



## Teacher's Guide

**Introduction:** Find the Why! is a gamified mobile platform inviting students to participate in 10-day challenges tackling real-world business issues with the chance to win cash prizes! This platform generates a digital resume featuring the students' work and their unique results from five (5) industry-valued assessments. Nebraska's local employers then have the chance to offer participating students invite-only virtual recruiting experiences, internships, scholarships, and even employment opportunities.

### Department of Education Career Readiness Standards Correlation:

NEBRASKA STANDARDS FOR  
**Career ready practice**  
ALIGNMENT

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Learning that works for Nebraska  
CTE™

*Find the Why!* engages students to explore their interests, cultivate curiosity, and develop a deeper understanding of the connections between education and career readiness. Through interactive activities and industry Challenges, focusing on critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration skills, *Find the Why!* equips students with essential competencies necessary for success in both academic and professional environments, effectively supporting the goals set forth by the Nebraska Department of Education:

- Applies appropriate academic and technical skills;
- Communicates effectively and appropriately;
- Contributes to employer and community success;
- Makes sense of problems and persevere in solving them;
- Uses critical thinking;
- Demonstrates innovation and creativity;



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- Models ethical leadership and effective management;
- Works productively in teams and demonstrates cultural competency;
- Utilizes technology;
- Manages personal career development;
- Attends to personal and financial well-being.

**Objectives:** Solving real industry problems within a two-week challenge with a team of peers can provide students with a wide range of valuable skills and experiences. Participating in challenges is highly beneficial as it bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, preparing students for real-world scenarios and enhancing their employability skills. Here are some of the skills students will demonstrate as a participant:

- Problem-solving skills: Students learn to analyze complex problems, break them down into manageable parts, and develop effective solutions.
- Collaboration and teamwork: Working in teams teaches students how to communicate effectively, delegate tasks, and collaborate towards a common goal.
- Critical thinking: Students develop the ability to evaluate information, consider different perspectives, and make informed decisions.
- Creativity and innovation: Students are encouraged to think outside the box, propose new ideas, and innovate solutions to challenges.
- Project management: Students gain experience in planning, organizing, and managing their time and resources effectively to meet deadlines.
- Communication skills: Students practice presenting their ideas, discussing strategies, and articulating their thoughts clearly both verbally and in writing.
- Research skills: Students learn how to gather relevant information, conduct research, and use data to support their decisions and solutions.
- Adaptability and resilience: Working on real industry problems often involves encountering unexpected challenges. Students learn to adapt their strategies, learn from failures, and persist in finding solutions.
- Technical skills: Utilizing the online platform, creating a video submission will assist students to demonstrate proficiency in utilizing technology to implement creative solutions and to meet deadlines.
- Networking and professional relationships: Engaging in industry challenges will connect students with local professionals, industry mentors, and potential employers.
- Self-confidence: Successfully tackling real industry challenges boosts students' confidence in their abilities and readiness for future professional endeavors.



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Calendar Color Code: **Teacher Driven**, **Student Driven**, **District Driven** or **FTW! Driven**

Month	Week	Events
August	14th -23rd	<b>Teacher:</b> Parent Permission Forms (Paper or via the Platform)
August	26th - Sept 30th	2 new Challenges will be revealed each day for the September Challenges Series at <a href="#">ftw!</a>
September	3rd - 6th	<b>Student:</b> <a href="#">Register</a> or <a href="#">Login</a> and select a <a href="#">Challenge</a> <b>Teacher:</b> <a href="#">View your Students</a> and review <a href="#">Pre-Challenge Teacher Page</a>
September	9th - 20th	#1 Challenge Series Begins (2 weeks) <b>Teacher:</b> <a href="#">Review Challenge Progress</a> and <a href="#">Digital Resumes</a>
September	20th	Challenge Final Submission Due Date
September	25th	Judging Complete
September	27th	Winners Announced ( <a href="#">Instagram</a> or <a href="#">ftw!</a> ) and Prizes Awarded
October	7th - 10th	<b>Teacher:</b> Reflection - "Post Secondary Pathway and How Much Money Can I Make" 7th-10th graders & "Soft Skill Video Coaching" 11th & 12th graders
October	14th - 16th	Company and College Offers go out to selected Students - a notification will appear on the students FTW! account.
October	21st - Nov 1st	A new Challenge for the November Challenge Series will be unveiled on the platform each day.
November	4th - 8th	<b>Student:</b> <a href="#">Register</a> or <a href="#">Login</a> and Select a <a href="#">Challenge</a> <b>Teacher:</b> <a href="#">View your Students</a> and review <a href="#">Pre-Challenge Teacher Page</a>
November	11th - 22nd	#2 Challenge Series Begins (2 weeks) <b>Teachers:</b> <a href="#">Review Challenge Progress</a> and <a href="#">Digital Resumes</a>
November	22nd	Challenge Final Submission Due Date
November	29th	Judging Completed
December	Dec 3rd	Winners Announced ( <a href="#">Instagram</a> or <a href="#">ftw!</a> ) and Prizes Awarded
December	9th - 13th	<b>Teacher:</b> Reflection - "Post Secondary Pathway and How



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		Much Money Can I Make” 7th-10th graders & “Soft Skill Video Coaching” 11th & 12th graders
January	9th - 14th	<i>Company and College Offers go out to selected Students - a notification will appear on the students FTW! account.</i>
January	27th - Feb 7th	A new Challenge for the November Challenge Series will be unveiled on the <a href="#">ftw!</a> platform each day.
February	10th - 13th	<b>Student:</b> <a href="#">Register</a> or <a href="#">Login</a> and select a <a href="#">Challenge</a> <b>Teacher:</b> <a href="#">View your Students</a> and review <a href="#">Pregame Teacher Page</a>
February	17th - 28th	<b>#3 Challenge Series Begins (2 Weeks)</b> <b>Teachers:</b> <a href="#">Review Challenge Progress</a> and <a href="#">Digital Resumes</a>
February	28th	Challenge Final Submission Due Date
March	7th	Judging Completed
March	11th	<i>Winners Announced (<a href="#">Instagram</a> or <a href="#">ftw!</a>) and Prizes Awarded</i>
March	12th	<i>Company and College Offers go out to selected Students - a notification will appear on the students FTW! account.</i>
March	24th - 27th	<b>Teacher:</b> Reflection - “Post Secondary Pathway and How Much Money Can I Make” 7th-10th graders  <b>Teacher &amp; Counselor</b> - 11th and 12th grade students use their FTW! Digital Resumes to apply for internships and jobs from companies connected to FTW!.
April	14th	<b>District:</b> SWF, CTE Leadership, 3 teachers & 3 Students present data from the year back to OPS District Leadership
April	28th	<b>District:</b> SWF, OPS District Leadership, Mayor Stothert, and Heath Mello panel data sharing with the community.
May	27th	<b>District:</b> OPS and SWF meeting - Upgrades and Enhancements for the 2025-2026 School Year Meeting.



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**Student Assessments During each Challenge:** *Find the Why!* provides students with access to four (4) formative assessments during each Challenge Series:

**DISC - Behavioral Tendencies (Initial Assessment at Registration):** During September Challenge Series - (High School and older Students)

The DISC profile [DISC profile](#) is an internationally recognized behavioral assessment tool that provides individuals with insights on how they tend to behave or adapt in any number of situations.

D: confident with an emphasis on accomplishing results.

I: more open with an emphasis on relationships and influence.

S: dependable with an emphasis on cooperation and sincerity.

C: with an emphasis on quality and competency.

**My Story #ftw! - Sense-Making & Narrative Data:** All 3 Challenge Series (All Ages)

Participants write a narrative about their interactions with the Find the Why! problem they chose to solve and the people they worked with. This narrative data provides rich insights specific to each participant's team experiences, a company's brand, an industry, post secondary desired pathways and where they want to live.

**20 Tenets of Culture:** During November Challenge Series (High School and Older Students)

BetterCulture crafted the 20 Tenets by studying which soft skills help individuals get a job, contribute to healthy teams, and achieve career advancement. The content is offered through a powerful system that combines a self-assessment with engaging coaching videos to help young adults become aware of the Tenets, understand why they are valuable, and to learn how to live up to each Tenet.

Examples of Tenets include:

- Coachable. They graciously accept, appreciate, and even seek out feedback from others.
- Assume Positive Intent. They grant colleagues the benefit of the doubt.
- Upbeat. They are positive, energetic, and hopeful.
- No Gossip. They discourage discussion of interpersonal drama.
- Kind. They are thoughtful and passionate to coworkers.
- Own It & Fix It. They acknowledge when they make mistakes and repair any damage.
- Tolerance. They accept or even embrace diverse views or values.
- Laughing Matter. They spread joy and have fun.



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### **Team Dynamics - Peer Reviews and Feedback:** All 3 Challenge Series (All Ages)

At the end of each challenge, participants provide 360 feedback to their teammates in the form of a “wordstack.” By re-ordering the words that correlate to the DISC assessment, teammates can provide peer feedback in a positive and dynamic way. This assessment is also tracked over time as a cumulative number as they work through numerous challenges with different teams.

- Inspiring
- Persuasive
- Adaptable
- Detailed Oriented
- Analytical
- Driver
- Results Oriented
- Patient

### **VALUES Index Assessment:** During the February Challenge Series (High School and Older Students)

The [VALUES Index](#) helps people to better understand their unique value hierarchy or belief system pertaining to what motivates them, what they are most drawn to, and where their passions lie. Understanding these values allows us to recognize them in others and adapt our messages to meet their needs unleashing a desire to succeed. The seven values are:

- Aesthetic - a drive for balance, harmony and form.
- Economic - a drive for economic or practical returns.
- Individualistic - a drive to stand out as independent and unique.
- Political - a drive to be in control or have influence.
- Altruist - a drive for humanitarian efforts or to help others altruistically.
- Regulatory - a drive to establish order, routine and structure.
- Theoretical - a drive for knowledge, learning and understanding.

### **Industry recognized Badging and Microcredentials:**

FTW! Challenges are the foundational blocks to preparing students to be real-time ready for placement in internships, education programs, and or jobs. Building upon that foundation, students will take a series of industry recognized modules leading to professional badges and microcredentials. This front-loaded onboarding process builds out a digital resume increasing opportunities for students and decreasing time to employment, along with decreasing costs for





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employers to onboard. This hybrid approach to preparing students is not just a one time resource, but one that stays with them for the duration of their career.

### Teacher Instructional Strategies:

#### Pre-Challenge:

- **Teacher:**
  - [Review Pre-Challenge Teachers Page](#)

#### Quarter 1:

- Day 1:
  - **Students:**
    - [Register](#) or [Login](#)
  - **Teachers:**
    - [Review Q1 Teacher Page \(Show students video - Optional\)](#)
    - [View your Students](#)\*  
*\*If you do not see a student on your list, they may have misspelled your email address in their profile. They can verify it on their own by viewing their user profile, or you can contact support ([support@findthewhy.org](mailto:support@findthewhy.org)) for help.*
    - Have students review the website, noting any questions they have.
    - [Guided Practice](#) - Utilize the Teacher Dashboard to monitor progress of students. Students must add you as their teacher within their registration.
- Day 2:
  - **Student:**
    - Login and review [Challenges](#)
  - **Teachers:**
    - View your [Students](#) or [Team Progress](#)\*  
*\*If you do not see a student on your list, they may have misspelled your email address in their profile. They can verify it on their own by viewing their user profile, or you can contact support ([support@findthewhy.org](mailto:support@findthewhy.org)) for help.*
    - Have students identify their top three (3) preferences. Have students share their top three (3) Challenge preferences and what interests them in each Challenge.
  - [Guided Practice](#)
    - There are seven components to every challenge (w/ hyperlinked) a student:
      - Image of the Challenge
      - Challenge Title



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- Industry (hyperlink)
- How Much Schooling and How Much Can You Make!  
- Post secondary pathway and potential income.
- Additional Challenge Specific Context
- Nebraska Company that needs employees who can solve these kinds of challenge
- 9 Roadmap of Questions - Each Challenge has to be processed through these 9 questions.
  - a.) Advisors provide feedback
  - b.) Iterative process, meaning each iteration of an answer earns points with the most points being reward for the engagement with Advisors.

### Quarter 2:

- **Day 3: Quality Teams**
  - **Teachers:**
    - [Review Q2 Teacher Page \(Show students video - Optional\)](#)
    - Facilitate a discussion on “What makes a quality team member?” by first having students write their ideas on sticky notes - one sticky note per idea, but no limit to sticky notes - for three (3) to five (5) minutes. Students should then place all of their sticky notes visibly in one shared place, such as the whiteboard, chalkboard, etc. Have student volunteer(s) read through every sticky note provided. Have students reflect on how they can contribute to demonstrating those qualities to be a high quality team member during the Challenge assignments.
  - [5 Min Countdown Timer \(Roller Coaster\)](#)
  - [3 Minute Back to School Timer \(Chimes Alarm at End\)](#)
  - [3 Minute Groovy Themed Timer](#)
- **Day 4: Brainstorm Solutions.**

**Teachers:** Have students determine their team and stress each Challenge question can and should be answered several times by multiple teams in order to end up with the best answer. Review brainstorming techniques with students. Each team decides which they'd like to try. Here are some ideas to help students generate a wide range of solutions, but also encourage collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking—all crucial skills for tackling real-world industry challenges:

  - Mind Mapping:** Start with a central idea or problem statement and create a visual map of related ideas, solutions, and connections. Encourage





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students to branch out with different possibilities, refining and expanding ideas as they go. Helps in organizing thoughts and seeing relationships between different aspects of the problem.

- Reverse Thinking: Instead of tackling the problem head-on, consider the opposite scenario or outcome. Ask questions like "What if we wanted the opposite result?" or "How could this problem be made worse?" This technique can reveal unconventional solutions and new perspectives.
- SCAMPER Technique: SCAMPER stands for Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, and Reverse. Students systematically apply each of these actions to the problem, generating multiple ideas for each. This technique encourages creative thinking by challenging assumptions and exploring different angles.
- Role Storming: Have students take on different roles or personas related to the problem (e.g., customer, CEO, engineer). Each student thinks from the perspective of their assigned role, offering unique insights and solutions. This technique fosters empathy and helps uncover solutions that consider various stakeholders' needs.
- Six Thinking Hats: Based on Edward de Bono's concept, assign each student or group a "hat" representing a different thinking style. Students approach the problem from the perspective associated with their hat (each teammate chooses a hat to review the solution with), generating ideas and evaluating solutions based on that mode of thinking. This method ensures a comprehensive exploration of the problem from multiple viewpoints.
  1. White Hat (Facts, Information, and Data):
    - Focuses on data, facts, and information available or needed.
    - Emphasizes objectivity and neutrality.
    - Questions asked under the white hat might include: "What information do we have?" or "What information is missing?"
  2. Red Hat (Emotions and Considerations for Others' Feelings):
    - Represents emotions, feelings, and intuition without needing to justify them.
    - Participants express their gut reactions, intuitions, and emotions about the topic.



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- Questions asked under the red hat might include: "How do I feel about this?" or "What is my instinctive reaction?"
3. Black Hat (Critical Judgment):
- Focuses on cautious and critical thinking, identifying risks, weaknesses, and potential problems.
  - Encourages participants to consider what might go wrong or why an idea might not work.
  - Questions asked under the black hat might include: "What are the risks involved?" or "What are the potential drawbacks?"
4. Yellow Hat (Positive Thinking):
- Represents optimism, positive thinking, and constructive viewpoints.
  - Encourages looking at the benefits, opportunities, and strengths of ideas.
  - Questions asked under the yellow hat might include: "What are the potential benefits?" or "What are the strengths of this approach?"
5. Green Hat (Creativity and New Ideas):
- Focuses on generating new ideas, possibilities, and alternatives.
  - Encourages creative thinking, brainstorming, and exploring innovative solutions.
  - Questions asked under the green hat might include: "What are some creative ways to approach this problem?" or "What new ideas can we consider?"
6. Blue Hat (Thinking About Thinking):
- Acts as the control hat that manages the thinking process.
  - Facilitates the discussion, sets objectives, and manages time.
  - Encourages reflection on the thinking process itself and guides the flow of the discussion.
  - Questions asked under the blue hat might include: "What are our next steps?" or "How can we summarize our discussion?"



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- Day 5: Identify Top Solutions.

**Teachers:** Have teams narrow down their brainstormed ideas to identify the best solutions. By applying these strategies, you can systematically narrow down your brainstormed ideas and focus on those that have the highest potential for success and impact.

1. **Mind Mapping:** Use a mind map to visually organize and connect related ideas. This can help to see which ideas are closely related or can be combined, thus reducing redundancy.
2. **Criteria Evaluation:** Evaluate each idea against criteria to filter out less suitable options. Establish clear criteria or parameters that your ideas need to meet. This could include feasibility, impact, alignment with goals, cost-effectiveness, etc.
3. **Prioritization Matrix:** Create a matrix where you can rank ideas based on their impact and feasibility. This allows you to focus on ideas that have high impact and are achievable with the available resources.
4. **Voting or Ranking:** If needed, have the team vote on the ideas based on predefined criteria or personal preference. This can help identify the most popular or promising ideas quickly.
5. **SWOT Analysis:** Evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats of the top three ideas. This structured approach helps to identify the potential strengths and weaknesses of each idea and assess its viability.
6. **Critical Question:** Ask critical questions about the top three ideas to explore the true potential. This would be a great activity to also include the team Advisor to provide input and feedback. Questions could include:
  - What problem does this solve?
  - Value-Add: Who benefits from this?
  - Alignment: How does this align with our goals?
  - Scalability: Can this idea be scaled effectively if it proves successful? How would scaling affect its feasibility?
  - Competitive Advantage: What sets this idea apart from existing solutions or competitors? Is there a unique value proposition?
  - Resource Requirements: What resources (time, money, personnel, etc.) are necessary to implement this idea? Are they readily available or obtainable?
  - Risk Assessment: What are the potential risks or challenges associated with implementing this idea? How could these be mitigated?



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- Market Fit: Is there a clear demand or need in the market for this idea? How does it address customer pain points or desires?
- Regulatory and Legal Considerations: Are there any regulatory or legal barriers that could affect the implementation of this idea? How can these be addressed?
- Impact on Stakeholders: Who are the primary stakeholders affected by this idea? How would it impact them positively or negatively?
- Long-Term Viability: How sustainable is this idea in the long term? Will it remain relevant and effective as circumstances change?
- Ethical Implications: Are there any ethical considerations associated with this idea? How might it affect different groups or communities?
- Measurement of Success: How will you measure the success of this idea? What key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used?
- Adaptability to Change: How adaptable is this idea to changes in technology, market trends, or customer preferences over time?

### Half Time:

- **Teacher:**
  - [Review Teacher "Half Time" Page](#)
  - Day 6 - Weekend
  - Day 7 - Weekend

### Quarter 3:

- [Review Q3 Teacher Page \(Show students video - Optional\)](#)
- Day 8: Advisor Collaboration and Review.  
**Teachers:** Have students send their Advisors the answers to their roadmap questions for review, help and advice. Ensure students use visuals to showcase why their solutions are not just good, but great! Make sure every student has completed all assessments to generate all team points.
- Day 9: Respond to Advisor Feedback.  
**Teachers:** One of the best ways to earn points to win the Challenge is to engage with Advisors! Reference 'critical questions' in Day 5 as needed. Be sure to follow-up and work together to perfect the greatest solutions!



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### Quarter 4

- [Review Teacher Q4 Page \(Show students video - Optional\)](#)
- Day 10: Capture the Video.

**Teachers:** Have students create a 60-90 second video explaining their solutions.

Guided Practice: To help students organize their thoughts into concise and impactful statements and assign roles so that everyone contributes to the *win*, encourage students to complete an outline of speaking points prior to filming. *Students should work with Advisors and teachers to ensure their speaking points are grammatically correct.* Students should practice their speaking points together multiple times before filming. This helps with timing, pacing, and smooth delivery. Students should not read the speaking points - delivery should be engaging and dynamic. Use appropriate body language, maintain eye contact with the camera, and vary your tone to keep the viewers interested. Make sure your facial expressions and gestures align with your message to enhance your delivery.

When filming, have students thoughtfully consider the following to produce the highest quality production for their Challenge submission:

- Test the Sound and Lighting: Proper lighting is crucial for a professional-looking video. Verify the audio is clear and minimize background noise to keep the focus on your solution!
  - Location: Choose a setting that is neat and relevant to your topic. A cluttered or distracting background can detract from your message. A simple, professional setting helps keep the focus on the team and the Challenge solution.
- Day 11: Review the Film.  
**Teachers** - Have students review their video submissions with their Advisor for feedback and make any final revisions as needed.
  - Day 12: Final Submission Day!  
Have students upload their final video recording.

**Optional Activity:** Celebrate students' achievements by hosting a 'watch party' where students can watch all submissions together and provide affirmations to their peers!

### Game Over!!!