English Transcript for Level 1 Research: What is Realistic

Now that you've searched based on what you want, let's add a dose of reality to the search process. The search sites that you're using would give you the option to search by selectivity. The selectivity of a university is an area that often confuses students. And what selectivity refers to is the percentage of, of students a university accepts. The lower the percentage, the more selective the university. The more selective the university, the harder it is to get accepted. Remember, being harder to get into does not mean that a school is better, it just means that it's harder to get into. Search sites have filters for selectivity. Big Future for example, offers five selectivity filters while College View offers three. When searching by selectivity you want to ask yourself two big questions. The first question is, am I realistically ready to handle the demands that come with attending a highly selective college? Academically, students at highly selective schools are generally the best of the best. So are you ready to be in classes with the best of the best? Will you be able to handle the quantity of work that you are given? And will you be able to complete that work with the high quality that is expected of you? All right? Think about, is that the type of environment that you want in your college experience? The second big question you have to ask when searching by selectivity is, do my qualifications give me a realistic chance for acceptance? Lots of students want to attend highly selective universities, but most applicants are not accepted. So think about how strong are your grades and test scores and other qualifications? Do those qualifications make you want to be best of the best academically. Be careful of limiting your search based on selectivity. Students are dazzled by highly selective schools and often miss out on a school that's just as good if not better for them. But maybe those schools aren't as highly selective. So when you do your search, you can search by selectivity, but consider searching by different categories of selectivity, so that again you can see all of your options. Along with selectivity, search sites will also allow you to search by test scores. If you have already taken the ACT or the SAT, you can put your scores into the search site to find universities that accept students in your range of test scores. While searching by test scores can be helpful, it can again limit your options. Remember, universities and colleges accept students from a wide range of test scores. Searching by test scores might eliminate some of those options. Searching by test scores is a great way to be realistic in your search. But at the early stage of your research, I would encourage you to search both with and without test scores so that you can see all of your options first. Along with getting accepted, there is also the reality of paying for your education. You'll notice that search sites will allow you to search according to financial factors along with admission factors. Be careful when using cost as a way to search for universities. In many cases, the price tag that you see on the school is not actually what you're going to pay for your education. The cost can be misleading, but that is not factored into the search. If you search by cost, you could eliminate some high priced schools that actually offer generous financial aid. Big future even has an option for financial aid available for international students. Very, very helpful if financial aid is something that you need. But again, only check this box if you truly need financial aid, because checking this box is going to narrow your search results. For instance, many public schools are not able to offer financial aid to international students. So by checking that box, you eliminate all of those schools that are unable to offer you aid, but what you might not realize is that those schools might have a lower cost. And they still might be affordable for you even without financial aid. If you're going to search using cost, search once with cost and once without cost. My advice, however, is to leave the financial side of your research to the next
level, to level two research so that you can see exactly what a university is able to offer you as an international student. Now that you've searched based on what you want and on what is realistic, you should have a smaller list of schools that you can investigate more deeply. Search sites allow you to click into each school that matches your criteria and find some absolutely incredible information. What you find there, is what we're going to look at next.