

This is the first post in the Conference of Consulting Actuaries (CCA) ***Women in Consulting Community Blog*** “The Competence-Confidence Spectrum” written by NYC Chief Actuary Sherry Chan. It is the first in a series where CCA members can share their thoughts about interesting articles or books they read, videos or shows they watched, and events they attended that may be of interest to the Women in Consulting Community.

This article talks about why girls generally outperform boys in school but is reversed in the workplace. In short, it attributes the different study/preparation habits to why “school is a confidence factory for our sons, but only a competence factory for our daughters” and later, when both reach the workplace, confidence is what ends up propelling (again, generally) men.

So, when I read this article, it made me think of my own path. I definitely was the girl who overprepared for any and all finals, tests, quizzes, and possibility of a pop quiz. But, after stepping into the real world, how did I acclimate so that I, too, propelled? I would say one of the biggest transitions I made is shifting the focus from the trees to the forest. In the workplace, we’re paid to attend to the trees, but what our bosses and clients want from us is just the forest (i.e. they generally do not want your spreadsheet; they want the final number). In other words, don’t get so bogged down by the details that you lose track of the big picture. The more you’re able to deliver a work product in the form that your boss or client wants it in, the more your work will be appreciated and praised, the more your confidence will build, and the more you will propel.

Where do you fall when relying on the spectrum of competence and confidence? What introspective stories do you have to share after reading this article?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/07/opinion/sunday/girls-school-confidence.html>