

Sohie Lee, Computer Science
12/13/19

If you can see it, you can be it (women of color posters in the new CS teaching spaces)

Project Goals and Potential Impact

The CS department is fortunate to have two new teaching spaces: L140 and L180. Students are in these rooms for lecture, lab, drop-in hours and they use the labs as a place to work. This project will create posters of women of color in technology (past and present) as inspiration to our current CS students. Almost all the role models in technology are white males (for example, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg). Female college students, however, are more inspired by outstanding female rather than male role models¹.

This project aims to encourage women in CS to see themselves as having a career in the field. Many of our current students have explicitly said they wished they saw more female role models throughout their time at Wellesley. If our students can see bold reminders in academic settings² that there are women of color thriving in STEM, this can influence how they see themselves with respect to the field of Computer Science. Role models can signal to Black and Latinx students that they are valued^{3,4}. Our goal is to create a space in the Science Center to counteract the message that society has given to black and brown girls. In our teaching spaces, role models can represent what is possible⁵.

Project Description

In the Spring 2020 semester, Sohie will hire two students to execute the poster display plan. These two students will plan the number of posters, design poster content and determine the display details in the two teaching spaces. This program targets underrepresented women who are interested in Computer Science. Currently, the two new rooms are used to teach a collective 258 students in the Fall semester; these are our intended impacted students.

Assessment Plan

Each of the classes taught in those rooms will administer a survey to assess the effect of the posters on the students. Focus groups may also be run to gather more data.

Continuation Plan

The poster display will span pioneers of women in technology (eg Grace Hopper) up to current Wellesley women (eg Sravanti Tekumalla 2016, Software Engineer at Uber). At certain intervals in the future (every 5 years or so), the CS & MAS linked in group can vote on a new poster person to be displayed in the labs.

References

1. Lockwood, P. (2006). "Someone like me can be successful": Do college students need same-gender role models? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30(1), 36-46.
2. Dasgupta, N. (2011). Ingroup experts and peers as social vaccines who inoculate the self-concept: The stereotype inoculation model. *Psychological Inquiry*, 22(4), 231-246.
3. Johnson, I. R., Pietri, E. S., Fullilove, F., & Mowrer, S. (2019). Exploring Identity-Safety Cues and Allyship Among Black Women Students in STEM Environments. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 43(2), 131-150. DOI: [10.1177/0361684319830926](https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684319830926)
4. Pietri, E. S., Drawbaugh, M. L., Lewis, A. N., & Johnson, I. R. (2019). Who encourages Latina women to feel a sense of identity-safety in STEM environments?. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 84, 103827.
5. Morgenroth, T., Ryan, M. K., & Peters, K. (2015). The motivational theory of role modeling: How role models influence role aspirants' goals. *Review of General Psychology*, 19(4), 465-483.