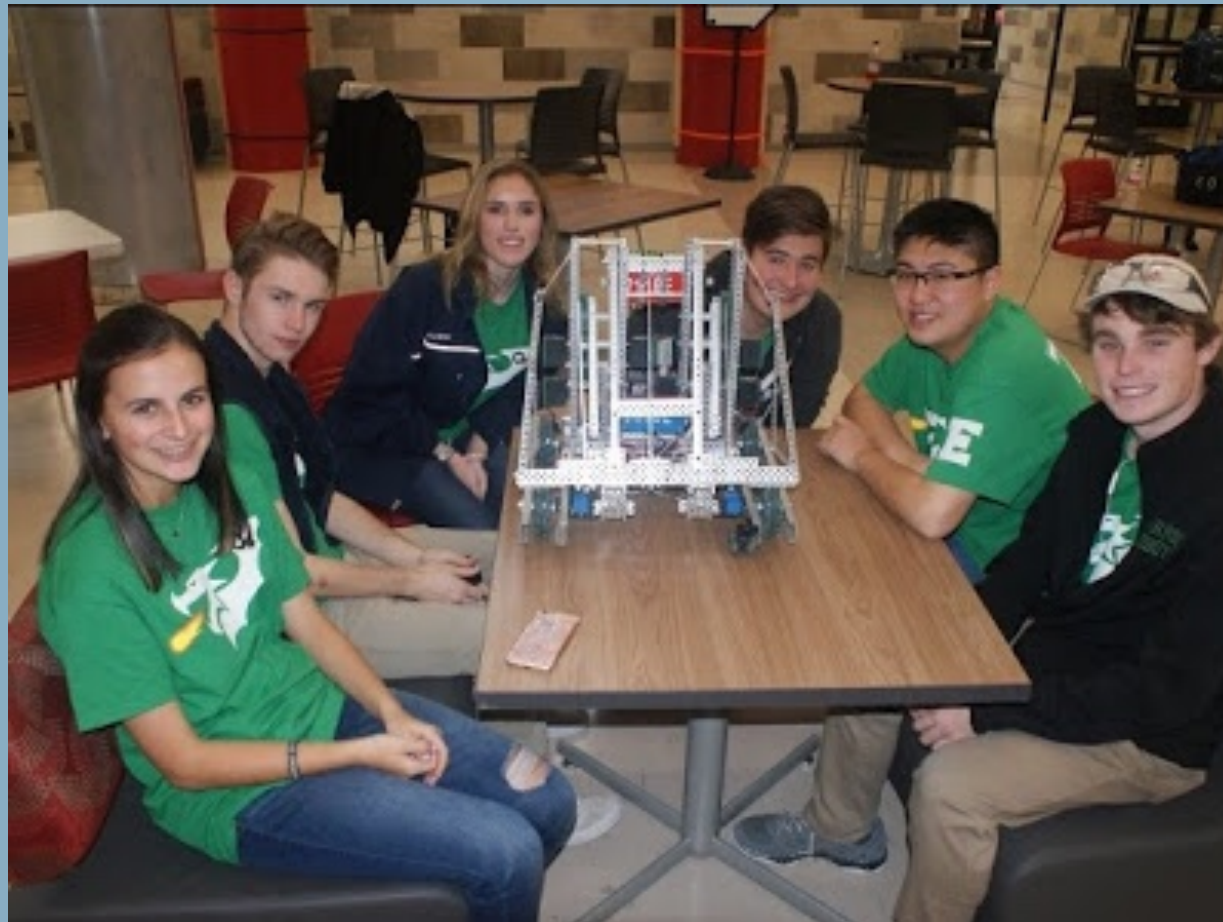


7110E Fired Up!  
Southlake, TX

## The New "Normal"

By: Emily Stalder and Bryn Tubb



## Preface

Have you ever felt out of place? Have you ever questioned if you're the right fit for the job?

Most girls in robotics are timid to join due to the fear of feeling different and overlooked in an engineering environment. "Boys are better at those classes" is a statement that should never be heard because you too can succeed in robotics. And, you too are just as capable of higher level thinking. It's 2017, wake up! Gender doesn't define brain power and interests. So take a leap of faith and join robotics. Still need to be convinced? Here's a culture shock event that will spur your interest in robotics.

Culture shock (noun): an experience a person may have when one moves to a cultural environment which is different from one's own.

Have you ever experienced a culture shock? Going to a robotics competition is a total culture shock. Any newcomer who steps foot into this event is perplexed. The intensity and competitive energy within each field is amazing. To think that robotics has its own events was almost confusing due to never being exposed to this way of life. The first thoughts that came to mind when I walked in the door at my team's first competition of the year was "what even is this". I checked out each room in this robotics dedicated building then sat in the lobby thinking "why am I here. I don't belong here. This is weird". Therefore, a total culture shock is what I experienced. I felt extremely uncomfortable then... the competition process began.

Inspection (noun): careful examination or scrutiny.

Our team's first event on our schedule was to get our robot through inspection.

This process was not as easy as we thought it would be. After three attempts,

we finally passed inspection. Our team never thought that the event would be so

serious with the way they were holding inspections. We headed back to our table

to finalize our autonomous code and to prepare for impending competition.

Anxious (adjective): wanting something very much, typically with a feeling of unease.

"Team 7110E to the field please!", announced the referee. We picked up their robot and brought it to the field. I (Emily) was on the drive team and was as nervous as I've ever been before. I looked into the crowd of spectators and saw The rest of the team giving me a thumbs up. The match was about to begin!

As one of the drivers on the field, I had started to scramble to get the preload on the robot and connect our controller. The current match had just ended and began getting scored. The adrenaline started rushing through the team. The crowd started to cheer and the referee asked the drivers if they were ready. "3, 2, 1!" The match had begun.



The crowd is roaring as the teams are screaming with passion "go, go, go!" The aura of the whole room is surreal. We were experiencing an event that is typically hidden from the "normal" eye. Being a part of this "world" is breathtaking to both of us. Feeling completely welcomed and involved in a "man's field" built our confidence that in fact we can be just like everyone else because the differences we thought existed really do not.



## Interview

At the end of the competition, each team is asked to interview with robotics advisors to evaluate their robot and teamwork. When questions were asked, we were the ones with the answers due to being the lead for mechanics as well as the head of the engineering notebook for team 7110E. Contrary to what we believed what would happen, the advisors valued our answers just as much as anyone else's thus proving that women and men are equal in robotics. What allowed for us to be the go to for questions was simply our roles on the team.



Being the only two women on our team of eight could have presented its challenge of being considered inferior in the field of engineering. Starting our robotics journey, we thought this difference would produce communication issues. However, what happened was exactly the opposite. Our team has created an environment where all ideas and opinions are accepted through showing confidence as a women in robotics, and demonstrating confidence is exactly what we did while walking through the competition doors.



## About The Authors

Bryn Tubb is a first time robotics member on team 7110E. She took the course Intro to Engineering in the 2015/2016 school year, and the robotics unit caught her attention. Bryn is a senior at 16 years old and will attend Southern Methodist University in the fall of 2017.

Emily Stalder has been a part of robotics for the past three years due to her older brother's involvement in the robotics program. She is a sophomore and has taken engineering one and two, as well as computer science one. She wishes to use her knowledge of engineering to become a doctor.

## Acknowledgements:

It's all about just dipping your toe into a new activity because many things in life you may enjoy, but without trying, you may never get to live life to the fullest. Don't worry about what others think because in the grand scheme it's all about what you think and what you believe within yourself. Take it from a girl who worried about how others saw her and tried to cover up her brain power and interests in science and technology in order to be "normal". In robotics you are normal because you are surrounded by others with the same interest as yourself! Explore new fields, discover what you like, and be yourself to the fullest. -Bryn Tubb