

The social (and cultural) nature of ‘intrinsic motivation’: Implications for student interest development and broadening participation in math and science

Friday, April 21, 2017

Light refreshments will be served at 9:45 AM

10:00 – 11:00 AM

A roundtable discussion with Professor Abraham will take place at 11:00 AM

NSB 1205 (Auditorium)



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Why do you like science? People typically answer this question by describing how they feel about the topic or they describe early pivotal science-related experiences or activities. Answers tend to focus on personal experiences, feelings, curiosities, passions, and other self-related reasons and experiences that causally led to a well-developed interest in science. Occasionally, people refer to the impact of a teacher, parent, or friend; but mostly, autobiographical narrative accounts of science interest development tend to focus on one’s self. My program of research (and others’) has demonstrated, however, that other people have a far greater influence on our experience of interest, or what feels like “intrinsic motivation” to pursue specific topics or activities. Educational and career interest development is shaped, far more than we are consciously aware of, by our cultural backgrounds and social interactions. In this talk, I will describe how social and cultural factors influence student interest development and what we experience as intrinsic motivation to pursue science education and careers, focusing on implications for broadening participation and diversity in math and science.

Hosted by:
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