

Beyond the Classroom: Investigating Gendered Imposterism in Undergraduate Physics

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The need for the promotion of equity in STEM is an uphill battle, one that is recognized by many academic institutions. As need for research-based, equity-promoting initiatives continues, students commonly experience what is described as the Imposter Phenomenon. It can be defined as a cyclical, distressing feeling in which an individual considers themselves less worthy of their achievements, and may attribute their successes to luck, deceit, or fraudulence, instead of their own competence, despite verifiable evidence of their skills. I present a plan to investigate the ways in which Imposterism impacts women and other marginalized individuals and ways to increase diversity in physics at Queen's University. I introduce the Imposterism Feelings Index (IFI) score as a quantitative measure of Imposterism in this work, where scores over 3 are considered higher Imposterism experiences, and scores under 3 are considered lower. This study has demonstrated evidence to prove that women, non-binary, and trans students have more Imposterism experiences than men in the department; such differences appear in the second year of study. In addition, results demonstrate that the environment has a significant impact, and that individual action is not strongly associated with lower Imposter feelings. This demonstrates the importance of shifting the culture of the field and the impact of intentional teaching strategies.

What area of study best describes your talk?

Other (specify below)

If you answered 'Other', please provide the study area.

Physics Education Research

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