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Fostering Physics Identity to Support Young Women in Physics Education (I)

Wednesday 13 June 2018 11:30 (30 minutes)

This talk presents a study that qualitatively investigated how young women in Ontario experience barriers in their high school physics education. The basis of the research is the long-standing issue of underrepresentation of women in physics in Canada and around the world. The study asked questions aimed at better understanding this issue: What barriers do young women in high school physics experience? What meanings do these students attribute to the barriers encountered in their physics education? The concept of physics identity was used as a lens through which students' experiences of barriers could be understood. Findings from focus group and interview data include themes concerning students' perceptions, experiences, and their identity and gender throughout the high school physics experience. The study yielded (a) a research-based understanding of young women's experiences of barriers in high school physics, and (b) practice-oriented recommendations for physics educators to support young women's success and continuation in physics education and the field. Along with thematic findings and recommendations for physics educators presented in this talk, a moving narrative—curated from participant voices—is also shared, which explores young women's journey with physics identity in high school physics.

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