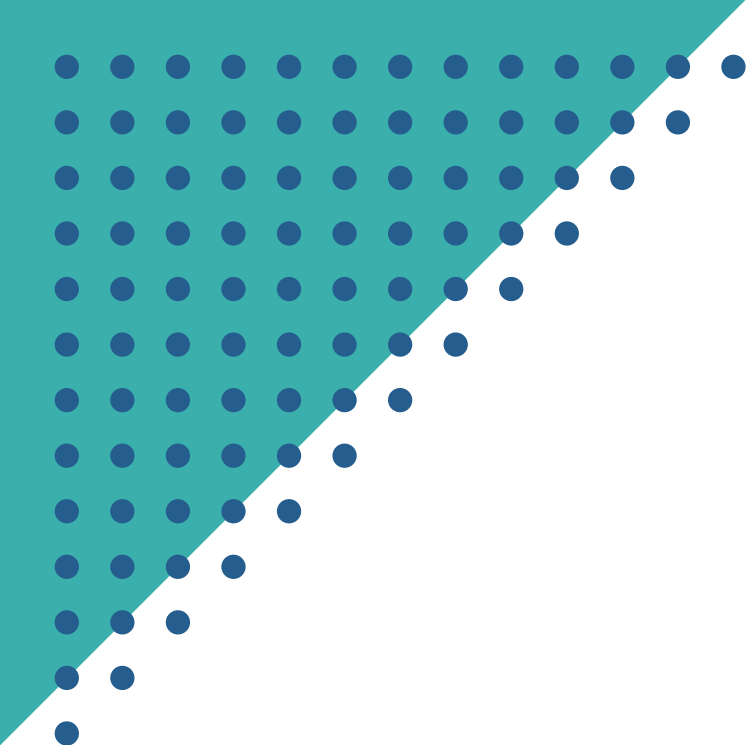




STUDENTS AS PARTNERS: EXPANDING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

C2L-PHL Work-based Learning Institute | May 7



PRENTIX

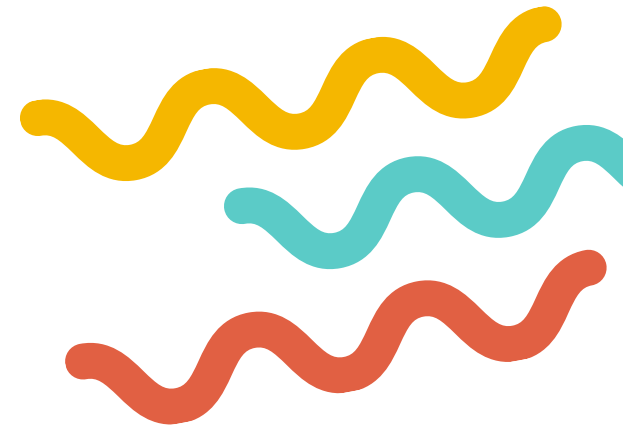


HELLO, I'M REBECCA!



- Founding HS Principal, Camden NJ
- VP Learning, Multiverse (apprenticeships)
- Founder, Prentix

AGENDA



✓ The “why” for student partnership

✓ A model for student initiation

✓ Lessons from the field

✓ Your turn

✓ Q / A



Employer Engagement Has a Scaling Problem



8.2 M

Learners wanting
internships

3.6 M

Internship opportunities
available

2.5 M

Quality internships
offered

- WBL programs depend on employer networks
- Most employer relationships are staff-dependent — and staff capacity is finite



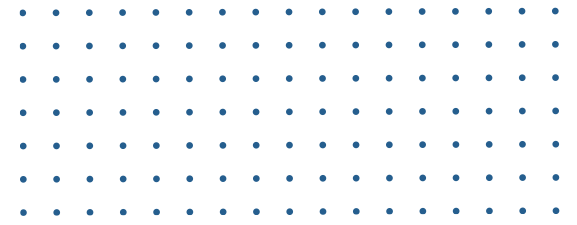
September 10, 2024

There Aren't Enough Internships to Go Around

01

Competition for internships has increased sharply in the last two years.

Handshake / Network Trends



The unlock we haven't tried yet

We've been overlooking the
largest *and* most effective source
of employer engagement
capacity

STUDENTS

All 28 million of them

Assumption:
Some
students
have “no
network”



Only 30%
American adults
are on LinkedIn

Students have rich, local networks



- Friends
- Family
- Family friends
- Neighbors
- Teachers
- Coworkers
- Sports teams
- After school programs

“Miss – all of my aunties work in healthcare!”

This is already how most young people get work-based learning



87% employers who hire
interns do so through
informal outreach or
personal connections

Student-Initiated Outreach



Activate warm networks

Students map existing connections to identify potential conversations — people they already know, or people one step removed



Conduct learning conversations

A structured, low-stakes professional conversation: not a job ask, not a cold pitch — a curiosity-driven exchange that builds a real relationship



Follow up and reflection

Students close the loop, document what they learned, and identify next steps — for themselves and, potentially, for the program

Does this really work?



Meet Aiden

- 10th grade student
- Interest in dentistry
- Held Learning Conversation with his childhood dentist (expert)
- Set up his own job shadow day

Does this really work?

Meet Allison

- 9th grade student
- Interest in police academy
- Held Learning Conversation with her teacher's husband (expert)
- Introduced to NYC's police explorer program – he offered to help her with her application



When students drive their own employer engagement...

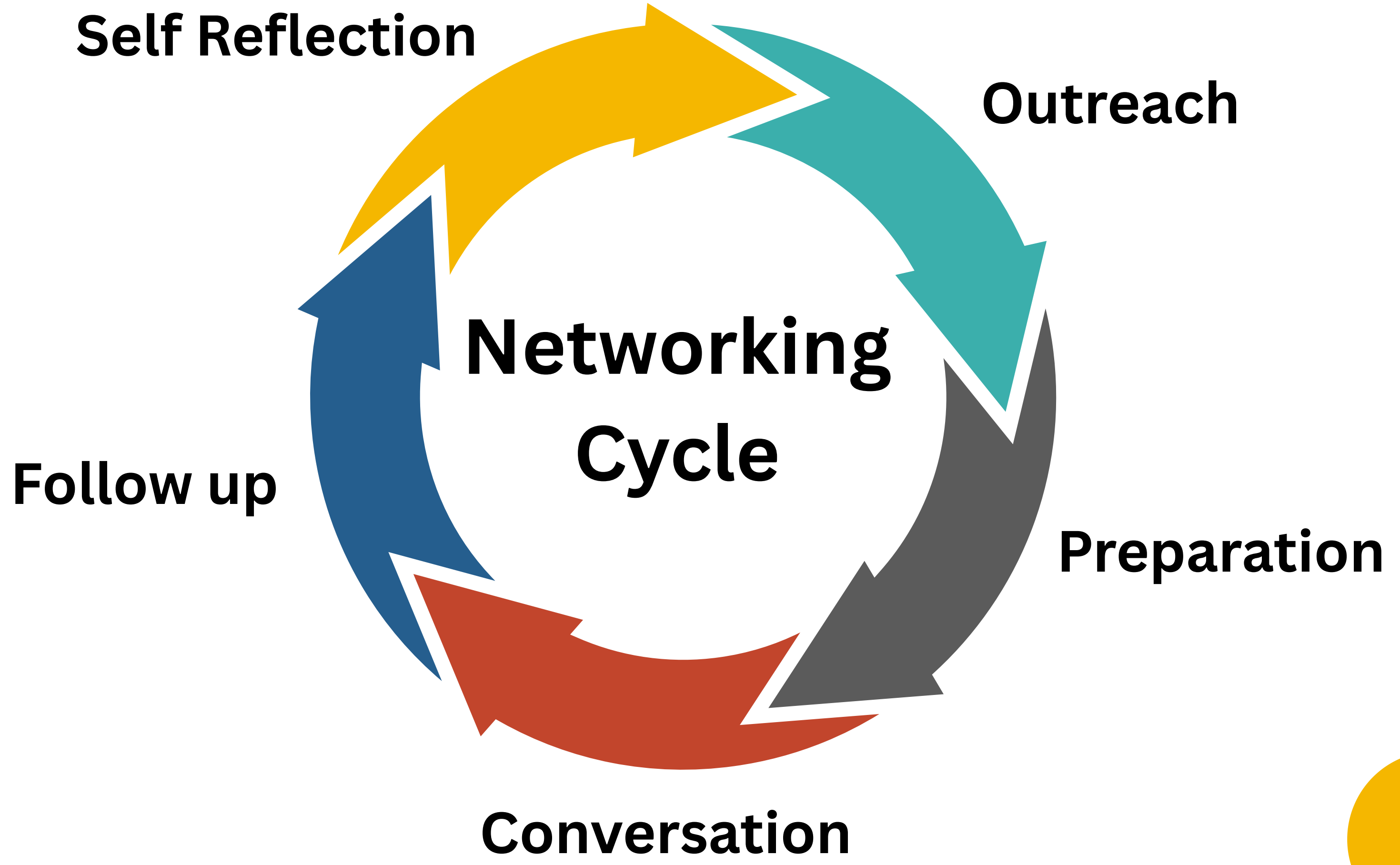
1 **in** **2**

professionals offer further support — mentorship, job shadows, or work opportunities



HOW TO ENABLE STUDENT NETWORKING





Anticipate and acknowledge the emotional hurdles



What if they think
I'm not smart?

What if I'm
annoying?

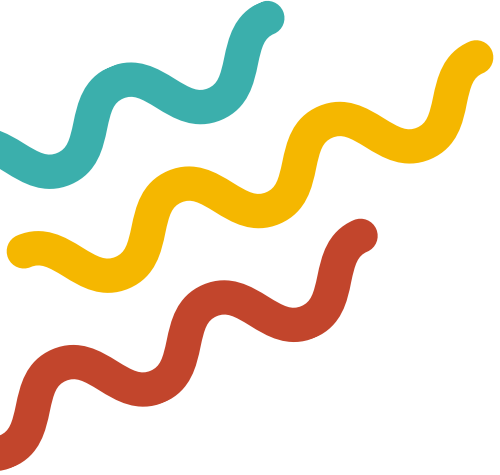
I never practice talking
on the phone

What if I say the
wrong thing?

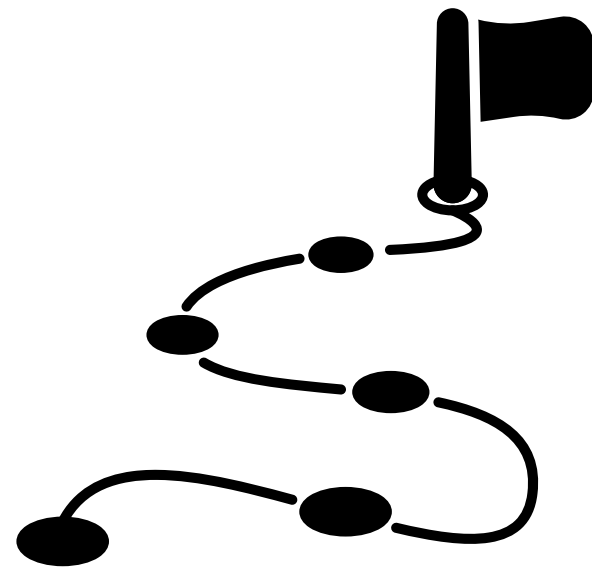
How formal
should I be?

What if I stumble
over my words?

What if they think
my ambitions are
too high?



Build structure and accountability into your program



Structured milestones

3-5 Conversations
Client project
Postsecondary Plan



Community & work time

“We’re all going to send
out 3 cold messages”



Opportunities to share wins

Celebrate the small
victories, together



**CONSIDER YOUR
PROGRAM**

Where could student-initiated outreach complement what your staff already does?

- **Career exploration:** learning conversations and job shadowing to bring careers to life
- **Work experience:** students use networking to obtain projects or internships
- **Placement access:** community champions who can help students move into full time roles

Partner conversation

- What's one type of employer or professional your students could realistically reach through their existing connections?
- What's one thing your program would need to put in place to support students in doing that?



Q / A





rebecca@prentix.net



Calendly

