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Jennifer A Czocher*, 601 University Dr, San Marcos, TX 78666, and **Kathleen Melhuish**, Texas State University. *Can mathematical modeling competitions help participants build confidence? If so, so what?*

We often hear about the benefits of mathematical modeling for students' learning of mathematics, development of modeling skills, and in the case of participating in competitions, for fostering "soft skills." In this talk I'll frame a systematic study of the impact of SIMIODE's mathematical modeling competition (SCUDEM) on participants' confidence to do mathematical modeling in terms of recent educational research about persistence in mathematics. I use the results to argue that modeling competitions are positioned to play an important supporting role in STEM students' ultimate success in their careers. (Received September 02, 2018)