

The Centre for Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Presents

The Authority of Ideas: Understanding Influence in Student-led Discussions



SPEAKER: Jennifer Langer-Osuna

DATE: Friday, February 17th, 2012

TIME: 1:30-2:30 p.m. (Light refreshments will be provided)

LOCATION: Room 200, 10th Floor, OISE/UT, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto

ABSTRACT

Student-led group work is an increasingly common activity in K-12 mathematics classrooms. Students are expected to debate ideas, justify conjectures, and come to consensus on reasonable approaches to solving problems. Yet several case studies have shown that some students end up having more influence than is explainable by the objective quality of their ideas. This talk will address the question, why do particular students' ideas get taken up in small groups? A framework for explaining student influence will be presented and illustrated with a vignette of two fifth graders working on a mathematics problem. The framework will be used to explain how the student positioned with authority and who garnered considerable influence was able to lead the dyad down a nonsensical solution path. For further inquiries and to RSVP, please email: smtcentre@utoronto.ca

BIOGRAPHY

Jennifer Langer-Osuna joined the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Miami after receiving her doctorate in Cognition and Development at the University of California, Berkeley. Her research focuses on the nature of student identity and engagement during collaborative activity, and the ways in which authority and influence are constructed in interaction. Recent work has focused on developing theoretical and analytic tools to capture how students become kinds of learners and how those identities shape student engagement in classroom tasks. Current work applies these tools to understand how English language learners negotiate mathematical ideas and positions of authority as they collaborate with English proficient peers.