Middle Level students need an opportunity to develop knowledge and skills to help them make appropriate decisions, have the confidence to take risks, and be flexible and adaptable when faced with change and life transitions. They also need to establish good work and study habits, to manage their time wisely, and to be able to set short and long range educational and career goals. This module provides students with an opportunity to be aware of and to develop these various skills. In the process, students gain a greater sense of self-reliance and empowerment in their own lives. Students will learn the steps to making career decisions and outline the steps that they will follow in the process. They will learn the importance of goal setting and begin to set some short and long term goals.

**Objectives**
- Identify and demonstrate use of steps to make career decisions.
- Identify and demonstrate processes for making short and long term goals.

**Suggested Time** 2 days

**Teaching Module 4—Goal Setting and Decision Making**
1. Teach the vocabulary associated with this Module (Module 4, p. 2).
2. Introduce this Module by using the PowerPoint *The Decision Making Process*. Individual slide notes are included in this packet (Module 4, p. 3).
3. Lesson 9—Informed Decision Making (Module 4, pp. 4-9)
4. Lesson 10—Setting Goals (Module 4, pp. 10-11) (this can be a homework assignment)
GOAL SETTING AND DECISION-MAKING GLOSSARY

**Long-term Goal** – something you want to achieve in the future

**Intermediate Goal** – something that you might be able to achieve in a short period of time

**Short-term Goal** – something you might do right away
# The Decision Making Process

## PowerPoint Notes

Note: Each slide is numbered on the bottom right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We are going to discuss the steps that you need to go through when making a decision. The decision could be a personal one such as buying something and making a purchase. Or it could be deciding on a career and developing a 4 year plan of study for high school and beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Identify the decision to be made. Your awareness that a decision must be made may be triggered by a number of things. For example, in middle school, you are beginning to explore your interests and careers. Even though you will narrow down your career options by only looking at those that match your interests, you will still need to make a decision as to which career and/or career cluster best matches your needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Most decisions require collecting information that will let you know your options and make the best decision. You will need to know what information is needed, the best sources of information, and where to get it. You can research information from books, the Internet, people, and other resources. Some information will come from within or a process of self-analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>As you are gathering information you will probably identify two or more possible options.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Analyze each option and what would happen with each. You must evaluate whether the problem identified in the beginning of this process would be helped or solved through the use of each option. Eventually you should be able to place the options in priority order, based on your own value system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>At this step you will choose among the options you have identified. Once you weigh all the evidence, you are ready to select the option which seems to be best suited to you. You may even choose a combination of options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>You are now ready to make a plan of action to reach your goal or decision. What are the steps that you need to take?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Review your decision and consequences. In this step, you experience the results of your decision and evaluate whether or not it has solved or helped to solve the problem identified in step 1. If yes, you may stay with the decision you have made. If no, you may repeat certain steps of the process in order to make a new decision. You may not always make the right decision or you just may not get the results you expected. It’s just important that if you do make the wrong or a bad decision, that you learn from your mistakes.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Lesson 9 - Module 4: Goal Setting and Decision Making

**Topic:** Informed Decision Making

**Competency:** Students will identify and demonstrate use of steps to make career decisions.

**Objective:** The student will recognize the importance of seeking information before making a decision.

**Materials:**
Decision Making Points to Remember (Module 4, p. 6)
Decision Making Scenarios (Module 4, p. 7)
Chart paper and markers
Steps to Decision Making (Module 4, p. 8-9)

**Description of Activity:**

1. Steps to Decision Making
   1. Define your problem.
   2. Gather information and resources. What information do you need? Where or what people are possible resources?
   3. List options.
   4. Weigh, compare options.
   5. Make a decision.
   6. Make a plan of action.
   7. Evaluate the decision. Why do you think your decision was the best choice?

2. Discuss the types of decisions and the seven-step process to decision making.
   Decision making starts with vision. In order to set career and personal goals, take some time to think about the knowledge you have of yourself and visualize what you want your life to look like.
3. Group students into four teams. Give each team one of the decision-making scenarios. Each team uses the seven-step decision-making process to work through the decision-making scenarios.

4. Each group will illustrate their decision and its outcome on a sheet of chart paper.

5. Each group will present their decision and results to the class.

6. Brainstorm as a class and record on the board:
   - Kinds of information needed to make a decision about educational choices
   - Kinds of information needed to make a decision about career choices

7. Each student will identify a problem and work through the seven-step decision-making process (Module 4, pp. 8-9).

**Evaluation:** Students will use the seven steps of decision making to make a decision

**Optional**

Think about where you would like to live. Would moving to another city or even a state be an option? Do you want a family? What kind of work would you like? What would you do for leisure? What kind of lifestyle would you want? The process of answering these questions can help you to develop your own personal vision. Once you have that vision, you have the raw materials than can be turned into short-term and long-term goals. The steps to making a decision can help you with many types of career-related decisions.

You can use the steps to determine:
- Which occupation field/cluster to enter
- Which training/educational program to take
- Whether you would like to own your own business
- Deciding on a part time job while in high school
- Whether or not you want to go directly to work or college immediately after high school
- Which high school courses to take
- Whether to change jobs

Knowing what you want from life will help you to set:
- Career objectives
- Personal objectives
- Community objectives
- Lifelong learning objectives
- Goals

Start with the “big picture” and then consider how your objectives will help you reach your vision. You can then makes decisions and plan short and long-term goals.
DECISION MAKING POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. You can always change your mind about a decision you’ve made.

2. There is probably no one right choice; and few decisions are totally wrong.

3. Deciding is a process, not a static, one-time event. We are constantly re-evaluating in light of new information. A decision may not have the consequences you expected so you can start the process over again.

4. When it comes to a career decision, remember you are not choosing for a lifetime; in all probability, you will have several jobs during your working life. Choose for now and don’t worry whether you’ll enjoy it 20 years from now. The workplace is constantly changing and you will need to change with it.

5. There’s a big difference between decision and outcome. You can make a good decision based on the information at hand and still have a bad outcome. The decision is within your control, but the outcome is not. All decisions have the element of chance, risk.

6. Think of the worst outcome. Could you live with that? If you could live with the worst, then anything else does not seem that bad.

7. Indecision is a decision not to decide. There are probably risks involved in not deciding, in not taking action.

8. Try to avoid either/or thinking; usually there are more than two options. Be imaginative and creative.

9. You may want to consult others for information but eventually you must make up your own mind. Sometimes it may be a good idea to consult more than one source so that your information is not biased.

10. Listen to your inner voice; trust your intuition. What feels right? If you are making a decision that can have long time consequences, take your time. Don’t rush and make an impulsive decision.
Decision Making Scenario

Scenario 1
Football season starts this weekend and Steve is excited about his school’s first game. He has already purchased his ticket and has made plans to meet his friends there. His school team is playing their long-time rival and it should be the best game of the season. On the night before the game, Steve’s parents receive a phone call from friends visiting in a city 30 miles away. Steve’s parents have not seen these friends in years because they live in a distant state. Friday night is the only time Steve’s parents can drive to see their friends. Steve’s parents have asked him to stay home from the game to baby-sit his six-year-old brother. They realize Steve has made plans to go to the game but feel that he will have an opportunity to attend many more games this year. Steve’s parents will let him make the final decision. What should he do?

Scenario 2
Marie is in the eighth grade at East Middle School. She earns above average grades in all of her school courses except science. Her favorite after-school activity is playing basketball. She would like to play basketball in high school next year. However, the high school says that athletes must pass all their classes in order to participate in a sport. This summer Marie can participate in a special summer science school that will help her in science. She also has been given the chance to go to basketball camp. The basketball camp takes place the exact time as the science school. Marie has two weeks before she either has to sign up for basketball camp or summer science school. What should she do?

Scenario 3
A not so popular student has invited you to a sleep over at a birthday party on Friday night. You have accepted the invitation and are planning to attend. On Wednesday, you are invited to a boy-girl party for the same Friday night by one of the most popular students in your school, someone you have hoped to become friends with. After talking with your friends, you realize most of them will attend the boy-girl party. Your parents have told you it is your decision, but that you should attend the party you responded to first. You really want to be a part of the popular crowd. What do you do?

Scenario 4
You are an eighth grade student. Since the seventh grade you have been on the Junior Varsity Cheerleading Squad. You recently tried out for the Varsity team next year. You were notified that you made the team. The cheerleading sponsor informs you that you can no longer be in band if you are cheering on Varsity football nights, since the band marches during half time at the football games. You have been in band since fifth grade and have really enjoyed being in the band and going on band trips. Next year the band is going to Disney World. What do you do?
Steps to Decision Making Activity Worksheet

1. Define your problem.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Gather information and resources.
   A. What information do you need?
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________
   B. Where or who are possible resources?
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

3. List your options. (You might not have four options.)
   a. _________________________________________________________________________
   b. _________________________________________________________________________
   c. _________________________________________________________________________
   d. _________________________________________________________________________

4. Weigh, compare your options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positives</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
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</table>

Continue on the next page.
5. Make a decision.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

6. Make a plan of action. (What can you do to get the best possible outcome?)

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

7. Evaluate the decision. (Are you happy with the outcomes of your decision? Do you need to make some changes in your plan? For this activity, why do you think your decision was the best choice?)

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Additional Thoughts/Notes

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lesson 10 - Module: Goal Setting and Decision Making</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Short &amp; Long-Term Goal Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency:</strong> Students will identify and demonstrate processes for making short and long term goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong> Students will identify what is important to them and begin setting goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials:</strong> My Career Goals handout (Module 4, p. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of Activity:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Have the students take out a blank sheet of paper and number it 1-4. Ask the students each of the four questions below and give them 30 seconds to respond by writing the first thing that comes to their minds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2. Hand out the “Career Goals” handout (Module 4, p. 11). Have the students identify a Short-, Intermediate-, and Long-term Career goal. Then have them list steps they need to reach each goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask the students to share their ideas on setting educational goals and how it will help them focus on appropriate coursework and other activities in high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If possible, share some of your own experiences in goal setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will practice writing goals and the steps they need to take to reach them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My Career Goals

1. Short-Term Goal

2. Intermediate Goal

3. Long-Term Goal

Steps to Reach Goal #1
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

Steps to Reach Goal #2
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

Steps to Reach Goal #3
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6.