

*The University of California, Irvine*

The Department of Education

Presents



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***Monday, April 25, 2011***

***11:30 – 12:45 AM***

***ED2024***

***“Social and Cultural Knowledge Influences Motivation  
to Learn”***

There are many reasons why students differ in their academic performance: ability, home environment, teacher and school quality, resource allocation, etc. Still, it is difficult to understand the enormous range of students' performance based on these factors alone. Recent research focusing on social and cultural sources of motivation suggests that students' understanding of classroom cultural norms and their roles and place in the classroom has great impact on their academic achievement. Consistent with this analysis, my studies shows that students' understanding of the requirements of intellectual success and of the purpose of attending school influences their motivation to learn. In addition, interventions that alter students' understanding of the goals of attending school and what it takes to succeed intellectually lead to cascading improvements in students' motivation to learn and their ability to solve complex problems. These findings have led to development of technology tools that can help make implicit classroom cultural norms explicit and can improve students' and teachers' understanding of their shared social learning environments; these tools will also be discussed.