



LET'S Connect

A Newsletter From Youth.Work.Connect.

UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN RULES OF WORK: WHEN THE ASSIGNMENT ISN'T FULLY DEFINED

A young employee is asked to help improve attendance at an upcoming community event. The supervisor's goal is clear, but there's no complete plan for how to get there. The young employee starts with a flyer, since that seems like the obvious task. It looks great, but attendance doesn't improve. The team later realizes the flyer wasn't the real issue: people didn't understand why the event mattered, partner organizations were never reminded to promote it, and the registration link was hard to find. The next time a similar project comes up, the young employee starts differently; instead of jumping to a task, they ask what's actually standing in the way of attendance.

The young employee completed a task. But the real assignment was about solving a problem.

This is one of the hidden rules of work: assignments are not always fully defined. Sometimes the work is figuring out what the work really requires.

Young people are often prepared to complete assignments where the expectations, resources, and measures of success are reasonably clear. That preparation is valuable. It helps them follow directions, use information, think critically, work with others, and meet deadlines.

At work, assignments can be different. A supervisor may know the goal but not the best way to reach it. The task may involve other people who were not mentioned at the start. The best resource may not be a person in the room, but an example from another organization, a website, a customer, a coworker, or someone who has solved a similar problem before.

That can be confusing, because the assignment may sound like a task: make the flyer, update the list, organize the materials, when the real work is larger: increase attendance, improve the experience, solve a problem.

Young workers do not need to ask a long list of questions before every assignment.

But they can learn to pause and think about three things:

- What problem are we trying to solve?
- Who else might need to be involved?
- What information or examples could help?

Employers and adult allies can help by explaining the goal behind the task. Instead of saying, "Please make a flyer," they might say, "We need more people to attend this community event. A flyer may help, but I'd also like you to think about what else might make people more likely to come."

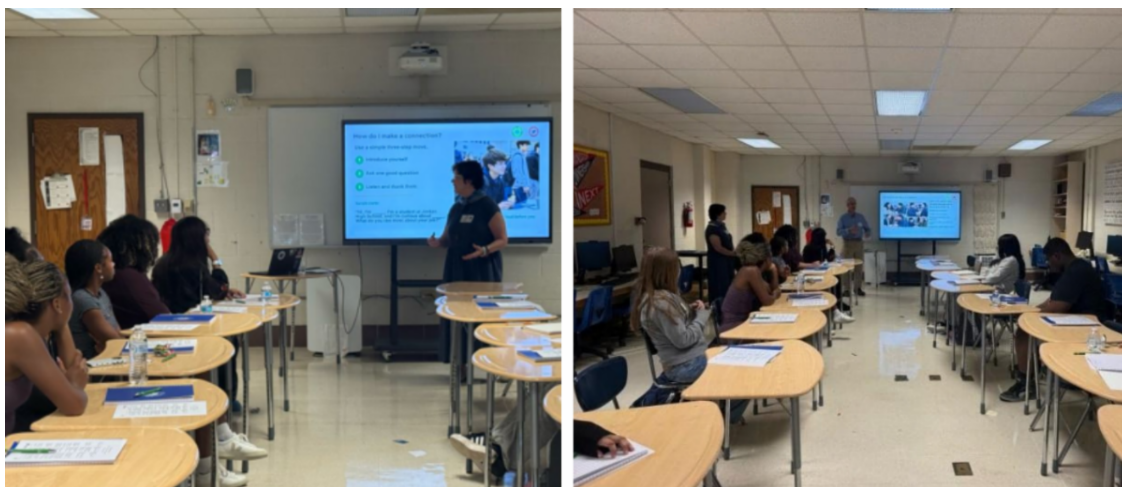
That kind of explanation gives young workers room to think, contribute, and build judgment.

If you're a young employee: Before jumping into a task, pause and ask yourself: What problem is this work trying to solve?

If you're an employer: When assigning work, explain the goal behind the task and invite the young employee to think about possible ways to solve it.

Unstructured assignments are part of the workplace. Learning how to handle them helps young workers move from completing tasks to contributing to a team.

What's On Our Mind- Helping Youth Make Connections



In September, we officially launched our first Career Connections Academy at C.E. Jordan High School in Durham, NC.

Our students began their journey toward building meaningful professional relationships, strengthening their networking skills, and learning how to turn connections into opportunities.

The Career Connections Academy is about more than exploring careers. It's about helping young people develop the social capital, confidence, professional skills, and real-world connections they need to thrive beyond high school.

A special thank you to everyone who helped make today's launch possible and to our students for showing up ready to learn, connect, and grow!

A special thank you to Curtis Rucker III for his [inspiring message](#) to our students.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

We would appreciate your thoughts on our initiative and welcome opportunities to collaborate. You can reach us at info@youthworkconnect.org and we look forward to staying connected.

**"Helping High School Youth From Underserved Communities
Build Social Capital to Promote Economic Mobility"**



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