

ZEYNEP AMBARKUTUK, PH.D.

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Focused on motivation, engagement, and learning, examined through advanced quantitative methodologies.

EDUCATION

PhD in Curriculum & Instruction, Educational Psychology Major May 2026
School of Education, Virginia Tech

Thesis: A Structural Motivational Systems Perspective on Student Engagement

Advisor: Dr. Brett D. Jones

MAEd in Curriculum & Instruction, Educational Psychology Major December 2023
School of Education, Virginia Tech

Advisor: Dr. Brett D. Jones

BA in Psychology June 2017
Department of Psychology, Başkent University

Thesis: A Comparison of Working Memory Biases in Groups Displaying Varying Social Anxiety Disorder Levels

Advisor: Dr. Dilay Eldoğan

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Virginia Tech August 2022 - May 2026
Graduate Assistant, Instructor

- Conducted quantitative and mixed-methods research on student motivation, engagement, and learning using SEM, multilevel modeling, and longitudinal analysis
- Contributed to internally and externally funded research projects through data analysis, evaluation, and dissemination of evidence-based instructional practices
- Instructed and assisted in both undergraduate- and graduate-level courses

Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity (CEED) May 2024 - August 2024
Summer Intern

- Evaluated CEED Summer 2024 Camps: Quantitative survey data assessment and qualitative focus group analysis
- Mentored female and underrepresented minority students to enhance engineering diversity initiatives and outcomes

Tall Oaks Montessori School February 2020 - August 2021
Teacher

- Designed and implemented student-centered, developmentally appropriate learning activities
- Facilitated students' social, cognitive, and emotional development

Language & Cognitive Development Lab at Virginia Tech August 2018 - December 2019
Volunteer Researcher

- Assisted with data collection in school settings for studies on children's perceptions of intelligence and science
- Engaged with research literature and participated in weekly lab meetings to support ongoing projects in cognitive and developmental psychology

Yasam Cocuk Kindergarten

September 2017 - July 2018

Psychologist & Education Coordinator

- Coordinated educational programming and supported children's developmental needs
- Provided guidance and training for teachers and parents

METHODOLOGICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

Quantitative Methods	Structural Equation Modeling, Multilevel Modeling, Longitudinal Data Analysis, Survey Design and Validation, Meta-Analysis, Systematic Review
Software	R, SPSS, HLM
Technical	LaTeX, HTML, CSS, JavaScript

PUBLICATIONS

- [5] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (2025). Relationships among students' perceptions of motivational climate, course motivation, and effort in undergraduate STEM courses. *Journal for STEM Education Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41979-025-00175-y>
- [4] Jones, B. D., **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Schunk, D. H. (2025). Applications of the MUSIC Model of Motivation and its associated inventories: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, 10, Article 67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-025-00249-7>
- [3] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, McDaniel, J. M., Hampton, C., & Lester, K. (2025). Revisiting assessment tools used to measure the impact of summer program interventions on perceptions and interest in engineering among underrepresented pre-college students – A work in progress. In *Proceedings of the 2025 Collaborative Network for Engineering and Computing Diversity (CoNECD) Conference*, San Antonio, TX. <https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2-54111>
- [2] Jones, B. D., Zhu, X., Ellis, M., **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Fenerci, H. (2024). Connections between students' perceptions of the motivational climate in a course and their motivational beliefs and academic and career goals. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 50(4), 702-723. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2024.2446551>
- [1] Evren Subasi, A. T., & **Uzuner (Ambarkutuk), Z.** (2020). The relationship between healthcare satisfaction, depression, and hopelessness level of mothers of children with cerebral palsy. *The Journal of Academic Social Science*, 8(100), 34-42. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/ASOS.39880>

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW AND IN PREPARATION

- [4] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (in preparation). How perceived course difficulty affects motivational climate, motivation, and effort: A model comparison.
- [3] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (under review). Motivational climate trajectories in a computer science course: A longitudinal study of gender and race differences in motivational beliefs. *European Journal of Engineering Education*.
- [2] Jones, B. D., Kim, I., Fenerci, H., **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Ellis, M. (under review). Motivational climate as a complex dynamic system: Profiles, stability, and gender differences in a computer science course. *Motivation and Emotion*.
- [1] Jones, B. D., Bane, S., Walters, A., **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Fenerci, H. (under review). Motivational climate and student evaluations of teaching: A longitudinal case study using a complex dynamic systems perspective. *Current Psychology*.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- [12] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (2026, April). *Effects of Motivational Climate on Motivational Beliefs in Computer Science: A Longitudinal Analysis*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, CA.
- [11] Saylor B., Jones, B.D.,**Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Fenerci, H. (2026, April). *Relationships Between Motivational Climate and Course Ratings in an Educational Psychology Course Over Time*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, CA.
- [10] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (2025, April). *The impact of course perceptions on motivational beliefs in a computer science course over time*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.
- [9] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (2025, April). *Comparing motivational climate perceptions, motivation, and effort across online and in-person mathematics courses*. Research presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.
- [8] Jones, B. D., Kim, I., Fenerci, H., Ellis, M., & **Ambarkutuk, Z.** (2025, April). *Relationships Between Engineering Course Climate and Domain-Specific Beliefs: Differences Between Men and Women*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.
- [7] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (2025, February). *Relationships between motivation constructs and key student outcomes: A meta-analysis*. Research presented at the *Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy*, Blacksburg, VA.
- [6] Jones, B. D., **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Gallagher, J. (2025, February). *Surveying the motivational climate in courses to improve student engagement*. Presentation at the *Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy*, Blacksburg, VA.
- [5] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (2024, August). *Undergraduate students' perceptions of the motivational climate predict their motivation*. Research presented at the annual convention of the *American Psychological Association*, Seattle, WA.
- [4] **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, & Jones, B. D. (2024, March 27). *Relationships between students' perceptions of motivational climate and their motivation in an undergraduate course: A MUSIC model perspective*. Research presented at the *Graduate Research Symposium*, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- [3] Xie, P., Nichols, M., **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, Alsharif, A., & Ali, S. (2023, October 20). *Experiences, Barriers, and Challenges for Engaging International Students in STEM*. Presentation at *Universal Design for Learning Day*, Blacksburg, VA.
- [2] Xie, P., Nichols, M., **Ambarkutuk, Z.**, Alsharif, A., & Ali, S. (2023, October 17). *Experiences, barriers, and challenges for engaging international students in STEM*. Presentation at *Digicon 2023 Conference*, Online.
- [1] Jones, B. D., Zhu, X., Ellis, M., Fenerci, H., & **Ambarkutuk, Z.** (2023, August). *Relationships between course motivational climate and students' computer science beliefs and goals*. Research presented at the annual convention of the *American Psychological Association*, Washington DC.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Educational Psychology for PK-12 Teachers (EDEP 2374)

- *Topics: Cognition, learning, human development, motivation*
- Instructor of record: Fall 2023
- Teaching Assistant: Spring 2023

Educational Assessment (EDEP 3474)

- *Topics: Reliable and valid assessment design, educational evaluation*
- Instructor of record: Spring 2025, Fall 2025, Spring 2026
- Teaching Assistant: Fall 2024

Psychological Foundations for Teachers (EDEP 5154)

- *Topics: Cognition, learning, human development, motivation*
- Teaching Assistant: Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2025

FELLOWSHIPS & HONORS

2025 Summer Cunningham Fellowship

May 2025

*Fellowship – Virginia Tech Graduate School, USA**Awarded to support dissertation writing and thesis defense preparation***Academic Success Scholarship**

2013 - 2017

*Scholarship – Baskent University, Turkiye**Covered academic expenses, including tuition***Certificate of Honor**

2016 - 2017

*Honor student for four semester– Baskent University, Turkiye***CERTIFICATES & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Associate Teaching Program

April 2025

Certificate – Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL)

Virginia Tech, USA

Educational Research and Evaluation

December 2024

*Graduate Certificate – Virginia Tech, USA***Cognition and Education**

October 2024

*Graduate Certificate – Virginia Tech, USA***Instructional Design with Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

April 2024

*Certificate – Technology-Enhanced Learning and Online Strategies (TLOS), Virginia Tech***Selected Professional Trainings**

2020

- CITI Program Certification – Human Subjects Research (Social/Behavioral/Education; IRB Compliance)
- Loss and Mourning Processes – A Theoretical Training
- Play Therapy for Children with Disruptive & Mood Disorders
- Virginia Preservice Training for Child Care Staff
- Coping with Crises and Traumatic Events

SERVICES

World Education Research Association (WERA)

2025 - Present

*International Research Network for Motivating Students – Volunteer Contributor***Journal Reviewer**

- Cogent Psychology (2024); Review of Behavioral Economics (2025); Computer Science Education (2026)

Conference Reviewer

- American Psychological Association Annual Convention (2024, 2025, 2026); American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (2026); Graduate and Professional Student Senate Research Symposium (2026)

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

American Educational Research Association (AERA) <i>Graduate Student Member</i>	2022 - Present
American Psychological Association (APA) <i>Campus Ambassador & Graduate Student Member</i>	2022 - 2025

LANGUAGES

Turkish	Native
English	Professional proficiency