



www.texasgearup.com

Topic: Countdown to Your Future

Time: 45 minutes

Audience: Students – Middle School

Objective(s): Students will

- 1) be encouraged to set goals for graduation from high school and a post-secondary education; and
- 2) be reminded to investigate various career options.

Materials and equipment:

Video: *Countdown to Your Future (12 minutes)* (only available in English)

<http://www.texasgearup.com/byot/toolkit/beyond-high-school/>

Data projector and computer

Handouts:

Video Discussion Guide

Web site: MY FUTURE, MY WAY: HOW TO GO, HOW TO PAY

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/timing.jsp>

This portal is designed for middle school students. If possible, review the site with them during this lesson.



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Procedure:

1. (3 minutes) Begin with introductions and then ask the following questions:
When do we usually see a countdown? What is the purpose of it? (Allow students to respond.) Then, say: Just like a countdown for a space shuttle, where all the working parts need to line up in order for lift-off, setting goals for your future is a countdown to successfully achieving your dreams.
2. (3 minutes) Give a brief overview of the objectives of the session. Say: In this session we will be talking about your future and the need to set goals for yourself and work toward those goals. Graduating from high school is the first step, but pursuing

higher education can put you into a position where you can make really significant contributions to the world around you.

Tell the students that this session will include the following: video, discussion and a checklist for them to use in their goal setting activity.

Introduce the video: *Countdown to Your Future* (video - 12 minutes)
<http://www.texasgearup.com/byot/toolkit/beyond-high-school/>

NOTE: If time is abbreviated, preview video and use a 6 minute segment of the video

Say: As the world changes rapidly, students must be able to keep pace. Education is the key! Jack Bacon, scientist, lecturer, and futurist makes a good case to students, like you, for staying in school, graduating and pursuing a post-secondary education in an area that interests them. As you view the video, consider these points:

- What are some examples of changes that Dr. Bacon discusses?
- Why is a college education important?
- Why is it important to have a dream for your future?

3. (15 minutes) After the video, use the Video Discussion Guide (attached)
<http://www.texasgearup.com/byot/toolkit/beyond-high-school/>

Allow students to discuss the questions and determine their understanding of what they want to accomplish in the future.

4. (5 minutes) Direct the students to the website listed here. MY FUTURE, MY WAY: HOW TO GO, HOW TO PAY

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/timing.jsp>

This portal is designed for middle school students. If possible, review the site with them and give them the handout for future reference.

Closure: Ask students to write a statement about the goals they have set for themselves.

Extending the lesson:

Use the computer lab and ask students to review the web site listed above. Make a writing assignment related to some of the topics found on the site.

Use the attached Post Card lesson to engage students in goal setting.

Discussion: Countdown to Your Future

<http://www.texasgearup.com/byot/toolkit/beyond-high-school/>

1. What are some of the technological changes that are mentioned in the video?

How did these changes affect Dr. Bacon's grandfather's life? His father's life?
His life?

What are some of the technological changes you are seeing in your life?

2. The bar graph used in the video shows that most of the U.S. population attains only a high school education.

According to Dr. Bacon, which segment of the population will have a greater involvement in shaping the future?

Which level of education do you aspire to reach?

Have you set your expectations high enough?

3. What is your dream for your future career?

What steps are you currently taking toward making that dream come true?

MY FUTURE, MY WAY: HOW TO GO, HOW TO PAY

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/timing.jsp>

WHEN should you consider college?

NOW is the time to explore your options for college and financial aid.

WHY think about college now?

Because the steps you take today will determine which college you attend in the future.

WHAT can a college education do for me?

A college education = more money, more job opportunities, and more freedom.

WHERE do I start?

Get ready for college by doing well in school, learning your options, and getting involved.

WHO can help me go to college?

Your parents and other supportive adults can help, along with the folks here at the U.S. Department of Education.

HOW will I pay for college?

Learn how to pay for your education by checking out this Web site, becoming informed, and getting started!

Now what?

Take the next steps in learning about education beyond high school and learning how to pay for it!



TEXAS GEAR UP/STAR PROJECT

POSTCARD ACTIVITY

NATIONAL GEAR UP DAY - SEPTEMBER 18, 2009

OBJECTIVE

This student activity is designed to address the following objectives:

- 1) Teachers, counselors, and other GEAR UP project staff will guide students in an awareness activity designed to help students become more familiar with the activities sponsored by the GEAR UP/STAR project at their campus.
- 2) Students will develop a statement about their post-secondary plans and articulate steps they can take to achieve those plans.
- 3) Students will re-visit their plans periodically and work with campus counselors and access coordinators to discuss their plans for higher education.

TIME

10 minute classroom activity

MATERIALS

Postcard for each student (attached), pens, teacher copy of Postcard Activity Sheet

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students: What do you know about the GEAR UP/STAR program at your campus? How many of you have participated in GEAR UP activities?

Explain that GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a nationwide six year program that is designed to help students (and their families) begin the planning process for their futures, including post-secondary education and careers. It starts in middle school and continues through graduation!

STAR (Students Training for Academic Readiness) is the name of the project at their campuses and is associated with Texas A & M University at Corpus Christi.

Explain that September 18 is National GEAR UP Day, a day to focus on how, over the past ten years, GEAR UP has been helping students across the country graduate from high school, enroll in college, and be successful in their careers.

2. Ask students: How many of you have thought about your educational plans after high school? Reiterate that there are many post-secondary education options, including four-year universities, community colleges, technical schools, and certification programs.

Ask students what steps they and their families are taking to make that happen. GEAR UP can help them through several activities planned this year: workshops for parents on financial aid and scholarships, college visits, courses that will help them be more successful in high school and college, summer institutes, leadership academies, and counselor/college access coordinator sessions.

3. In an effort to help students articulate their plans, show the postcard and tell them:

GEAR UP in Texas is all about YOU! The program is designed to help YOU achieve your dreams by being prepared for the next phase of your education.

Ask them to take a few minutes to think about their plans after high school in terms of education, careers, training, jobs.... What are they interested in doing?

Ask them to complete the postcard prompt...."After high school, I plan to....."

Then have them complete the lower part of the card in which they are asked to outline steps they plan to take NOW to help them achieve their goals.

4. Tell students to address the postcard to themselves and then turn it in to the teacher/presenter. It will be mailed to them later in the year as a reminder of their goals and the steps they are taking to make them happen.

When students turn in the postcards, give them a blue GEAR UP wristband as a reminder that they are part of a 55,000 student project in Texas!

If possible, include a list of GEAR UP activities at each campus that will happen this year and encourage students and their families to participate. GEAR UP is there to support them!

Give names of college access coordinators, counselors, and others who can help them achieve their goals!



When **I** graduate from high school, **I** plan to...

So, this year **I** will...

Sincerely,

To:

*Making College The Dream... and
The Dream a Reality®*



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