

Work It Back

Relevance, future thinking, skills, opportunities, and choices.



FOUNDATIONAL MESSAGE

What you do here can matter to your future.



NOTICE



CONNECT



STRENGTHEN



DISCOVER WHY



ENVISION

STRATEGY 4 - DISCOVER THE WHY

Work It Back

Focus:Relevance, future thinking, skills, opportunities, and choices

Activity Summary

Students begin with a broad future choice they would probably like to have someday and physically move through a series of stations to work backward. They identify an opportunity that could support that choice, a skill that could help them access that opportunity, and finally a way school helps them practice that skill. By holding the four pieces together, students can see a tangible connection between what they do in school today and the choices they may have in the future.

Why it matters

Students do not need a perfectly clear picture of their future. But when school feels disconnected from anything that matters to them, motivation can quickly disappear. Helping students see the connection between what they practice today, the skills they develop, the opportunities those skills can create, and the choices they may have later can make school feel more relevant.

Community Schools Connection

Motivation · Relevance · Future Readiness

Community Schools seek to provide meaningful opportunities that help students learn, grow, and prepare for life beyond the classroom. This activity helps students connect the skills they are practicing in school to future opportunities and choices, making learning feel more relevant and purposeful.

The Connection



Preparation

Create four stations around the room and place multiple copies of a few simple cards at each station.

1 CHOICES

- Have work I enjoy
- Be able to support myself
- Have options and flexibility
- Help or contribute to others

2 OPPORTUNITIES

- More career options
- College/training/certifications
- Meet and learn from people
- Lead or take responsibility
- Try new things

3 SKILLS

- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Teamwork
- Persistence
- Creativity
- Time management
- Learning new things

4 SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

- Working with others
- Writing/communicating
- Solving problems
- Meeting deadlines
- Trying difficult things
- Learning new information
- Asking questions

Facilitator Framing

“ SAY
You don't have to know exactly what you want to do with your life. You don't need a perfectly clear picture of your future.

“ THEN
But it is important to think about your future sometimes, because it can help you understand why some of what you're doing today matters.

“ THEN
We're going to start with one choice you might like your future self to have, and then we're going to work it back.

STEP 1

1 Pick a Choice

“ SAY Everybody stand up and move to the CHOICES station.

“ THEN These aren't supposed to describe your perfect future. Just pick one that sounds like something you'd probably like to have.

2 Find an Opportunity

STEP 2

“ SAY
Take your Choice card with you and move to OPPORTUNITIES.

“ THEN
Pick one opportunity that you think could help make your choice more possible.

“ REMIND STUDENTS
There isn't one perfect answer. Just find a connection that makes sense.

3 Find a Skill

STEP 3

“ SAY
Take both cards and move to SKILLS.

“ THEN
What skill could help you take advantage of that opportunity?

- Students choose one.

4

STEP 4

Connect It to School

“

SAY

Bring your three cards to the final station: SCHOOL.

“

THEN

Find one place where you already practice that skill in school.

- Students choose their final card. Each student now has a four-part chain.

Make the Connection

“

SAY

Take a look at what you're holding.

“

THEN

You started with a choice you might like to have someday. That choice may depend on having opportunities. Taking advantage of opportunities often takes skills. And school is one of the places where you get to practice and build those skills.

“

ADD

Your chain doesn't have to be perfect. That's not the point. The point is seeing the connection.

Close

“

SAY

You don't have to know exactly what your future looks like.

“

THEN

But when you start thinking about the kinds of choices you'd like to have someday, it becomes easier to see why what you do today can matter.

“

FINISH WITH

School helps you build skills. Skills can create opportunities. Opportunities can give you more choices.

Student Connections

SCHOOL > SKILLS > OPPORTUNITIES > CHOICES



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