

Exploring Nontraditional Careers
7th Grade Career Development Advisement Activity #3
Teacher as Advisor Program (TAP)
Estimated time: 30-45 minutes

National Career Development Standard/Competency

1. Knowledge of the influence of a positive self-concept
 - Describe personal likes and dislikes
9. Skills to make decisions
 - Describe personal beliefs and attitudes
11. Knowledge of different occupations and changing male/female roles
 - Describe advantages and problems of entering nontraditional occupations
 - Describe stereotypes, biases, and discriminatory behavior that may limit opportunities for women and men in certain occupations

Goal:

Students will participate in a group activity to explore their attitudes about nontraditional careers.

Objectives:

- Discuss beliefs and attitudes
- Describe barriers that limit career options and propose strategies to overcome them

Materials:

- 7th Grade Career Development Advisement Activity #3 handout – **Exploring Nontraditional Careers**
- Pen or pencil
- Optional supplemental resources: “Taking the Road Less Traveled” and “Destination Success” are located in the Guidance Center. Ask your counselor about these two excellent resources for more information about nontraditional occupations.

Activity:

1. *Greet students: “Good morning, welcome to advisement. I hoped you enjoyed the last activity, “Who’s in the Bag?” Collect the assignment from the last activity. “Today we’re going to explore attitudes about men’s work and women’s work by responding to a series of statements. If you agree with the statement, raise your right hand and if you disagree with the statement, raise your left hand. If you’re not sure whether you agree or disagree, raise both hands. There are no right or wrong responses to any of these statements.” Make sure students understand the directions before beginning the activity.*
2. *Read the following statements, allowing time for students to respond after each one. Once all statements have been read and students have responded, discuss with students the questions that accompany the statements.*
3. *Repeat the statement, ask students to reflect on their prior responses and have students discuss the questions.*
 - “Most males don’t have the patience to work with small children.”
Questions: What are some of the careers that involve working with young children? Do you know any males who work with small children?

- “Most females aren’t smart enough to be scientists.”
Questions: What kind of “smart” do you have to be? Do you know any males or females who are smart in this way? Are there people who are smart this way but have no interest in this area?
 - “All adult females should be prepared to support themselves financially.”
Questions: Should everyone be prepared to support themselves financially? Why?
 - “Males are paid more because they have families to support.”
Questions: Are males the only ones with families to support? Are there households where women are the sole support of their families?
 - “Men who work as flight attendants are not masculine and women who drive heavy machinery are not feminine.”
Questions: What does being masculine or feminine have to do with the type of work you choose? Are there masculine and feminine occupations?
4. Discuss with students how attitudes about “proper” work can create gender barriers that limit opportunities and close off avenues to satisfying careers in nontraditional areas. Male and female students should be allowed to work at any job of their choice. They should also be allowed to freely participate in any programs that may be offered at the high school. Such programs for women would be welding, auto technology, computer science, and AP math. Young men should be able to participate in Health Science Technology or Early Childhood education.
5. Distribute the **Exploring Nontraditional Careers** handout. Have students complete the exercise and hand it in. You may prefer to divide students into groups to do this assignment or you may lead the assignment. Either way, individual students should hand in the assignment before advisement ends. Discuss the barriers and solutions with students.
- *Sample barriers:*
 - Socialization to traditional female roles*
 - Lack of support from family, friends, and classmates or coworkers*
 - Lack of self-confidence*
 - Lack of female role models*
 - Limited experience with tools and mechanical operations*
 - Limited information about nontraditional occupations*
 - Females are usually directed to traditional classes*
 - Isolation and sexual harassment in classrooms*
 - Lack of instructor support*
 - Perception that men are not caring*
 - Perception that men who choose nontraditional jobs aren’t masculine*
 - Salary for men; women usually can make a higher salary at nontraditional jobs*
 - *Some solutions:*
 - Teach about career options beginning in elementary school*
 - Expose students to nontraditional role models*
 - Relate academic instruction to career awareness*
 - Provide opportunities for career awareness through field trips, speakers and shadowing.*
 - Encourage all students to enroll in upper level math and science courses*

Sponsor nontraditional career fairs and contests
Teach parents about career options

Evaluation:

Student will be evaluated on their handouts.

