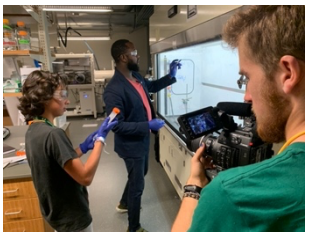

My STEM Story: Scaling STEM Motivation Through Digital Storytelling and Near Peer Relationships

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Project Overview: The My STEM Story project aims to enhance the identity-based motivation of diverse high school students through their engagement with and reflection on the authentic digital stories of diverse near-peer mentors paving their way in a post-secondary STEM pathway.

Student-to-student storytelling about struggle, purpose, passion, and inclusion in science pathways can enhance diverse students' vision and agency for their own future pathway and contributions in science.

Lessons Learned & Insights Gained

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic school closures, we designed the classroom intervention to be a fully online, student-directed experience, which 11 teachers and 698 students nationwide implemented successfully. Students found the online videos and reflection activities provided new perspectives on the inclusivity of science and opened new possibilities for their own pursuits and goals for pathways in science.

Equity

To engage more minoritized racial and ethnic students in science pathways, high school students should be invited to align the values of science to their own values, hear from near-peer students from similar backgrounds about their passion, struggles, and strategies in pursuing science, and envision and map out their own goals and contingency plans for their possible future pathways in science.

New Challenges & Next Steps

Reaching students during the COVID-19 pandemic required building a scalable student-directed platform, which has opened the door for greater reach and accessibility and expansion to post-secondary student research. Building a light-touch onboarding process for teachers and making the modules readily available to classrooms around the country with self-directed access will be the major design challenge for this coming year.