

April Stec, Business Insight Analyst – Costing at ArcBest Technologies
(She studied industrial engineering.)

I always really enjoyed math classes. I went to Trinity Junior High then went to Southside High School in Fort Smith and took as many math classes as possible. What I figured out is that the reason I liked math was because of the problem solving aspect, not necessarily the numbers! I worked hard to obtain a scholarship to attend UA Fayetteville and studied industrial engineering, which applies technical problem-solving skills to business problems such as workplace safety, efficiency, and design. I saw that ArcBest was hiring through the UA STEM career fair and obtained a job as a pricing analyst. In this role I used and further developed a combination of analytical and negotiation skills while determining how much to charge our customers for our services. After three years I moved into my current role of business insight analyst, where I have been two years and work on effectively allocating and estimating costs to aid in business decisions. In addition to my current job, I am working on obtaining my executive MBA with a focus in data analytics from UA. I also enjoy taking art classes when I have the time. I don't plan to get off the path of learning and self improvement anytime soon!

My parents always encouraged me to work hard in school and be whatever I wanted to be. I really enjoyed math and problem-solving and knew I wanted to use it in my career. I didn't know what types of career opportunities existed, but I decided to pursue industrial engineering in college as it was an opportunity to use my creativity and problem-solving skills. I was excited to find a job where I can use my skill set in my hometown.

Her favorite classes in high school with anything math or problem-solving related: Algebra, Statistics, Calculus. She also really enjoyed psychology and art classes. Her favorite classes in college for engineering statistics, operations research (i.e. solving optimization problems), and any IE class with a focus in logic problems
She is still trying to figure out what her dream job would be.

If you don't know exactly what you want to do, that's OK! Just study and explore subjects and topics that interest you. There are a lot of options in tech and stem, and there are a lot of different paths to get there. The area is constantly growing in new things are being developed constantly so it is never too late to learn something. Don't get discouraged if you come across something that is hard. It is OK to fail at something. It won't define you. Just get back out, laugh it off, and try again Dash or try something new! If you are curious about something and ask questions! Working in stem is not as scary as it sounds. It really is obtainable and there are endless possibilities to find your niche. If you know what you want to do, do it. Don't compare yourself to others, just yourself. If you have made progress in the path you want to go, then that is what matters. If you haven't seen someone that looks like you were talks like you are dresses like you do what you want to do (yet), doesn't mean you shouldn't. Don't compare yourself to others, just yourself. Look past those things and show up for what you want to do and who you want to be.

