Leigh Estabrooks
Invention Education Officer, Lemelson-MIT Program

As Invention Education Officer of the Lemelson-MIT Program, Leigh Estabrooks leads the Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam initiative, which was created to inspire a new generation of inventors. InvenTeams are high school teams that receive grants up to $10,000 each to invent technological solutions to real-world problems. During her tenure, Estabrooks has broadened the initiative’s impact by doubling the number of teachers to receive professional development for creativity and invention. She has insured that teacher training includes (1) guidance for creativity and inventive thinking, (2) instruction on basic electronics, (3) introduction to CAD, and (4) review of necessary tools to build a prototype. Estabrooks’ goal is to expand the InvenTeam initiative both nationally and globally. In this position, Estabrooks’ role also includes development of educational materials and resources on invention to enhance K-12 pedagogy.

Prior to joining the Lemelson-MIT Program, Estabrooks was an information technology instructor at Pathfinder Regional Technical High School in Massachusetts, where she developed and updated content for the Information Technology Shop. Preceding this occupation, she was a teaching and research assistant in marketing and product management for Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at its campus in Hartford, Conn. Estabrooks worked in product development and consumer research with Tambrands Inc., Chesebrough-Ponds, Inc., and The Coca-Cola Company earlier in her career.

Estabrooks received her B.S. in agriculture from the University of Tennessee in 1979 and her M.S. in business at the Renesselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1993. Among her personal activities, Estabrooks served as a coach for her local community’s FIRST LEGO® League. This competition addressed issues such as global warming and nanotechnology, as well as robotics, throughout her three-year role. She currently resides in Lexington, Mass., with her husband and two sons, whom she teaches: “It’s never too early to start inventing.”