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# Impact of Personalized Learning Through Interest-Based Internships

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October 6, 2020





# Welcome

- **Introduce yourselves.**
  - Share who you are, where you are from, and one hope you have for this school year.
- **Ask and answer questions.**
  - Use the chat function to pose questions of our panelists. All attendees are encouraged to respond.
  - We will leave time for our panelists to answer questions.
- **Share your learning.**
  - Tell your colleagues what you are learning. Use #Aurora2020 on Twitter and mention @Aurora\_Inst.
- **We are recording and archiving the webinar.**
  - The slides and video will be available on [aurora-institute.org](https://aurora-institute.org).

# BIGPICTURELEARNING

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The Impact of Personalized Learning  
Through Interest-Based Internships

Funded by the Leon Lowenstein Foundation

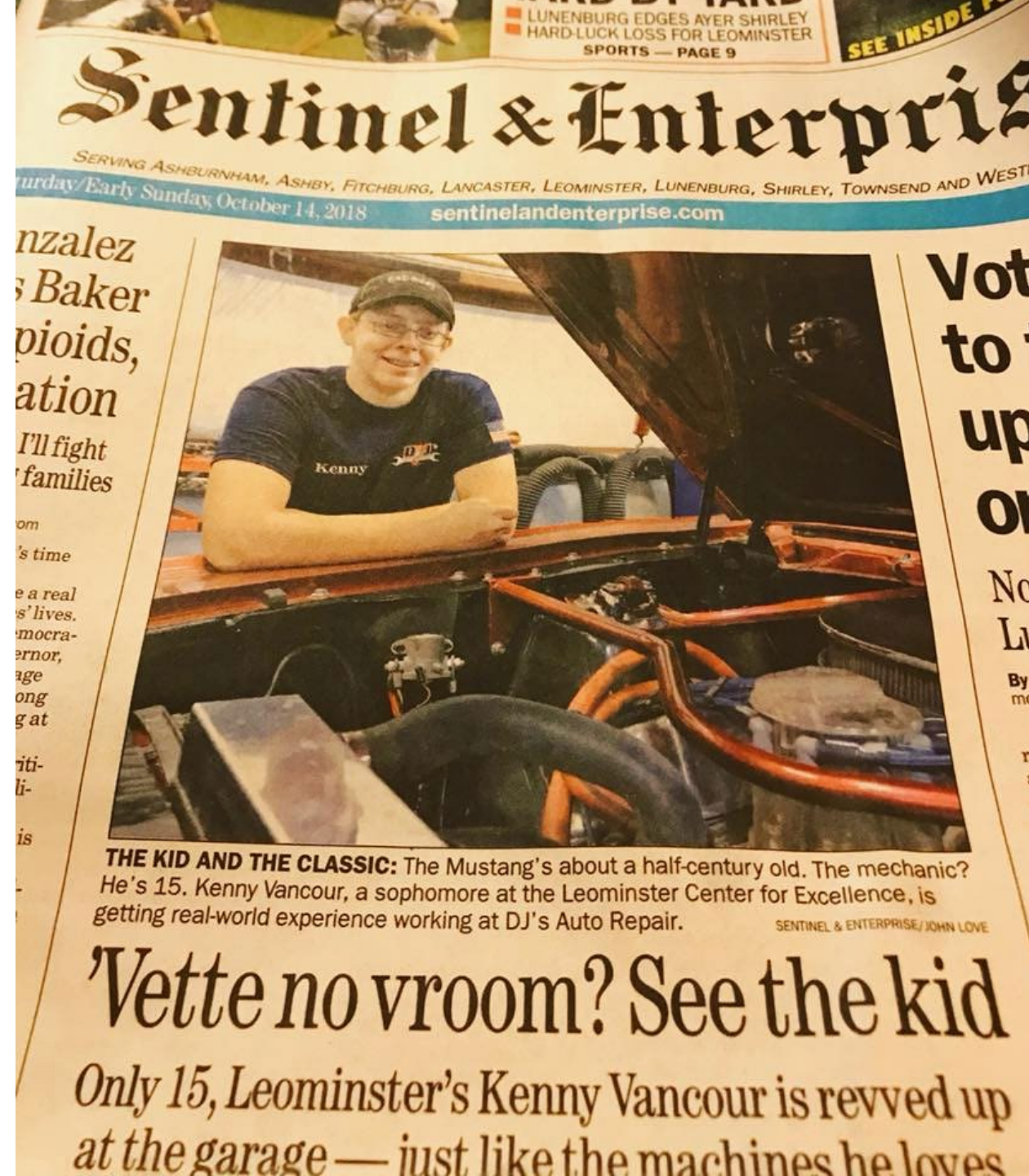


# Goals and Introductions

- Explore various student outcomes of engaging in interest-based internships.
- Describe the educational and psychological mechanisms whereby interest driven internships contribute to various outcomes.
- Discuss the benefits of conducting university-school network collaborations.



# BPL and Interest Based Internships







# Student Directed

# Real World Learning



Relationships

Interests

Practice





It is our vision that all students live lives of their own design, supported by caring mentors and equitable opportunities to achieve their greatest potential. We move forward prepared to activate the power of schools, systems & education through student-directed, real-world



A group of approximately 20 students are posed on a grassy hill. In the background, a city with a river and distant hills is visible under a clear blue sky. The students are dressed in casual attire like hoodies and jeans. A semi-transparent dark grey box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

**70 + US Schools**

**150+ International  
Schools**

**bigpicture.org**

# Met Sacramento Internship Process

**9th Grade Prep:** \* Self Exploration \* Research \* Goal Setting \*  
Experiential Learning/Internship Search

**Request to Pursue:** \* ImBlaze \* Book a shadow day \* Meet  
with advisor

**Secure Internship:** \* Confirm with site \* Internship set-up  
meeting \* Project set-up meeting

**End Internship:** \* Project completion \* Two weeks notice \*  
Exit meeting \* Evaluation \* Letter of recommendation

# Benefits

**Personal:** \* Work is used in the “real-world” \* Learn from an expert in the field \* Gain confidence \* Build Relationships

\* **Self-awareness**

**Educational:** High school credit \* **Critical thinking**, writing, and other skills are developed \* Learn how to complete an authentic project

**Career:** Edge on the job market \* Networking opportunities \* Potential job offers \* Add to resume \* **Valuable experience**



# Questions for Victoria?



# BC Collaboration and

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# This Study





## 2016:

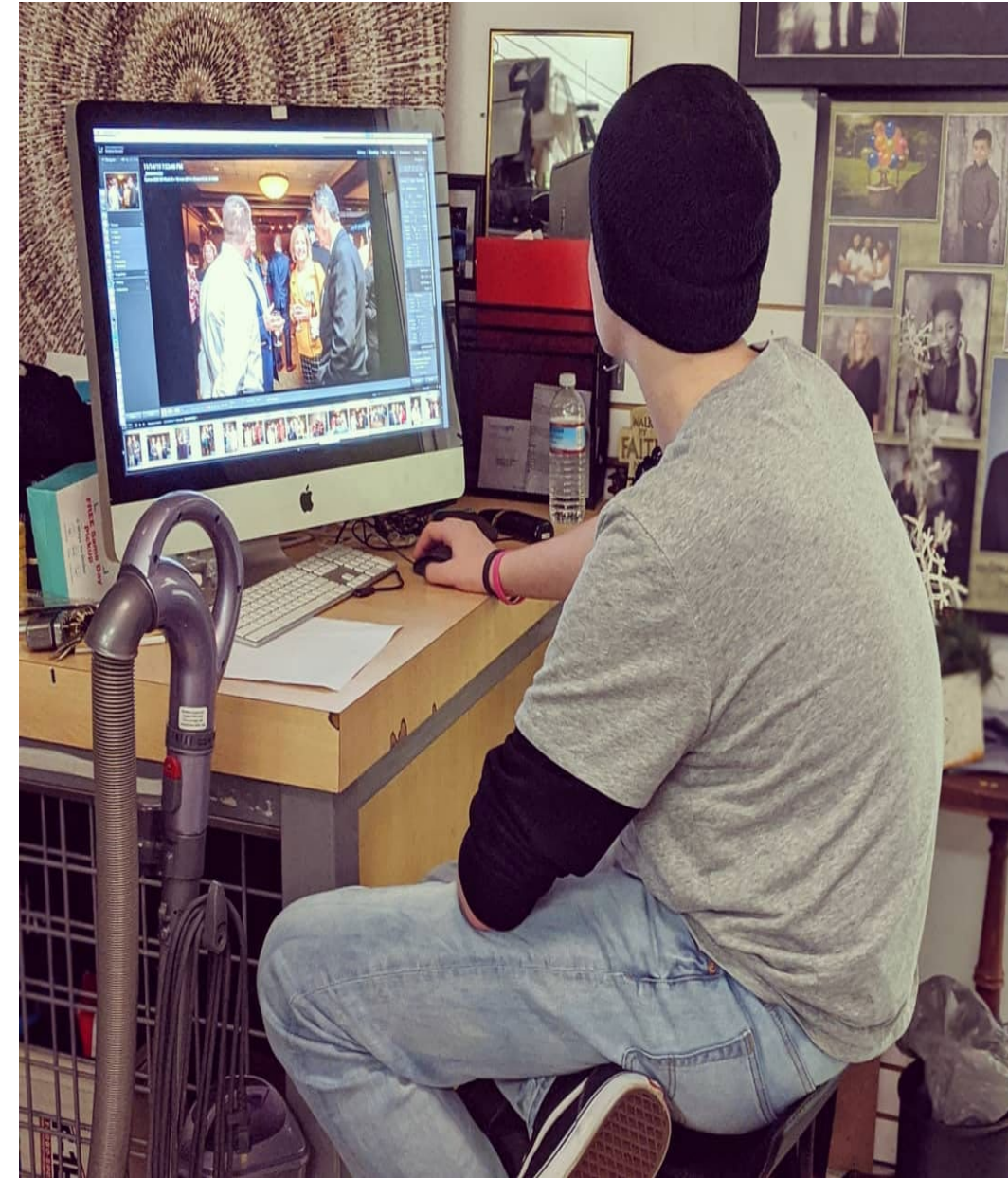
Andrew Frishman, Co-Executive Director of BPL reached out to my colleague, Dr. David Blustein, and me to collaborate in research initiatives.  
Developed a Theory of Change Model

## 2017-2019

Six school study with **student researchers** at each school  
Use of surveys (100) and interviews (14) to focus on specific dimensions of the LTI experience that foster student engagement and deep learning

## 2019-20

With support from the Leon Lowenstein Foundation, Dr. Blustein and I continued collaboration in modifying and expanding this study and bringing it to scale with 6 additional schools





# Launch of the Leon Lowenstein Foundation Study

January 2020

- Planning meeting in California to gather input and revise model.
  - Including Representatives from Boston College, The Christensen Institute, Big Picture Learning, Internship Coordinators from Big Picture schools.

Spring 2020

- Planned to collect surveys and conduct interviews

COVID - 19

- Revised plan to capitalize on the moment and assess graduating seniors
- Also look at impact of COVID on school and LTI experience, future plans, and how school and LTI experience equipped them for navigating the COVID school and work experience





# Methods

## Planning

Protocol training  
with graduate  
research assistants

Coordinate with  
BPL schools to  
recruit students

## Data Collection

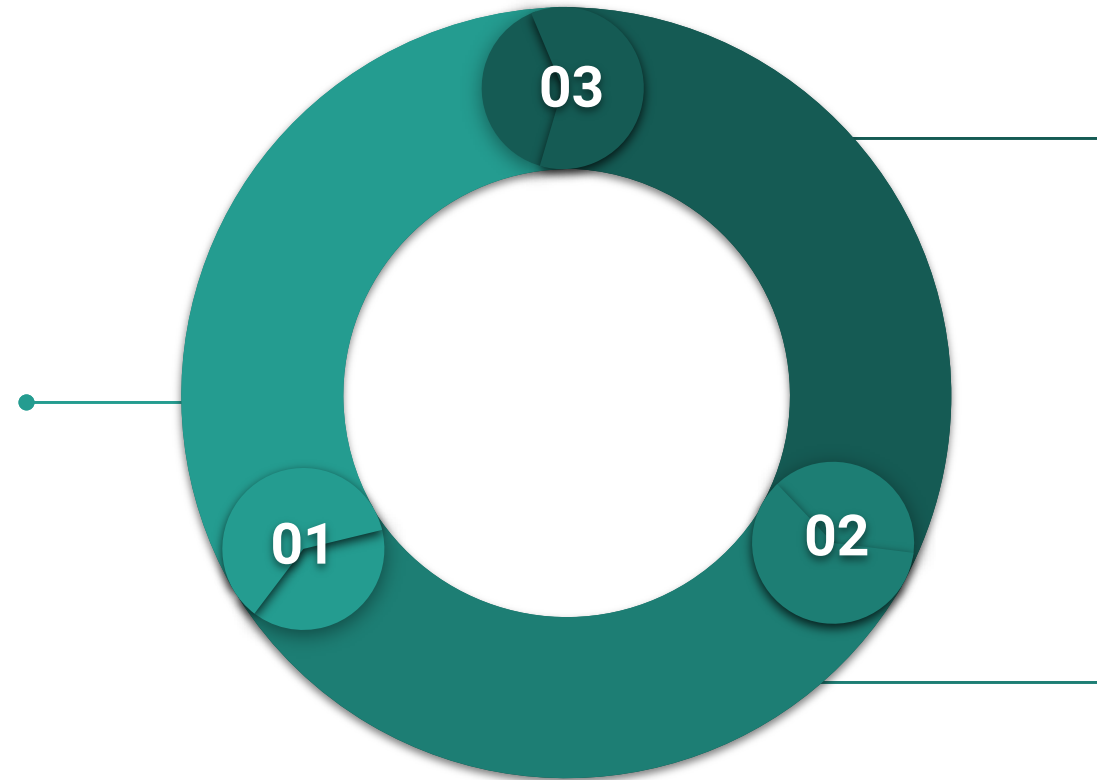
Zoom interview

Transcribe interview  
recordings

## Data Analysis

Consensus training

Domains and  
categories





# Interview Highlight

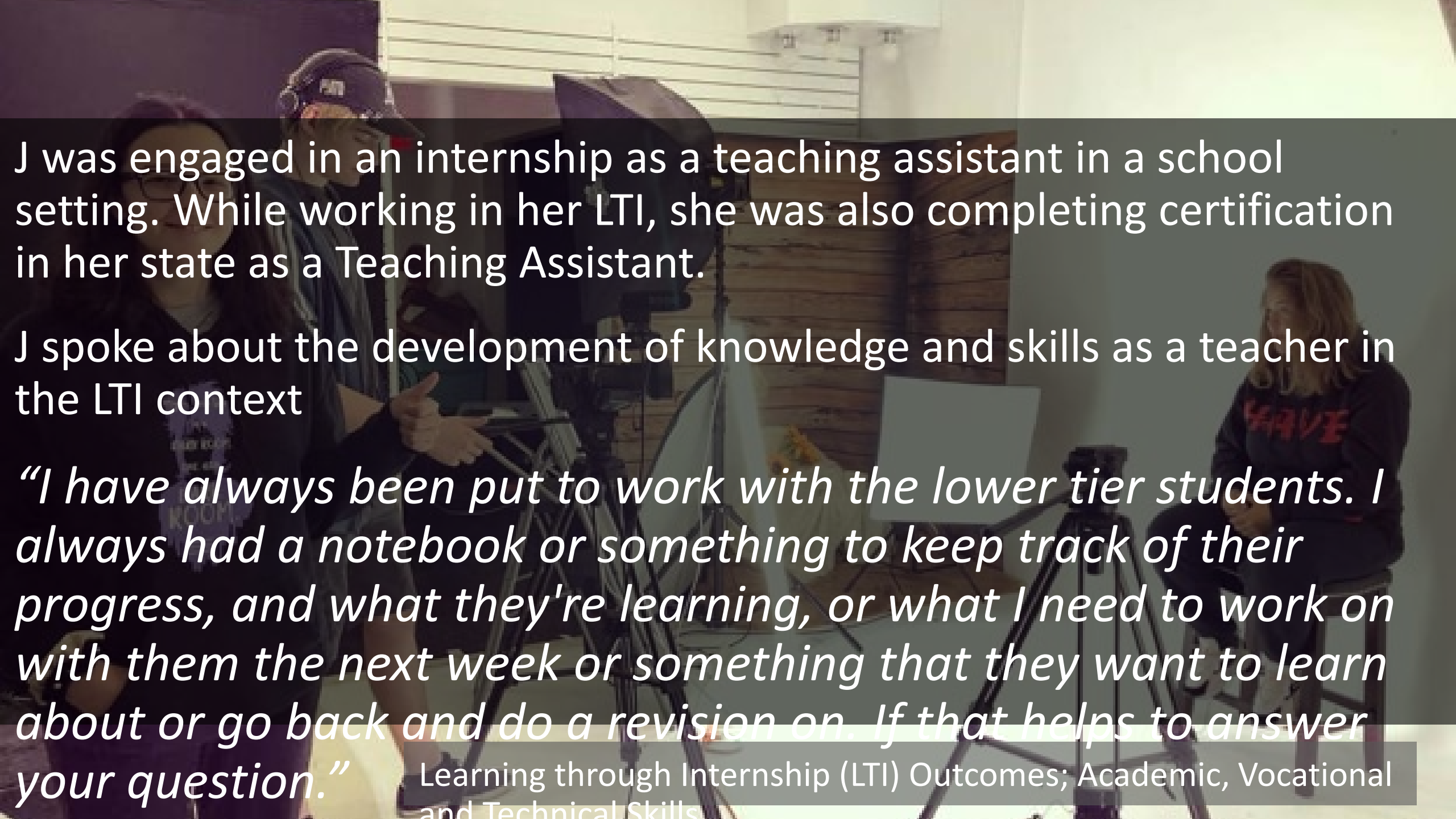


# Learning Through Internships (LTI)

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## Outcomes

Academic, Vocational and Technical  
Skills

A video production set with people and equipment. In the foreground, a woman with glasses and a dark shirt is looking towards the camera. Behind her, a man in a blue cap and a woman in a red shirt are visible. The background features a wooden wall and various studio equipment like tripods and lights.

J was engaged in an internship as a teaching assistant in a school setting. While working in her LTI, she was also completing certification in her state as a Teaching Assistant.

J spoke about the development of knowledge and skills as a teacher in the LTI context

*"I have always been put to work with the lower tier students. I always had a notebook or something to keep track of their progress, and what they're learning, or what I need to work on with them the next week or something that they want to learn about or go back and do a revision on. If that helps to answer your question."*

Learning through Internship (LTI) Outcomes; Academic, Vocational and Technical Skills



J also spoke to how her LTI experience helped her to develop her academic skills in an area in which she had struggled in the school setting.

*I think I discovered for myself that I could actually be interested in math. I've had a tumultuous life of math, hard life with math. I've never really understood math, worked well with it, or understood it. I would remember an equation, and then the next minute I was like, "Oh, I don't remember how to do it." ....And being able to go back to basic math, and then while teaching the students, reteaching myself, how to do it, even if it's at a second grade level because it starts somewhere and then you build up to harder math. I think, I learned how to become more comfortable and get better at it, while teaching and learning how to teach math as well.*

Z expresses interests in politics, history and law. As an upper classman, he has been able to take three college classes. He selected an LTI in a university library, where he was able to integrate his academic interests in politics and history with hands-on experience. Z describes his LTI:

*The materials we work with are historical materials, relevant to the history of California, going back, I've seen stuff from the 1600s, a lot of stuff from the 1800s.*

*My project... was working specifically with a collection of political documents, many, many news clippings, committee documents, notes, articles, clippings, press releases from the '70s, that were collected by the press team of governor Jerry Brown in his first term, when he was governor initially...Not only was I learning the history of 1970s California, but I was also learning how to work with old papers...*

Learning through Internship (LTI) Outcomes; Academic, Vocational  
and Technical Skills

S selected an LTI in a culinary spice shop. Although her career interests are not aligned with the culinary arts, she saw this as an opportunity to work with a fabulous mentor, to gain some knowledge about spices, while also pursuing her career interests and knowledge in computer science by developing the store website for online ordering. S explains:

*Working with the website there were so many things that I didn't think about and when I go off to college I want computer science in there somewhere and website developing. So I was able to connect that and working with our website creator I was like, I want that job. I was able to see what could be my future.*



# Learning Through Internships (LTI)

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## Outcomes

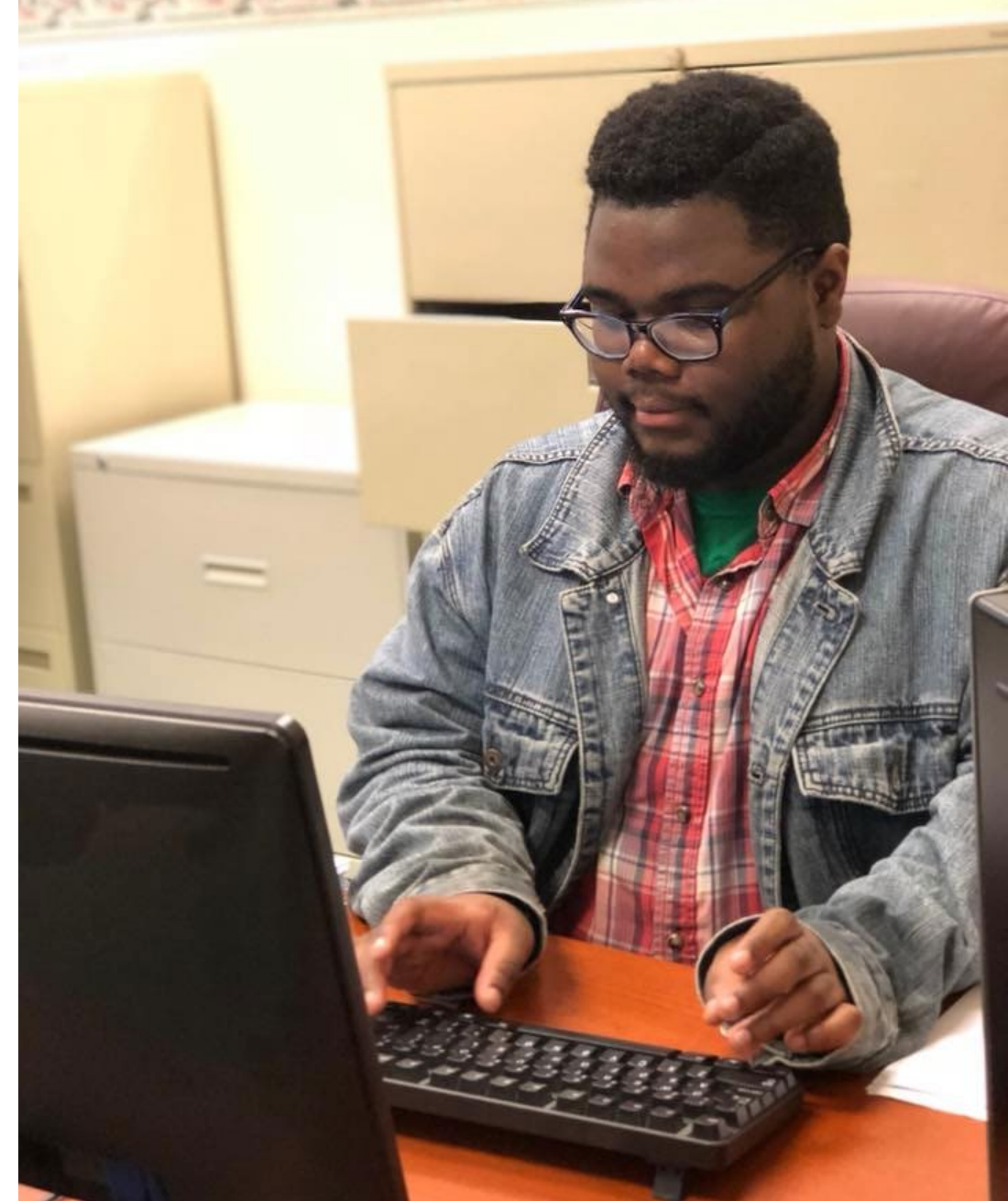
Socio-emotional/personal; Social skills; Self-awareness; Interests/passions; Evidence of socio-emotional learning

K interned first at a fitness and nutrition center and later at an entrepreneurial program, had a different experience in exploring his interests:

*I remember at the beginning of BPL, I wanted to become a Nephrology nurse, so with kidney diseases and such. And then the year after, I was like, "Man, this really isn't for me." So, I switched to a videography and then I was like, "Wow, this is cool, but I still don't think this is my passion." So, I did a lot of internship placements there, and then I moved to education and I really liked that. My internship experiences really helped me to choose different paths. Not necessarily like, "Oh, this didn't fit for me," but it helped me figure... Like narrow down my interests. I feel like if I did... Let's say I went straight to the internships that I had now, I wouldn't be able to enjoy it as much as compared to now because of all the things that I've learned before.*

C who was first interested in marine biology, changed her mind and decided to pursue career in politics. She discussed the meaning of learning by doing:

*I learned that I was interested in government, history and political science, I got to see it firsthand. And that's what I appreciate the most because, reading from a textbook, it's still valuable and it's nice to have the context and theory, but the best learning always comes from doing it and seeing it. I always thought every time I go into congresswoman's office, I'm living history right now. With Trump's presidency, I got to see people's responses firsthand and what he wanted to see their legislators do and I got to see firsthand how Congresswoman was dealing with this situation.... And I learned just how important it was to me by doing the internships and how passionate I am about it.*



Learning through LTI: socio-emotional/personal; social skills; self-awareness; interests/passions; evidence of socio-emotional learning



S reflected on challenges at her LTI that fostered her growth:

*So I learned a lot about how to just stand my ground as like a 15 year old and be like, you may be 40 but I'm still out here. I almost left that internship halfway through because it was too much. But then I learned if you had a job and your boss is too much, you can't always just get up and leave. So I stuck it out and it ended up being fine. We're on fine terms. It was just a little rocky for a little bit. But I had to assert my dominance I guess, as like a little kid. But it was stuff like that. It's definitely been a big thing that helps me now with this site and handling my own at this shop. Yeah. Stuff like that. It makes you a mini adult when you have to go work with people.*

# Learning Through Internships (LTI)

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## Mechanisms

## Interest, Practice, Relationships

P started Freshman year in an art related internship and then moved into a doggie daycare and then found a place and interest in dog grooming.

*So I feel like in traditional school I would have never even known what I was interested in if it wasn't for the opportunity to go to LTI. Going to different internships helped me to see what I like and see what the outside of the real world is like. So if I was in public school I probably would still think I was into art or I probably would still be clueless.*



C spoke at great length about her relationship with her mentor and explicitly discusses her mentor as her teacher.

*I guess I never got close with someone in the way that I did with [my mentor] **and to be able to see her as a teacher was really, really valuable.** And from her, I learned just really important skills and being able to start your career, like I said before, and just how to communicate with people. And I could go to her for a lot....And I think she's my very first real mentor, someone who I could look up to and ask questions of, and she was completely willing to do that, which I don't think you find from a lot of people.*



Learning through LTI Mechanisms:  
Relationships

B emphasizes the importance of having an internship that not only interests you, but also a place where a student can build strong relationships.

*Well, I feel like in an internship, for me, fitting in, it's mainly about my relationship with my mentor. Because I could be at a place that I think is, "Oh, this is going to be best fit for me." But I feel like if I don't have the best relationship with my mentor, it wouldn't... I wouldn't like feel as inclusive, but my mentors this year are absolutely amazing.*

*... I feel I'm there because of the fact that I have a good relationship with the people as well, which makes me help... Which helps me enjoy my work. So, it isn't necessarily like, "Oh, I want to... It fits my passion, therefore, it works for me." It's more like, "Oh, the people there, as well as my interests..." I don't know. It kind of just becomes this whole ball that combines together. You know?*



O explains the importance of Internships as practice in the real world. To her, the practice is an important piece in learning.

*Academics is everything, but I think that academics plus experience is what makes the best formula. Because if you're just thinking about the theory and not experimenting, then what are you actually learning?*

Learning through LTI

Mechanisms: Practice

# University/School Network Collaboration

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## The University Perspective: A few highlights

- Opportunity to bring my research agenda, theoretical and research knowledge to concerns of educators
- Opportunity to connect with leading innovators in education and work-based learning experiences
- Opportunity to have research questions and models informed by the lived experiences of students, educators, and school leaders
- Opportunity to collaborate with school-based leaders who can bring research into the school context in culturally and contextually sensitive ways

# The School Network

## Perspective: A few highlights

Opportunity to collaborate with leading researchers on work-based learning.

Opportunity to build a body of empirical evidence around BPL Practices.

Opportunity to improve practice.

Opportunity to bring practitioners into a conversation with researchers.



# The Student Story

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Trista Galli, the Met Sacramento  
Alumna



# Breakout Rooms



# Questions for Breakout Rooms:

- What do you see as being a powerful aspect of internships?
- What strikes you as a benefit of the LTI process?
- What do you see as the challenges of the LTI process?



Questions &  
Thank you!





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## Quick Feedback

One-Minute Survey: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AuroraWebinar\\_10-6-20](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AuroraWebinar_10-6-20)



## Symposium Webinar Series

1. **Improving the Equity in Personalized Learning through a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Approach** | October 8, 2020 | 2 pm ET
2. **Implementing Student-Centered Learning: Lessons Learned from Leaders in the Arena** | October 13, 2020 | 2 pm ET
3. **Lessons from COVID-19: How Competency-Based Education Provided for Continuity of Learning in Three North Carolina Schools and Is Shaping the Path Forward** | October 15, 2020 | 2 pm ET
4. **High School Internships in the Time of COVID-19: Mentorship, Connections, and More in Virtual Work-Based Learning** | October 19, 2020 | 2 pm ET
5. **Choice in Learning: Examination of Students' Use of Flex Time in High School** | October 22, 2020 | 2 pm ET
6. **Competency-Based Education Systems: Performance Assessment Using Proficiency Scales** | November 5, 2020 | 2 pm ET
7. **Deeper Competency-Based Learning: Making Equitable, Student-Centered, Sustainable Shifts** | November 10, 2020 | 2 pm ET
8. **Designing Engaging, Purposeful, Rigorous Tasks for Remote and In-Person Learning** | November 12, 2020 | 2 pm ET

<https://aurora-institute.org/events-webinars/>





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