

EFFECTIVENESS OF ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS IN CULTIVATING STEM INTEREST IN YEAR NINE FEMALE STUDENTS

Stephanie Mayes^a, Maria Parappilly^b

Presenting Author: Stephanie Mayes (maye0053@flinders.edu.au)

^a Undergraduate, Flinders University, Adelaide SA 5001, Australia

^b College of Science and Engineering, Flinders University, Adelaide SA 5001, Australia

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BACKGROUND:

With women underrepresented in STEM disciplines, due to the perception that STEM careers are challenging (Kier et al, 2013), there is a focus on encouraging females to pursue STEM (Marginson et al, 2013). Research suggests that enrichment programs enhance interest in gaining a STEM career (Merolla & Serpe, 2013), however knowledge on the most effective enrichment method is limited.

AIMS:

The aim of this project is to investigate the effectiveness of two enrichment methods on female year nine students' interest in STEM.

METHOD:

The project involves two enrichment programs run through Flinders University; Real Science Enrichment Days and Design & Technology Enrichment Series. The effectiveness of enrichment on student attitudes towards STEM was evaluated by experiment using modified validated pre- and post-surveys (Tyler-Wood et al, 2010).

RESULTS:

Findings show that both enrichment methods take the negativity out of students, who found Science less challenging after either enrichment. After the Enrichment Series, there was a decrease in the percentage of students who found Science boring. We seek to present the usefulness of such programs and the measurable outcomes achieved so far.

CONCLUSIONS:

These findings will be beneficial in designing more efficient enrichment programs to inspire girls about STEM careers.

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