GEAR UP for LIFE Student Kickoff (Assembly Version)

K20 Center

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Time Frame 45-60 session(s)

Essential Question(s)

- What are the benefits to earning a postsecondary degree?

Summary

Students explore the top 10 benefits of continuing their education after high school through an interactive overview. Students are given a brief introduction into the 7-year GEAR UP grant, learning about the benefits of postsecondary education, writing letters to their future selves, signing a GEAR UP banner, picking up a GEAR UP decal, and completing an evaluation of this activity.

Learning Goals

- Help students gain an understanding of how postsecondary opportunities increase career options.
- Have each student create a letter to their future self about how they will increase their readiness for college and careers before they transition to high school.

Attachments

- Benefits of College Literature Review—GEAR UP Student Kickoff Assembly Version.pdf
- Career Cards—GEAR UP Student Kickoff Assembly Version.pdf
- Letter to Future Self—GEAR UP Student Kickoff Assembly Version - Spanish.docx
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- Letter to Future Self—GEAR UP Student Kickoff Assembly Version.docx
- Letter to Future Self—GEAR UP Student Kickoff Assembly Version.pdf
- Top 10 Benefits Posters—GEAR UP Student Kickoff Assembly Version.pdf

Materials

- Career Cards (attached; two sets printed on both sides)
- Top 10 Benefits Posters (attached; one set printed on both sides)
- Letter to Future Self (attached; one per student)
- Clipboard (one per student)
- Pen or pencil (one per student)
- GEAR UP pens (one per student)
- GEAR UP decals (one per student)
- Banner (one per school)
- Markers
- Benefits of College Literature Review (attached; optional)

15 minutes

Engage

Presenter's Note: Classroom Kickoff

If preferred, find a modified classroom version of this GEAR UP kickoff here: GEAR UP Student Kickoff (Classroom Version)

Presenter's Note: Activity Preparation

It is recommended that no more than 100 students participate per assembly. One adult is needed to lead the assembly and several adults are needed to supervise students.

Prior to the assembly, print (double-sided) and prepare two sets of the attached **Career Cards**, ordering each set numerically starting with card #1 on top of each.

Begin by welcoming students to the assembly and introducing yourself. Tell students they are here today to talk about the future—their future. Choose two students to help present and give them each a set of the attached Career Cards.

Tell students, "*Today we are going to talk about careers that you might want to have after high school graduation. We are going to pretend that both of you have graduated from high school. One has continued on and completed your postsecondary education—like a career technical school, a community college, or a 4-year university. The other has completed high school and wants to work. Let's look at the following careers and see which careers are available to these students. I'm going to ask the audience if each career needs more schooling than a high school diploma. If you think the career needs more education than a high school diploma, hold up your hand*."

Have both students show the first card, which says "pharmacy technician." Ask the audience to consider if starting a career as a pharmacy technician requires more education than a high school diploma. Have students hold up a hand if they think the answer is yes. Tell students that this career **does not** require more education than a high school diploma; a person could start a career as a pharmacy technician with only a high school diploma (and could do so if they have more education than that). Tell both students to keep the pharmacy technician card since it's available to both students.

Have both students show the next card, which says "dental hygienist." Ask the audience if this career requires more education than a high school diploma. Again, have students hold up their hand if they think the answer is yes. Tell the audience, "*This career **does** need more education. I will take the high school student's card.*" Take the high school graduate's card, and let the postsecondary graduate keep theirs.

Repeat this process with all 10 Career Cards. Take any cards that require postsecondary education from the high school graduate student.

Presenter's Note: Career Cards Key

1. Pharmacy technician: high school diploma only
2. Dental hygienist: postsecondary education
3. Architect: postsecondary education
4. Oilfield worker: high school diploma only
5. Website developer: high school diploma only
6. Nurse: postsecondary education
7. Veterinarian: postsecondary education
8. Bank teller: high school diploma only
9. Electrical engineer: postsecondary education
10. Pharmacist: postsecondary education

Once all 10 career cards are completed in this manner, have both students count their cards. Ask both students how many cards they have. The postsecondary degree student should have all 10 cards, and the high school graduate student will have only four.

Ask the audience, "*What does this tell us about career choices?*" and have a few students respond to the question.

Presenter's Note: Possible Student Responses

- Many careers require more than a high school diploma.
- Going to school after high school lets people have more choices in careers.

5 minutes

Explore

Have students use the Think-Pair-Share strategy to reflect on other benefits of getting more education after high school. Ask the audience, "*Besides having more career options, what is another reason to attend a postsecondary school?*" Provide a minute for students to silently think. Then, tell students to turn to the person next to them and talk about the question. Next, ask for a few students to share their thoughts.

Presenter's Note: Possible Student Responses

- I can earn more money.
- I can have a better paying job.
- I can get smarter and learn more.

15 minutes

Explain

Presenter's Note: Activity Preparation

Prior to the assembly, print a set of the attached Top 10 Benefits Posters.

Next, choose 11 students to hold a poster from the attached **Top 10 Benefits Posters**. Line up the students and give each student a poster in order of ten to one, with the GEAR UP benefits poster last. Have the volunteers hold the posters so that the number of the poster is shown and not the text on the other side.

Tell the audience, "*Next, we will compare what you just shared about the benefits of continuing education after high school with what the research says. Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to have these ten things. We will count them down from ten to one.*"

Tell the audience to repeat the number you call out after you. As each number is called out, have the student holding that number turn their poster around to reveal the benefit.

Call out number 10, and ask the audience to call out 10 too. Have the student with the number 10 poster flip it to reveal the benefit on the other side. Tell the audience, "*Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to have a more satisfying family life.*"

Continue to the next benefits as listed below:

- *"Number 9"—(*Audience calls out "9"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to live longer and healthier."*
- *"Number 8"—(*Audience calls out "8"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to make a difference in your community. "*
- *"Number 7"—*(Audience calls out "7"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to understand the world better."*
- *"Number 6"—(*Audience calls out "6"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to be prepared for success in a technology-driven world."*
- *"Number 5"—(*Audience calls out "5"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are less likely to be unemployed."*
- *"Number 4"—(*Audience calls out "4"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to be happier in your job."*
- *"Number 3"—(*Audience calls out "3"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you will increase your job options. "*
- *"Number 2"—(*Audience calls out "2"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to connect with peers and mentors."*
- *"Number 1"—(*Audience calls out "1"*)—"Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to earn $1 million more over your lifetime."*

Tell the audience, "*All students today CAN have all 10 benefits of continuing their education because THIS school has been awarded a GEAR UP grant!*" Ask the last student to turn around and reveal the last poster, which shows the benefits of the GEAR UP grant. Say, "*This 7-year grant supports your postsecondary goals, increases families' college and career awareness, provides campus visits, and prepares you for success after high school.*"

Have the 11 student volunteers return to their seats.

15 minutes

Extend

Presenter's Note: Assembly Preparation

Prior to the assembly, prepare student handouts by placing an attached **Letter to Future Self** handout, evaluation form, and a pen or pencil on a clipboard. Ensure there are enough clipboards prepared so that each student has one.

Have teachers help with passing out one prepared clipboard to each student. Invite students to next think about how they are going to prepare more for postsecondary school over the next couple of years. Tell students to look at the Letter to a Future Self handout on their clipboards and use the sentence starters to complete the handout.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Presenter's Note: Assembly Preparation

Prior to the assembly, order, print, or otherwise prepare your school's banner for display. Include your school's mascot and the words "Committed to GEAR UP." Provide markers for the students to sign the banner.

Ask students to next look at the evaluation form on the clipboard. Explain to students that they will be giving their own feedback about the assembly. Walk students through the evaluation to have them complete it. Have students leave the Letter to Future Self and evaluation form on their clipboards.

Dismiss students in small groups. Have each group keep their GEAR UP pens, drop off their clipboards in a designated area, sign the banner, and get a GEAR UP decal.

10 minutes

Follow-up Activities

Throughout this school year, students will experience more GEAR UP Grant activities and information. For now, following the kickoff, try the following in your classroom.

Provide students with the attached **Benefits of College Literature Review**.

Have students use the I Notice, I Wonder strategy to begin exploring the possible benefits of continuing their education after receiving a high school diploma. Facilitate a whole-group discussion using their statements and questions. Ask students to consider what they could do to help prepare themselves to achieve those benefits. Students might also reflect and write about which one benefit is most important to them. In their writing, they can justify and explain why it is the most important out of the top 10.

Research Rationale

See the attached **Benefits of College Literature Review**.

Stakeholders working within the GEAR UP grant to support the partnership between the district and the K20 Center are crucial to the implementation of GEAR UP services. Welcoming and priming these stakeholders for a new program is important. It not only establishes buy-in, but introduces the K20 Center and its mission, approach, and ideals, as well as the GEAR UP program and its goals. Providing students with the opportunity for inquiry throughout the session allows them to explore the life-altering benefits they will receive as recipients of GEAR UP services as the K20 Center partners with their schools to create a college- and career-going culture.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). GEAR UP student kickoff (cassroom version). 5E lessons. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/575
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I notice, I wonder. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/180
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-pair-share. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139