

Work Values and STEM Careers



LESSON PLAN

Audience Middle and High School Students

Time needed 15 minutes

Objective Through this activity, participants will increase their awareness of opportunities and pathways to STEM careers. The activity also connects participants STEM ability and capability to career interests.

Overview This activity is designed for students to work independently to complete a simple worksheet and concludes with a small or large group discussion.

Introduction

Start with a small or large group discussion, and ask the question: As you consider what future career you want to pursue, what things are important to you?

Consider writing responses on a board for everyone to see, and highlight the hopefully diverse range of responses. If responses are narrow, then ask the students why their parents or anyone else might choose a career.

Lesson

Our society is a melting pot of cultures, which yields a variety of personal values among citizens. Work goals or values are seen as expressions of basic values in the work setting, and basic values involve four types: intrinsic, extrinsic, social, and prestige.

- **Intrinsic values** refer to the importance placed on autonomy and interest.
- **Social values** refer to the importance placed on working with people and making contributions to society.
- **Extrinsic values** refer to the importance to make money and have job security.
- **Prestige values** refer to the importance placed on having a prestigious and respected occupation.

The way in which ones' individual priorities align with these basic values relates to his or her attitudes and behavior toward work, because work value congruence is significantly related to job satisfaction.

The career we choose should ideally align with our personal work values, and we may choose a career based on several values! It is possible that our work values change over time. Have the students complete the worksheet independently. *This should take 5 minutes*

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Summary

End with a brief discussion about what the students learned and how this knowledge might relate to their future career choice. Some guiding questions:

- What did you learn about work values?
- Do any of these statements in the bubbles resonate with you? Why?
- Highlight the *Did you Know?* portion of each work value. Have a student read each aloud. Ask the students if they knew these truths, and invite them to share a personal story.

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