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The Physics Classroom: Does Faculty Gender Matter?

AMY BUG, Swarthmore College

Evidence, both anecdotal and in the literature, suggests that gender matters when students evaluate a professor; particularly in a highly analytical field like physics or mathematics. We report on a study to determine the effect of gender when other variables (in particular, the “script” delivered by an actor playing the role of a lecturer) are controlled. After physics students view such a lecture, their written evaluations show significant effects related to both the gender of lecturer and of the student. While the study involved a small number ($N = 126$) of participants, it is believed that meaningful conclusions can be drawn, and future work is indicated.