

Middle school is a critical time for young people to begin thinking about future careers. While many middle school students still long to be football players, actresses or rap singers, they are also beginning to consider realistic options. In order to effectively explore all realistic options middle school students need to have accurate information about specific careers. The literature on recruitment into engineering careers suggests that students may not know about engineering careers, have few adults or peers discussing engineering with them, and therefore do not explore engineering as a career option or prepare for it academically in these crucial middle school years.

This paper will present results from an investigation of middle school students' attitude to and knowledge about engineering, engineering careers, and their engineering skills self efficacy. The survey was adapted from the previously developed "High school students attitude to engineering survey" (Gibbons et al, 2002; Hirsch et al, 2003) and other published attitudes to science and math surveys (Morgan & Jinks, 1996; Fennema & Sherman, 1976). The validity and reliability of the survey will be presented along with a summary of significant findings which include: students' overall attitudes to engineering, math and science; their knowledge about engineering careers; their self efficacy in relation to engineering skills and who has been talking to them about careers in engineering.