



Science of Learning
Strategic Research Theme

Winter Institute 2016

Leading the Marriage of Education and Neuroscience- Challenges and Opportunities for 21st Century Educators

Speaker: Dr. Akaysha Tang, Program Director at the Office of International Science & Engineering, National Science Foundation (NSF) of the United States; Associate Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of New Mexico, USA

Date: 22 January 2016 (Friday)

Time: 11:00 am -12:30 pm

Venue: Room 101 Runme Shaw Building

Chair: Professor Brendan Weekes



Abstract: Today's educators and students face unparalleled opportunities and challenges afforded by the rapidly growing services and information through the world wide web and cell phones and increasing pressure and stress associated with information overload and a global presence at the fingertip at all times. Understanding the mind, the brain, and the capacity to learn has becoming a shared goal between some educators and neuroscientists, with the educator wishing to use such knowledge to improve teaching and to promote student learning and with the neuroscientists applying their findings to learning in a real world educational setting. This relationship is nevertheless asymmetric as the findings from neuroscience without the guidance of educationally relevant questions have some but a small chance to generalize across the diverse and rich setting of the classroom, school, family, country, and culture. In this seminar, I will discuss Willingham's three problems in the marriage of education and neuroscience, clarify what neuroscience is and is not, contrast different forms of neuroscientific inquiries alternative to functional mapping or localization. I wish to engage educators to consider an exercise of leadership—taking the lead in this marriage by identifying specific and concrete challenges in contemporary education (rote learning in an digital age, e.g.) and then challenge neuroscientists for new kind of experimental designs to take into consideration of the rich non-laboratory context, challenges engineers for new kind of instruments for making new kinds of observations beyond the eyes of the teacher and scores on the tests, mathematicians and computer scientists for new ways of transmitting, storing, analyzing, and using novel data types to generate real-time feedback.

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