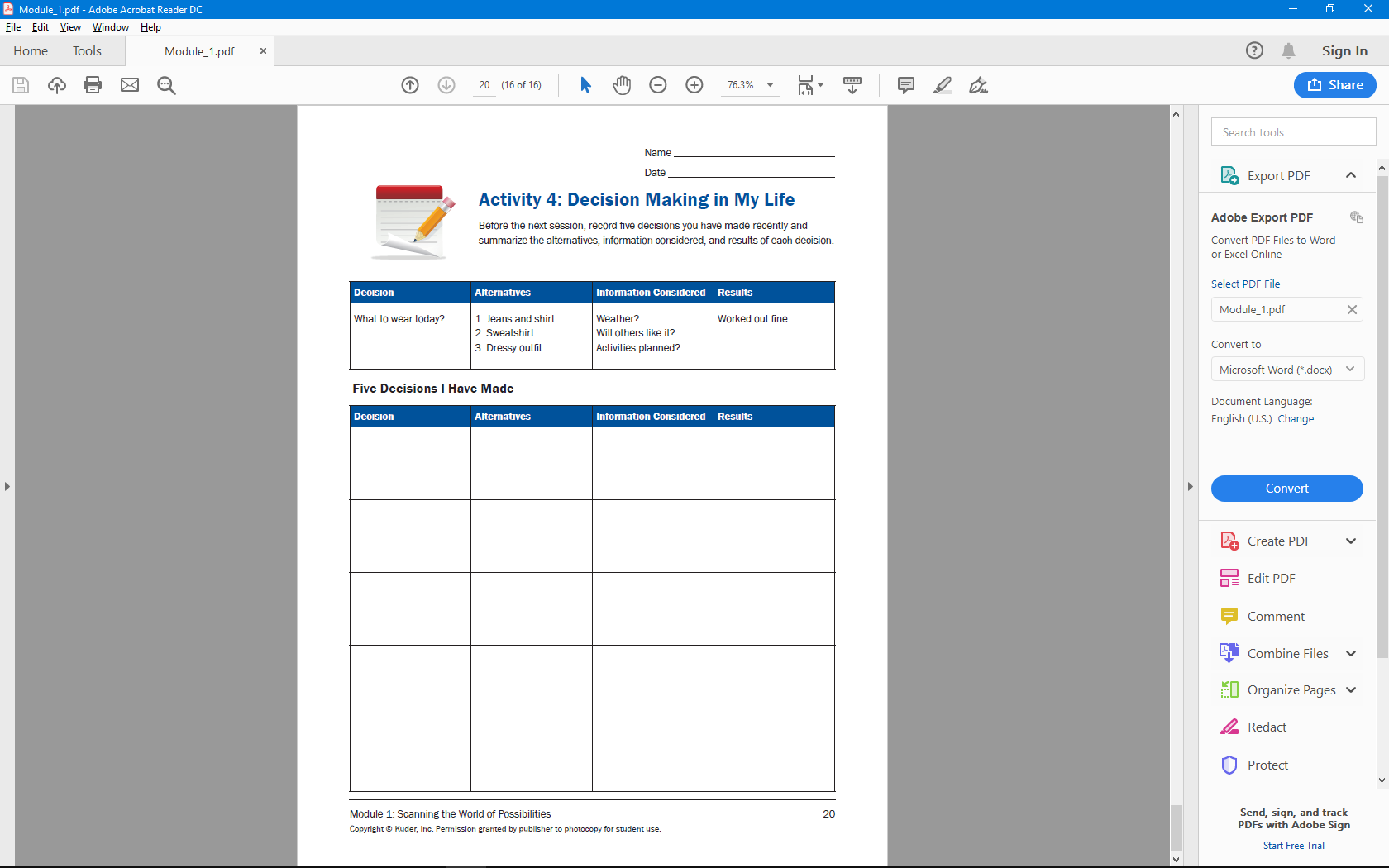
Provide middle school students with Activity 4: Decision Making in My Life to complete. This will introduce them to Module 3: Determining Your Direction for the next class session.

*Before the next session, use Activity 4: Decision Making in My Life to record five decisions that you have recently made and to summarize the alternatives, information considered, and results of each decision.*

Example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decision | Alternatives | Information Considered | Results |
| What to wear today? | 1. Jeans and shirt  2. Sweatshirt  3. Dressy outfit | Weather?  Will others like it?  Activities planned? | Worked out fine. |





Optional Activities

1. Have students create a collage of people and things that have influenced their thinking about future careers. A collage is a collection of pictures. Students may put them in a small picture album, or may paste them onto a poster or piece of flip-chart paper.
2. As an optional learning experience for high school students, invite two to four recent alumni to return to speak to the class. Attempt to get a mix of those who are satisfied with their current work and those who are dissatisfied. Structure both the time and the content.

Suggested time is a maximum of 10 minutes per speaker. Ask each to talk about:

1. What they’re doing now.
2. How they like what they’re doing now.
3. How they made decisions that got them to this point in their career.
4. What they wish they had known when they were in high school.

Module 1: Resource Material

Why is work important?

Work takes on different meanings for different people. For some, it is viewed as the means by which money is earned so that satisfaction can be found in other life roles. For others, it is viewed as a way to express interests and skills and to attain values – that is, to find self-actualization. Still, for others, it is a deep spiritual commitment, a way in which to contribute to society or establish meaning in life.

Regardless of the meaning that work takes on in an individual’s life, its selection is one of life’s most important decisions. This is true because it consumes at least one-third of our waking hours, and it has the potential to make those hours satisfying or dissatisfying. Work has the potential to interact with and influence many of the life roles played by individuals. For example, one’s attitudes about and satisfaction with work are likely to affect the roles of spouse/partner and parent. The amount of time that one has to spend at work affects the amount of time one can spend in the roles of spouse/partner, parent, and citizen.

Traditionally, one’s occupation is a significant determiner of socioeconomic class and income. In turn, these two variables affect our lifestyle, the friends we have, the education we achieve, the neighborhood and kind of house we live in, the kinds of leisure we can afford, and the type of retirement we can have.

Beyond that, work offers the potential to express self-concept and create a self-identity. This fact is so pervasive that it is likely that the first question we ask people we have just met is what kind of work they perform for a living. The titles of occupations trigger stereotypes, which have some measure of truth to them. Persons who work in a specific occupation tend to have similar interests, abilities and skills, and personality traits.

Still further, work serves to structure time. Though most of us dream of unstructured time, the fact is that many people – if not most – are more productive and happier when their time is structured.

Why plan?

Given the rapid changes in the nature of work, hastened by technological advances and globalization, some current career planning theorists say that it is impossible to plan ahead and that we should be teaching young people simply to learn about change and to go with the flow.

Though many changes are occurring in work tasks, places of work, and skills required for occupations, we also believe in the value of planning. Clearly, the idea of selecting one occupation and drafting a long-term career plan is passé. We know that we will all make several changes in jobs, as well as in occupations, in our lifetimes. We also know that we will never “finish our education,” but rather will need to continually upgrade skills and acquire new ones. It also seems evident that jobs of the future will be described by the list of skills needed to perform them and the level of each skill needed. Thus, in the future, we may talk about transferring a set of skills from one occupation to another, and the titles of those occupations may appear to be quite different from each other, though the skill set needed to perform them is common. Finally, we know that it will be important to teach young people about change – or transition, as some theorists call it – and to teach them some models for coping with it.

Although acknowledging that this is a time of change, professionals in the field still advocate that having an evolving career plan is highly desirable. We know from research that there is a high correlation between having career plans and retention in either high school or college. We also know that career plans change but are usually highly related to each other. For example, if a student taking an interest inventory expresses high interest in one cluster of occupations and chooses a college major based on that cluster, there are more than eight chances out of 10 that, if that student changes majors, the new one will be within the same general cluster or one that is closely related. Thus, research substantiates the fact that interests are quite stable from the middle adolescent years on through adulthood, and that changes made in school majors related to occupational choices revolve around a central area of interest.

Further, it is difficult for persons of all ages, but especially middle school and high school students, to plan for and move from Point A to Point Z. It is much easier to plan to move to Point B from A, then to C from B, etc. In other words, we humans are most comfortable moving a mini-step at a time toward a longer-term goal. This being the case, it is highly desirable for a student to formulate a tentative plan so that specific short-term goals can be set, even though that plan and those goals may change with time and experience.Module 1: Scanning the World of Possibilities 14 >> Back to Module 1 Overview

Having a tentative plan makes it possible for students and their parents or guardians to be informed when selecting school subjects or exploratory experiences that will either support the plan or modify it, and when planning for further education. This is a more desirable state than selecting school subjects blindly, following what peer pressure may dictate, or having no goals to motivate one to stay in school.

The overarching purpose of this curriculum is to help students learn about themselves and the world of educational and occupational options at their disposal, and to formulate a modifiable career plan so that decisions can be informed ones.