**On the Frame: Visualizing Engineering Identity Experiences of Sophomore-Level Students**

**Part 1:** Researchers have shown that students are most likely to leave engineering undergraduate programs during their first two years. Justifiably, a number of studies have investigated engineering student persistence and attrition, especially during the first year, and then informed the development of interventions to address the challenges. While those interventions have improved freshmen retention in some institutions, less has been published on the impacts of these interventions on the sophomore student experience. In this study, we examined the experiences of sophomore engineering students and explored how these experiences relate to their identities as engineers. We conducted this study using photovoice, a methodology/intervention in which participants submit photographs to help describe their experiences and also give recommendations on how to improve their experiences and resolve their concerns. Four participants submitted three sets of pictures (at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester) and participated in focus groups. We analyzed data using thematic analysis. We inductively determined three themes: on the frame, out of focus, and prefigures. Through empowering participants to co-construct the knowledge, we were able to see what *interest*, *competence*, and *recognition* as engineers looked like from the student’s perspectives. This work has the potential to yield practical solutions that institutional stakeholders can implement, such as intentionally creating cultures of well-being, self-reflection, and belonging.

#empty

#competence

#overwhelmed

