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From: <ericson@cc.gatech.edu>

To: "AP Computer Science" <ap-compsci@lyris.collegeboard.com>

Subject: [ap-compsci] attracting females and minorities to computer science

Date: Tue, 30 Sep 2008 03:35:06 +0000

I really recommend that people read *Stuck in the Shallow End* by Jane Margolis and others. It is a report of the years that they worked with LA schools and how African Americans and Hispanics are denied access to computer science classes. It also gives some insight into why so few women are in AP CS classes. It shows that teachers and administrators are often part of the problem as they tend to reinforce the stereotypes that only white males and asians "belong" in CS classes.

In Georgia I have found that if teachers don't recruit women they usually get 0, 1, or 2 women in their classes. This was also reported in the *Stuck in the Shallow End* book. Teachers that do recruit women have gotten 25% - 50% females. There are several techniques that work: recruiting women from Math, Band, or other AP classes, getting women to recruit their friends, sending a letter home to parents, holding a open house night.

There is a new talking points brochure by the National Center for Women in Information Technology which you can download at <http://www.ncwit.org/resources.res.outreach.talking2.html>. This would be great to include in a letter home to parents. Teachers can get the PSAT data in the fall which identifies students who would do well in AP classes and use this to target women and minorities. Our good brochures are available at <http://csta.acm.org/Careers/sub/ClassroomCareersResources.html>. I also have a sample letter to send home to parents of girls at <http://coweb.cc.gatech.edu/ice-gt/611>.

Another great way to grow more interest in your CS classes is to hold computer summer camps. We have been doing this at Georgia Tech since 2004 and last week interviewed an African American male who said he is a Georgia Tech majoring in CS because of our summer camps. He had intended to major in chemistry until he came to our summer camps and found out how much he liked computing. We also know of other kids from our summer camps that are now at Georgia Tech.

In our summer camps we have found that kids love the free stuff like Scratch, Alice, and Media Computation as much or more than the things that cost money like PicoCricket, and LEGO Robots. So, you can get started by offering summer camps with free software. You can offer summer camps for middle school students and parents are willing to pay for more than the cost of day care so you can make money for yourself and even pay some high school students to help you. I recommend running 2-3 weeks of middle school camps for every week of

high school camp that you offer. We can't get high school kids to pay much for summer camps (just \$75 a week) but we have middle school students paying 285 a week. See <http://coweb.cc.gatech.edu/ice-gt/616> for more information on our summer camps. Also see <http://coweb.cc.gatech.edu/ice-gt/475> for some slides on the logistics of a summer camp. Resources for Scratch are at <http://coweb.cc.gatech.edu/ice-gt/446>. Resources for Alice are at <http://coweb.cc.gatech.edu/ice-gt/172>. Resources for Media Computation are at <http://coweb.cc.gatech.edu/mediaComp-teach>.

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