

Modeling & Mentoring Non-traditional Careers Online

One of the easiest ways to bring up the possibility of non-traditional careers to high school students is to invite peers, past graduates, and local business persons who have succeeded in careers where there is a predominate sex, race, or ethnicity. But what can a school do when they have a limited number of or no volunteers willing to come to the classroom for face-to-face time with students? The challenge of being in a less densely populated area or lacking of a specific occupation in the region is a major challenge for many Kansas school when attempting to improve on the awareness and acceptance of non-traditional careers through modeling and mentoring.

While the personal connection may not be readily available locally, the resources are out there to start the process of informing and supporting students through a variety of web sites, organizations and opportunities to connect through webinars or virtual personal conversations. A vast number of organizations have already done the hard work of identifying examples of extraordinary people who are succeeding in field where they are not the norm for hire and highlight what helped spark their interest in the field or occupation. Most times these pivotal moments happened in middle or high school with some interaction or exposure by another model or mentor.

To start a database of online resources and video testimonials, most districts only need to turn to their favorite online search engine and start entering keywords to find a plethora of free websites and online examples. Some of the top search results that we found were....

- **NOVA: The Secret Life of Scientists & Engineers** – *Highlights a wide variety of scientists and engineers and their stories.* <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/blogs/secretlife/>
- **American Assembly for Men in Nursing** - AAMN is a professional organization for nurses that have improved gender inclusion in nursing profession by offering an environment of belongingness and collective learning to excel in the profession. <http://aamn.org/>
- **USDA Farm Service Agency: Women Outreach Program** - The Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides outreach to women farmers and ranchers, specifically those who have not participated in, or have not received benefits from USDA or FSA programs. <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=oued&topic=ops-wn>
- **Regional & National Newspapers** – Huffington Post: Women regularly profiles extraordinary women in predominately male dominated careers and how they got where they are today. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/14/dame-sue-ion_n_5976036.html?utm_hp_ref=girls-in-stem
- **MenTeach** - MenTeach is a non-profit clearinghouse for both men and women seeking information and resources about men teaching. <http://www.menteach.org/>
- **Pretty Brainy** – promotes respect for what girls bring to science and math to create a force for innovation and growth. <http://www.prettybrainy.com/>
- **National Association of Women in Construction** - Knowing that women represented only a small fraction of the construction industry, the founders organized NAWIC to create a support network. <http://www.nawic.org/>