

Changing stereotypes key to getting girls interested in computer science

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Stereotypes can be a powerful force in discouraging girls from pursuing careers in computer science.

Two new University of Washington studies examine how stereotypes—that computer scientists are mostly geeky, brilliant and socially awkward males—effectively steer girls away from computer [science](#). And the papers give some practical insights for how [educators](#) can counteract the stereotypes and make the field more inclusive.

The work is by three UW researchers: Sapna Cheryan of the UW psychology department, and Andrew Meltzoff and Allison Master of UW's Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences.

In one study, the UW team reports that female computer science teachers can help high school girls be interested in the field, especially if the [girls](#) are worried about negative computer science stereotypes. The study was done with hundreds of Seattle-area students, is not embargoed and will be published in an upcoming issue of the *International Review of Social Psychology*.

More information: *International Review of Social Psychology*, journal.frontiersin.org/Journal/psyg.2015.00049/full

Provided by University of Washington

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