



The LEAD Graduate School & Research Network at the University of Tübingen invites you to attend the lecture by

**Jamie Jirout**

Assistant Professor of Education, University of Virginia

## Promoting Curiosity in the Classroom to Support Learning

Wednesday, March 24th, 2021, 3–4 pm  
Zoomlink: <https://zoom.us/j/97296770152>

**Abstract:** Early learning environments can provide experiences that support the development of foundational knowledge and promote children's curiosity to learn. In this talk, I will describe a study that explored the relation between curiosity, assessed as enjoyment of learning (Enj), and general knowledge (GK) from preschool to kindergarten (N= 1359). Results of cross-lagged panel models show bidirectional relations between preschool Enj and GK, but with the association between prek Enj on later GK twice as large, and prek to K Enj showing more potential malleability. These findings suggest the potential benefit of school readiness interventions that focus on curiosity and school enjoyment to support broader academic development, and I will describe a framework for what curiosity-promoting instruction looks like and data for how often this type of instruction is observed in school. I will end with examples of how small modifications to common learning experiences from preschool through higher education can promote curiosity, and describe the next steps in our work testing the efficacy of curiosity-promoting instruction in educational settings.

**Biography:** Jamie Jirout is a developmental psychologist who studies children's curiosity and learning in science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM). Dr. Jirout earned her PhD in psychology through the *Program for Interdisciplinary Education Research (PIER)* at Carnegie Mellon University, where she was also affiliated with the Pittsburgh Science of Learning Center. She then completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Temple University through the Spatial Intelligence and Learning Center. Dr. Jirout is currently a Jacobs Research Fellow studying children's cognitive development at the University of Virginia School of Education and Human Development. She is especially interested in how curiosity supports learning and can be promoted in educational contexts, and in studying how play promotes the development of foundational skills to support later STEM education.

### Important Publications:

- Jirout, J., Ruzek, E., Vitiello, V., Whittaker, J. V., & Pianta, R. (Under review). School enjoyment and the relation to the development of general knowledge.
- Jirout, J. (2020). Supporting early scientific thinking through curiosity and question asking. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1717. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01717.
- Jirout, J., Vitiello, V., & Zumbunn, S. (2018). Curiosity in Schools. In G. Gordon (Ed.) *The New Science of Curiosity*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova.

**Contact:** Alisa Schmid, LEAD Graduate School & Research Network, [alisa.schmid@uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:alisa.schmid@uni-tuebingen.de)