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Examining the Gender Gap in Introductory Physics LAUREN KOST, STEVEN POLLOCK, NOAH FINKELSTEIN, University of Colorado at Boulder — Our previous research[1] showed that despite the use of interactive engagement techniques in the introductory physics course, the gap in performance between males and females on a mechanics conceptual learning survey persisted from pre- to post-test, at our institution. Such findings were counter to previously published work[2]. Follow-up studies[3] identified correlations between student performance on the conceptual learning survey and students' prior physics and math knowledge and their incoming attitudes and beliefs about physics and learning physics. The results indicate that the gender gap at our institution is predominantly associated with differences in males' and females' previous physics and math knowledge, and attitudes and beliefs. Our current work extends these results in two ways: 1) we look at the gender gap in the second semester of the introductory sequence and find results similar to those in the first semester course and 2) we identify ways in which males and females differentially experience several aspects of the introductory course.

[1] Pollock, et al, Phys Rev: ST: PER 3, 010107. [2] Lorenzo, et al, Am J Phys 74, 118. [3] Kost, et al, PERC Proceedings 2008.

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