Challenging stereotypes, creating change: Improving girls’ participation in STEM

Rebecca Davies, Sunshine Coast Grammar School

Recent research shows that Australian women comprise of only 28% of the workforce in STEM related fields (Rickard, K. and Crowther, A., 2015). This is despite the fact that early primary aged girls show an equal interest in STEM as boys the same age (Hobbs, L. et al. 2017). If we want to improve women’s participation in STEM related fields we need to begin by analysing what is happening in our schools.

Educators need to be encouraging girls to continue their love for STEM throughout primary school and into high school, but this is not currently reflected in our schools. Teachers and school leaders recognize the need to increase girls’ participation in STEM but do not always have the strategies for implementing change.

Together we will deconstruct current teaching research and practice in order to explore how we can improve girls’ participation in STEM in schools, particularly in extracurricular coding, robotics, and science clubs. Participants will walk away with a range of strategies that they can take back to their schools to make an immediate difference.

References

- Rickard, K, Crowther, A 2015, The slower track: women in the STEM professions survey report, Professionals Australia, Melbourne