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*Mathematical Deviance: How punishing failure punishes queerness*

Queerness, and being a queer person, at its core means existing in opposition to social norms and expectations. Queerness means breaking rules. In this presentation I argue that traditional methods of teaching mathematics – top-down approaches to learning that emphasize facts, rules and universal truths – run contradictory to queerness. In such spaces, deviations from the approved methods are often met with red X's, while uncertainty and questioning are stamped out. When mathematics classrooms penalize mistakes and non-standard approaches rather than treating them as productive inquiry, they enforce a culture of conformity that may alienate queer learners. If we want to better engage queer students, we need to leave behind rigid pedagogical models, instead emphasizing, celebrating, and exploring rule-breaking as a valiant mathematical endeavour.