Let's start researching. I divide research into three levels. And naturally, we'll begin with level one. Level one research is very broad research. The goal of level one is to cut thousands of college and university options down to dozens of college and university options. The best way to do this broad research is by first researching what you want. And the best tools to research what you want are big search sites that divide colleges and universities into large categories. Now, there are more university search sites than I can count. And I have not tried all of them, nor can I comment on all of them. But the ones that we're going to refer to have been around for a long time and are very reliable. One thing that I firmly believe, and you have to keep in mind, is that you cannot do your research using only one web site. To get the best results, you're going to want to use multiple sites and compare the results that you find. For this section of the course, I'm going to use two of these sites for reference. Big Future by the College Board and College View, which is operated by a company named Hobsons. Both of these sites operate the same way. They use a series of filters where you make choices about what you want in a school. Your choices narrow down the number of potential schools that match you. With each selection that you make, universities are either removed or added, so that you're only left with the schools that are the best matches. Now, between these sites, you'll notice some differences right away. Big Future offers ten filters, while CollegeView offers 20 filters. It doesn't mean that one is better or worse; it just means that you have options for how you want to search. As you explore these filters, you're going to notice that many of the subfilters are related to the features that you can considered during your self assessment. Both sites offer information about each category that you can use. So make sure that you explore that information. When using these big search sites, start by checking off some of the bigger, easier options that you have identified first, the things that you want in a school. For instance, if you have identified the size of the school that you want, that's a great place to start. Now, you'll notice that school size on college view has five choices, where Big Future has three choices under type of school. Another easy place to begin is campus setting. Do you want to go to a school in a city? Near a city? Or not near a city? Again, you'll notice that each search site offers different options. A third, easy way to search is by location. Do you want to go to school in a certain part of the United States or even a certain state within the country? I encourage students to consider schools across the US. But some of you might want a specific location for a specific reason. Maybe you have family living in that area, or maybe you just want a certain type of weather. If it's important to you, use it as a search criteria. Now, one area that is very important to a lot of students is major. Your major is what you're going to study when you're in school and what you're going to get your degree in. When researching by major, you have to be careful about what you call your major. In US education, majors and study are all about the goal that you're trying to achieve, not about the name of the major. An example of this is robotics. If you type robotics into BigFuture, you're going to be left with less than 60 matches. However, there are far more than 60 schools in the United States where you can study robotics. At those other schools, it's not called robotics. Robotics might be a program under the electrical engineering department or maybe the mechanical engineering department. Or maybe it's a program outside of the major. But you can still learn about robotics and be qualified to work in that field. Think about your goal and search different majors that can achieve that same goal. To test this idea, keep all of your search criteria the same and then change the major. When you change the major, you're going to get different results. Go back and
compare these results to one another. And you might be surprised at how many options are really out there. Another area related to major that can confuse students is anything that starts with pre. Things like pre-medical, pre-dental, pre-law, pre-veterinary. In the US, these are not actual majors. Remember, a major is what you get your degree in. You cannot get a degree in pre-med. You, as a pre-med student, will have to study in a different major that will result in a degree. Now, anything that has pre in front of it is important. It means that a school will offer you an advisory program, so they will support you in your preparation for medical school or law school or dental school. So it's certainly something important to search for, but remember that it's not actually a major. Think about what you want to study on your way to your professional school, that will be your major. There are also categories on these search sites that you might not be as familiar with. Take the time to read about those categories and think about whether or not they're actually important to you. An example of this is the type of school that you can search for. On search sites, you'll notice options to search for two-year schools or four-year schools. To get a Bachelor's degree, you will need to attend a four-year school. A two-year school will result in an Associate's degree, which is a step towards a Bachelor's degree. You can attend a two-year school. Receive an Associate's degree and then transfer to a four year school to finish your Bachelor's degree, which is a great option for a lot of students. Two year schools often offer more flexible admission criteria and sometimes lower cost. So attending a two-year school could be a great step along your path to a Bachelor's degree. But for now, decide do you want to start by searching for two-year schools? Or by searching for four-year schools? Another aspect of school type are public, private or for-profit schools. Now, there are a lot of myths out there about public versus private. These myths were even around when I was applying to schools. But the reality is there is really little difference in the quality of education you’re going to receive at a public school versus a private school. Now, there can be big differences between public schools and private schools, but those differences come more in the size, the cost, how much financial aid is available to students and how the school is run. But the education and the quality of the education that you receive is great at both types of schools. Now, for-profit schools are a little bit different. For-profit schools are actually businesses that offer specialized education. As an adviser, I tell students to be very careful about applying to for-profit schools, because their mission is not purely educational. So, do some extra research if you're considering a for-profit school. Now, when using these research sites, remember to take your time when looking at the filters. After you finish checking off your choices, you're going to be left with a list of matching results. Hopefully, this number of possible schools is something much smaller than 4,000. Right? If you still have thousands or even hundreds of options, remember what we discussed last week. You have to commit to some preferences. If you go into this research process with an i-don't-care or an i-can-adapt attitude, you're not going to get anywhere. Now, that we've searched for what you want, let's add in something about what's realistic. [BLANK_AUDIO]