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Member Spotlight: Channing J. Mathews, Ph.D.

AUTHOR

Channing J. Mathews, Ph.D.

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Bio:

Dr. Channing J. Mathews is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology (Community Area) at the University of Virginia. Her interdisciplinary scholarship is situated at the intersection of developmental psychology, education, and African American studies. Her research program examines how youth of color leverage ethnic-racial identity and critical consciousness development to support academic engagement, STEM orientation, and activism during adolescence and emerging adulthood. Dr. Mathews' work conceptualizes ethnic-racial identity as the dynamic process through which individuals interpret the role of race and ethnicity in their lives, and critical consciousness as one's awareness of social inequalities alongside the motivations and actions to challenge them. These constructs are examined as dual promotive assets that can foster resilience, empowerment, and sustained participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) pathways among Black and Latine youth. Her scholarship has been

published in leading peer-reviewed journals, including the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *Frontiers in Education*, and *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, and has significantly influenced interdisciplinary dialogues on equity, identity, and educational engagement. Dr. Mathews has also been recognized with prestigious fellowships, such as the NAEd/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship, underscoring her contributions to advancing equitable STEM education research. Beyond her research, she is actively involved in community engagement initiatives and mentoring emerging scholars, furthering the translation of psychological insights into real-world educational practice and policy.

Q: Why did you decide to choose developmental science as a course of study or career?

A: *I chose developmental science because I am passionate about helping young people navigate transitions, particularly during adolescence and emerging adulthood. As a teacher in the Dominican Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo, I leveraged my psychology background to help students understand themselves and the driving forces (e.g. people, places, passions) that shaped who they are, and to equip them with tools to be self aware as they navigated the various changes they would encounter across their schooling. Pursuing a PhD in Psychology allowed me to contribute to the science of identity in context, allowing me to have a larger impact on practitioners and educators who directly engage with young people each day.*

Q: What advice would you give to a student beginning their Ph.D. studies in developmental science or related?

A: *Read both within, around, and adjacent to your field. Read and (re)discover the pioneers of the field, and the shifts and pivots that the field has taken to become what it is now. Understanding the history of where we are is how you identify your place to contribute and push the field further. Also remember to stay connected to the people you do this work for...you should know them beyond the numbers and quotes we use in order to communicate our findings.*

Q: Why did you join the Black Caucus and how does it facilitate connection among members all year long?

A: *I joined the Black Caucus because I wanted to learn from the pioneers of Black developmental psychology. I wanted to absorb the wisdom of my elders, while also making my contribution to continuing the legacy they built. The Black Caucus has been a critical connection point for me throughout my career and has kept me in the work when I wasn't sure if my contributions mattered. The Black Caucus has been a resource for critical mentorship and loving corrections, as well as a space for building lasting collaborations through its virtual and*

in-person events throughout the year. As I focus on preparing my tenue case in Fall 2027, I draw upon the many resources and individuals that the Black Caucus provides access to sustain the legacy of Black scholars and scholarship in the field of developmental science.

For more information about Channing J. Mathews, Ph.D.:

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