

Tips To Enhance Teen Interest In Science And Math

(NAPSA)—Many experts assert that the strength of the U.S. economy lies in fostering a culture of innovation and educating America's youth in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The good news, according to a recent survey of teens by the Lemelson-MIT Program, is that 12–17-year-olds are enthusiastic about these subjects, with 77 percent interested in pursuing a STEM career. However, ensuring that teens hang on to that enthusiasm as they transition into college or the workforce may require encouragement along the way. Consider the following tips to foster teens' interest in the sciences:

1. Get outside the classroom

For a transformative learning experience, provide teens the opportunity to build things and conduct experiments outside the classroom. Supplementing classroom learning with real-world experiences provides a valuable view into the role of science and math in everyday life. Two-thirds of students said they would enjoy learning about science more if they could take field trips to places where they can learn. Research and plan visits to local companies, museums or planetariums to help students foster a deeper understanding of the sciences.

2. Take a hands-on approach

Two-thirds of teens prefer hands-on individual and group projects when it comes to classroom-based education methods. In the classroom and at home, keep things fun and interactive. Integrating animations, simulations, building-design skills and other lab tools into assignments are



Hands-on experience is a great way to get students to appreciate science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

ways to tap into teens' interest in hands-on learning.

3. Find strong mentors

Teachers and parents alike should keep in mind that role models have a tremendous impact on increasing teens' interest in science, math and technology. Strong mentors can also help teens better understand the impact that STEM professionals have on society. Remember that even access to family members or family-friends who work in these fields can be a driving factor for teens' interest.

There are a variety of channels beyond school and home that can connect teens' interest in STEM with access to hands-on, outside-the-classroom opportunities. For example, educational programs like the Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam initiative let teams of high school students, teachers and mentors apply for a grant of up to \$10,000 to invent technological solutions to real-world problems of their own choosing.

To learn more about Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams or to access the 2010-2011 application, visit <http://web.mit.edu/invent> or call (617) 253-3352.