People like me do that – and it's okay!

Vicarious experience and perceived self-efficacy

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Social Cognitive Theory

"An individual's learning is not only related to their personal capabilities and experience, but also to their observations of others within the context of social interactions, experiences, and outside media influences".

Fogg-Rogers, L., Sardo, A.M., Boushel, C. (2017)
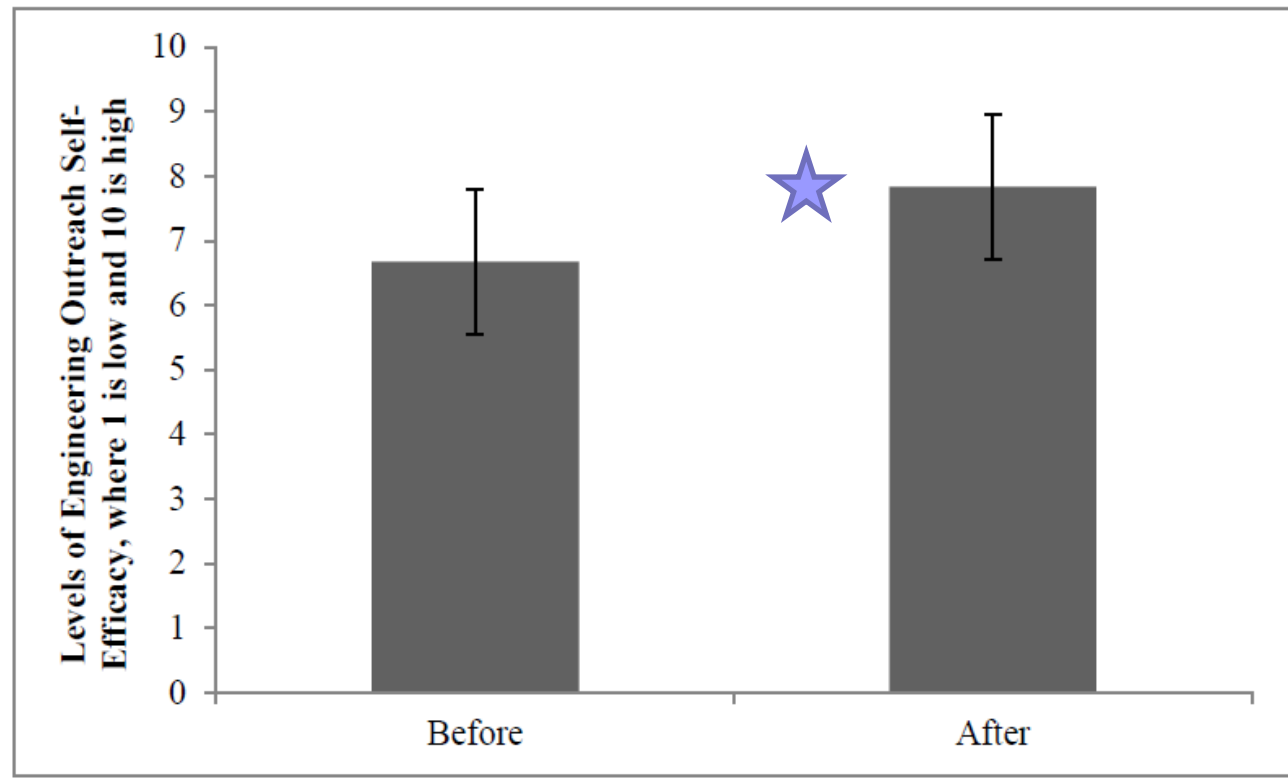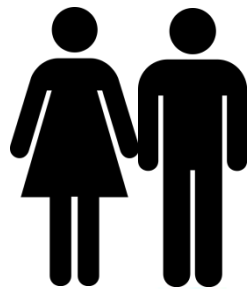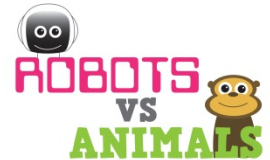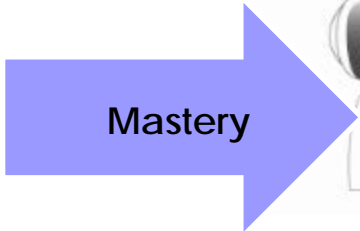
Direct learning

Experience of success and emotional arousal = mastery

Indirect learning

Social norms and social persuasion

Vicarious experience = role modelling

Mastery

Social persuasion and social norms

Fogg-Rogers, L., Sardo, A.M., Boushel, C. (2017). Robots vs Animals: establishing a culture of public engagement and female role modelling in engineering higher education. *Science Communication*

But… purposive selection is controversial

"Employing women just for the sake of employing women and making their numbers up - I think it actually undermines and devalues the participation of women in such events. The quality is in the scientist regardless of gender".
(Engineer 15, Research Supervisor, Male)

"Maybe constantly throwing girls at them in engineering isn't actually working and maybe there's another way to do it… I do feel sometimes there could be more encouragement, positive encouragement, for boys to be doing it as well where I think boys can miss out because it's just assumed that that's what they're going to do".   (Engineer 8, Male)

Fogg-Rogers, L., Sardo, A.M., Boushel, C. (2017). Robots vs Animals: establishing a culture of public engagement and female role modelling in engineering higher education. *Science Communication*

Conclusion

Vicarious experience is influential for girls and women

- "You can't be what you can't see" - role models can influence societal perceptions
- But role models have a tricky path to walk – not too dominant, not too geeky, competent at their jobs but still feminine….

We need to change social norms and influence social persuasion

Create peer group support networks

Use gender inclusive language

Show women doing activities – and getting a good response from them