



5-E CLASSROOM STEM ACTIVITY:
EXPLORING STEM CAREERS:
ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, EDUCATION, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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STEM MYTHS BUSTED

There are a lot of myths out there about STEM careers and the path students should take after high school. These myths are accepted as fact and feed into each other - causing students to miss out on opportunities to do what they love. Let's bust some common STEM myths.

MYTH 3:

Better School=Better Job=Higher Salary

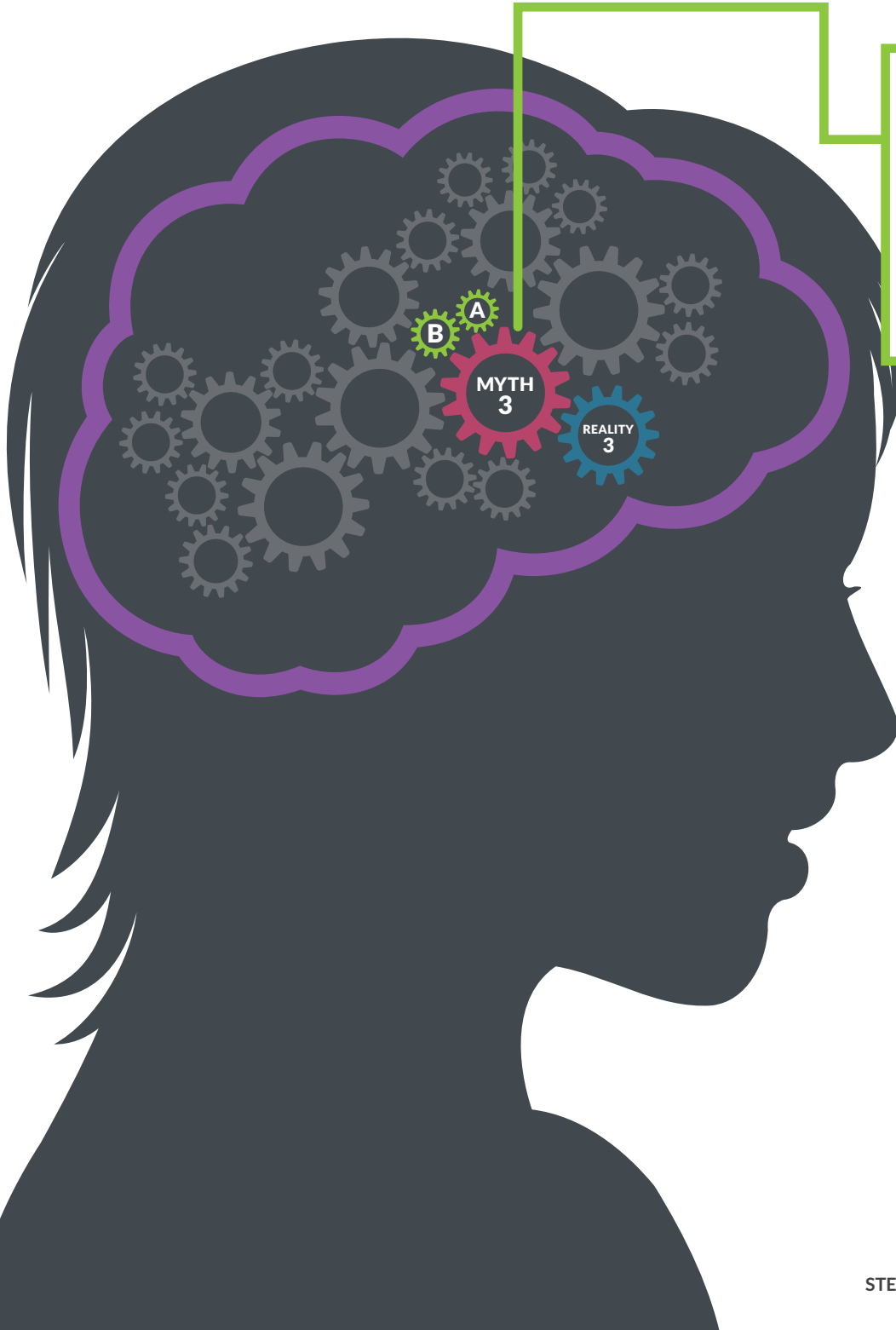
REALITY:

In STEM, there is no correlation between school prestige and job placement. The focus is more on the skills you develop.

FACTS:

A: For STEM fields, it largely doesn't matter whether students go to a prestigious, expensive school or a low-priced one - expected earnings are the same. (*The Wall Street Journal*).

B: On average, graduates of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology earn more than graduates of Harvard. The tuition at Harvard is almost four times higher than at SDSM&T. (*Forbes*). □



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Here are some ideas for how high school teachers could use this story as a launching point for integrated STEM learning. Our activities follow the 5-E Learning Cycle Model.



Part 1: Engage

- ① Take an informal poll in your classroom:
 - a. How many of you feel like you're "supposed" to attend a four-year college?
 - b. How many of you think a degree from a prestigious school is more valuable than a degree from a technical or community college?
 - c. How many of you know what you want to do as a career?
 - d. How many of you know the education path that trains you for that career?
 - e. What conclusions can you draw from students' responses?
- ② Have students read "STEM Myths Busted" in the Early Spring 2017 issue of *STEM Jobs* magazine.
 - a. Did anything surprise them?
 - b. What are their thoughts about going to a technical or community college? Did any of the facts presented change their ideas about these schools?
 - c. What do they think is the average cost of earning a bachelor's degree at a public (in-state) college? At a private (in-state) college? Do most students finish a degree in four years? If not, how does that affect the cost of getting a degree?



Part 2: Explore

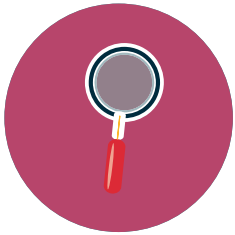
- ① Break students into pairs and assign each pair one of the job spreads that can be found in the magazine or online at edu.STEMjobs.com/teacher-resources. Teacher can determine whether to assign them randomly or based on student interest.
- ② Tell students that each pair will choose one job from their assigned job spread to investigate further. Teacher will monitor selections to avoid duplications. Students will research:
 - a. **Duties and Responsibilities**
 - i. What can someone in this career expect to do each day?
 - ii. What skills are used?
 - b. **Education Required**
 - i. What type of training is required to be qualified for this career?
 - ii. If formal schooling is required:
 1. Which program provides the best training? (computer science, communication, civil engineering, etc.)
 2. What schools in your area offer this program?
 3. What is the tuition cost for the applicable program at three of these schools?
 4. What is the graduation rate at these three schools?
 5. What is the job placement rate at these three schools?
 6. How long does it take the average student to complete the program at each of these three schools?
 - c. **Salary**
 - i. What is the average entry-level salary?
 - ii. What is the median salary?
 - iii. How long will you have to work to recoup tuition costs if you earn the entry-level salary? The median salary?
 - d. **Job Prospects**
 - i. Is there job growth projected for this career?
 - ii. What companies in your area are hiring for this career?
 1. Do they pay for continuing education?
 2. Are there opportunities for advancement and growth?
 3. Do they offer benefits?
 - a. How much do employees pay for health insurance?
 - b. Is there a retirement offering, like a 401K?

Recommended resources can be found at edu.STEMjobs.com/teacher-resources.



Part 3: Explain

- ① Students will create a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation of their findings to share with the class. Both students in each pair should contribute to both the creation and delivery of the presentation. Pairs will be graded according to the rubric in the Evaluate section, which should be shared with students when the assignment is given.
- ② At the culmination of the presentations, poll students again:
 - a. Did anyone discover a career they never knew existed?
 - b. Did anyone discover a career they would consider pursuing?
 - c. Which career had the lowest education cost?
 - d. Which career had the highest salary?



Part 4: Elaborate

Students will submit a formal writing assignment responding to the following prompt:

*What career was the most appealing to you and why?
Was this a career you would have considered previously?
Why or why not?*



Part 5: Evaluate

Group presentations and individual contributions will be scored according to the following rubric. Individual writing assignments can be graded as desired.

5	4	3	2	1
The presentation was clear, concise, and thorough. It provided precise information and explanations.		The presentation was informative. It answered most of the questions posed in the prompt in an understandable way.		The presentation was unclear and only provided a small portion of the required information.
The student contributed to the group's research, understanding, and presentation in meaningful ways.		The student contributed somewhat to the group's research and/or presentation.		The student did not contribute to the group's research or presentation.

Standards Addressed:

Common Core State Standards - English and Language Arts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

National Career Development Guidelines

CM3.R1 Assess the impact of career information on your plans and refine plans so that they reflect accurate, current, and unbiased career information.

CM3.K2 Recognize that career information includes occupational, education and training, employment, and economic information and that there is a range of career information resources available.

CM3.A2 Demonstrate the ability to use different types of career information resources (i.e., occupational, educational, economic, and employment) to support career planning.

CM3.K5 Identify occupations that you might consider without regard to your gender, race, culture, or ability.

CM3.A5 Demonstrate openness to considering occupations that you might view as nontraditional (i.e., relative to your gender, race, culture, or ability).

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career Development

CPI.1.A identify employment opportunities

CPI.8.A analyze the future employment outlook in the occupational area

CPI.8.C compare rewards and demands for various levels of employment in a variety of careers

CPI.9.A evaluate and compare employment options, including salaries and benefits

CPI.9.B compare rewards and demands for various levels of employment in a variety of careers

CPI.9.D determine continuing education opportunities that enhance career advancement and promote lifelong learning

CPII.9.A research and identify current or emerging occupations

CPII.9.B analyze future employment outlook

CPII.9.E identify the academic and technical entry requirements for employment in various high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations

CPII.10.A evaluate and compare employment options such as salaries, benefits, and prerequisites

CPII.10.B compare rewards and demands for various levels of employment in a variety of careers

CPII.10.C determine continuing education opportunities that enhance career advancement and promote lifelong learning

CPII.10.D determine preparation requirements for levels of employment in a variety of careers