

Top Ten WTEA Strategies to Attract and Keep Young Women in Technology/ STEM Education and Careers

1. Educate yourself about gender equity issues and be positive and gender inclusive in your language, attitudes, and materials.
2. Actively engage with girls-find them, talk to them, learn what is important to them-including future career opportunities, and express enthusiasm and clarify STEM possibilities related to their interests, etc.
3. Analyze your materials, instructional practices, curriculum content and activities to assess the match between girl's needs and interests as well as contemporary careers. You may need to create new courses to overcome stereotypes about the content or related careers of existing courses. Provide semester length courses to encourage exploration. Build autonomy and choice into projects and activities.
4. Build allies in the school and community to support gender equity activities. Counselors, other teachers, parents, those employed in nontraditional careers should be working with you to educate girls and young women.
5. Establish a classroom "code of conduct" and enforce it impartially-emphasize equal treatment-all students must feel valued and safe. Treat all students with respect, and expect the same from them.
6. Ensure the classroom and lab environments are clean, neat, and professional (orderly).
7. Determine how your program is perceived and take steps to counter misperceptions and connect with related career opportunities. Recruitment materials- Involve students in creating promotional materials with diversity representation. Go beyond equal to affirmative representation-e.g. a poster aimed at girls.
8. Encourage and mentor every student to connect their interests to the class and to careers-emphasize effort and not talent, neutralize gender stereotypes, support student confidence, etc.
9. Bring real world, successful, female, guest speakers to the class. Prepare those speakers ahead of time with tips on what students need to hear most, including: a description of the path from high school to the current career; the contribution of the their career to society; the ability to balance work, family and community life; available career advancement opportunities; description of any barriers and solutions to any barriers the speaker encountered.
10. Contemporary career development related to technology education and engineering-connect students to web-sites of interest based on their career choice and their gender, race, or disability.