

How to Counter Stereotypes to Improve Equity in Computer Science

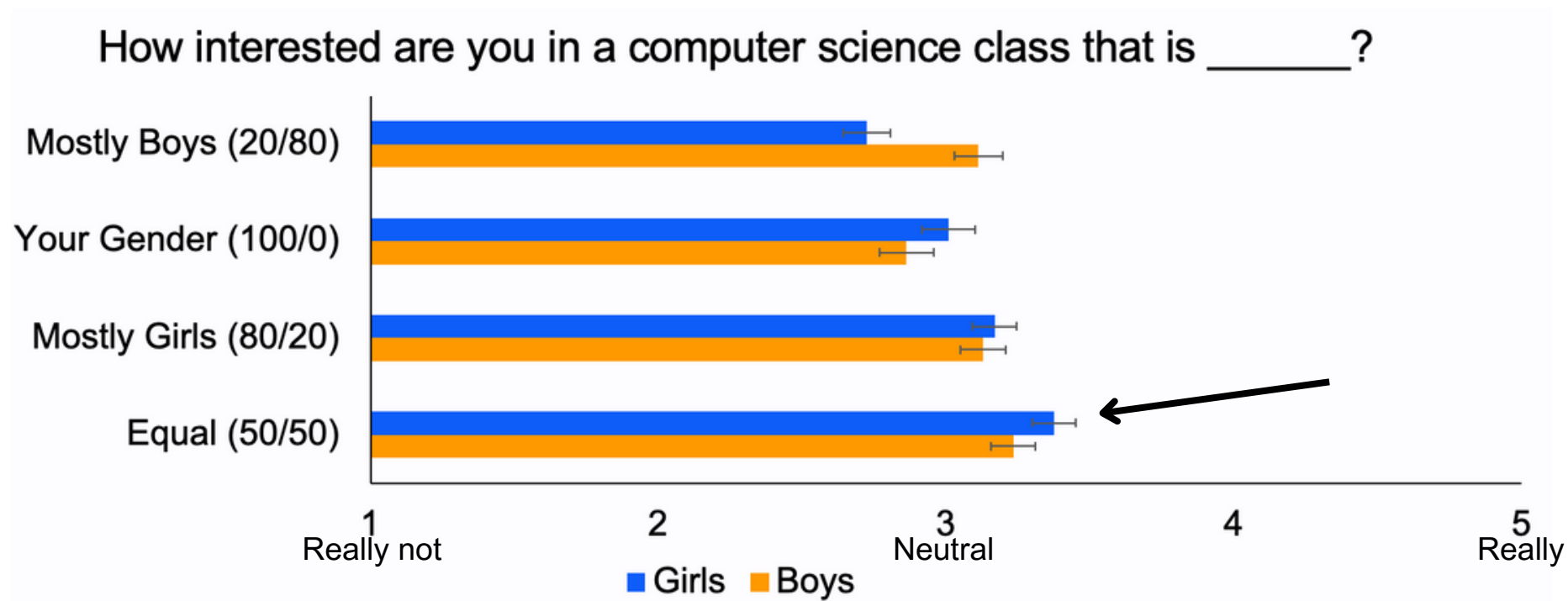
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- Even though more girls are taking AP computer science than ever before, they are still underrepresented compared to boys (College Board, 2023).
- "Interest stereotypes" are beliefs that boys are more interested than girls in computer science (Master et al., 2021).
- The more that girls believe these stereotypes:
 - 😞 the less they feel they belong in computer science
 - 😞 the less they want to take a computer science class

Stereotypes send girls the message, "People like me don't belong here."

How can teachers counter stereotypes to send girls messages that they DO belong in computer science?

We asked 257 8th and 9th graders:



Representation matters!
Girls were most interested when there were **equal** numbers of girls and boys.

What can teachers do?



Challenge interest stereotypes:

Spread the word about how much girls enjoy your class



Promote belonging:

Make sure girls feel included and valued



Emphasize that change is happening:

More girls are taking computer science than ever before!



Aim for equity:

Girls-only spaces are a short-term fix, not a long-term goal