

ASC 2010 Conference

Motivation to Learn in Social Contexts: Integrating Individual and Social Perspectives

Cambridge University

May 10-14, 2010

The first decade of the 21st century has seen an ever-expanding definition of learning and learning environments. From schools to university environments, there has been an increasing emphasis on the importance of learning in groups. At the same time, the physical boundaries of “group learning” are being broken down by advances in technology and communication. Group learning now routinely happens asynchronously, with members residing around the world. Motivation theory has traditionally looked at the individual, focusing on personality characteristics and the influence of external factors to explain self-regulation and motivation to learn. The study of learning in groups or activity systems, including computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) has, in turn, neglected the socio-emotional aspects of social settings. Work in both fields has been limited by the lack of interaction among scholars and the constraints of existing theories. Given the increasing importance of understanding learning and motivation in groups, we are proposing a joint colloquium aimed at integrating individual and social, and cognition and motivation.

Advancing theory: Integrating social and individual perspectives

Groups are collections of individuals in social interaction, bringing their own histories, motivations, cultural norms and goals to the learning situation. Goals and motivations are further shaped through interaction, as learners’ identities and positions within the group evolve along with the characteristics and structure of the group itself. Self-regulation is important, but in groups there is also social regulation, as members seek to influence other members and the functioning and goals of the group. By bringing together senior scholars who have been studying motivation, learning, regulation and culture at the boundaries of individual and social, our colloquium seeks to use shared data to advance our understanding of the following questions:

1. How is motivation to learn in social situations related to learners’ identities and positions within the group?
2. How are motives to learn related to or different from motivations to participate in a group?
3. What is social or other-regulation? How do cognitive and motivational regulation interact at the individual and social level, across cultures, face-to-face and via technology, when visual cues are reduced or absent?
4. Can we account for overlapping or hierarchically-structured social systems in explaining motivation to learn?

Advancing methodology: Integrating individual and social approaches

Integrating individual and social perspectives on motivation and learning raises serious methodological questions and an expanded set of methodological tools. Therefore, a second aim of the colloquium is to examine and critique the methods we have been using, and *through collaborative inquiry with shared data*, develop new, more integrated approaches. We propose to address the following methodological questions:

1. How can we observe motivation in social contexts? What coding frameworks support an integration of individual and social perspectives on motivation?
2. What designs and methodological tools support investigations of motivation in activity systems?
3. How should we study change and development in the motivation to learn of individuals and groups?
4. How can we combine different levels of analysis to integrate individual and social perspectives on motivation?

Organizing Committee

Julian Elliott, Durham University, UK

Sanna Järvelä, University of Oulu, Finland

Susan Bobbitt Nolen, University of Washington, USA

Julianne Turner, University of Notre Dame, USA

Marja Vauras, University of Turku, Finland

Simone Volet, Murdoch University, Australia

David Whitehead, Cambridge University, UK

Applications to Participate in ASC 2010

Scholars currently conducting research on motivation in social contexts are invited to apply for participation in the colloquium. In keeping with EARLI guidelines, participation is limited to 20 participants in total. Please note, given the size of the organizing committee, there are only four (4) additional places available. Each senior scholar will bring one junior researcher (pre- or post-doc) to the colloquium.

Applications should include the following information:

- Name and affiliation of the researcher(s)
- A description of the ongoing research project and its relation to the aims of the ASC as described above, including methodological approach
- A description of the kind of data that might be contributed for joint analysis at the conference

- A brief statement describing how attendance at the colloquium will
 - Support the ongoing theoretical and methodological development of the researcher(s), especially junior colleagues, and
 - Contribute to the goals of the ASC
- A single representative publication or conference paper stemming from the research project, if available

There is no cost to attend the colloquium; a €250 hotel allowance for each participant is provided, along with lunch at the conference and a conference dinner. Remaining travel costs will be the responsibility of the attendees, although there will be some funds available for junior researchers' travel expenses.

Please send application materials to:

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THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 15 NOVEMBER, 2009