

Brain and Mind – from Concrete to Abstract

»READING AND THE BRAIN« OCTOBER 22ND 2024

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP BETWEEN MSH AND ST HILDA'S COLLEGE OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Prof. Jo Taylor

»Can Neuroscience help us to understand how we learn to read?«

In this talk Prof Taylor will discuss the challenges involved in learning to read and how cognitive theories of reading propose that we solve these challenges. In particular, she will explain that we can comprehend text either by associating the printed forms of words directly with their meanings, or by associating the printed forms of words with their pronunciations and then using our spoken language knowledge to link these pronunciations to meanings. She will then present two brain imaging experiments that attempt to answer the following questions: 1) Is it better to focus on word pronunciations or meanings when teaching reading? 2) Does the way in which we learn to read differ depending on the writing system we are learning (e.g., English vs. Chinese)? The talk will end by considering more generally how neuroscience can be a useful tool for understanding the mechanisms involved in a complex task like reading and what it might be able to tell us in future.

Jo Taylor is an Associate Professor in the Division of Psychology and Language Sciences at University College London, where she teaches developmental psychology on the Psychology and Language Sciences BSc. Her research examines the cognitive and neural mechanisms that underpin literacy acquisition across the lifespan.

Prof Maggie Snowling

»Language and Literacy: New concepts of dyslexia.«

The classic view of dyslexia is of a specific learning disorder characterized by a selective impairment of phonological processing which compromises reading development. Research evidence now challenges this view and highlights the impact of poor language on learning to read. With findings from a longitudinal study of children at high-risk of dyslexia as a backdrop, Prof Snowling will argue that oral language is the foundation for literacy and that there is more than one developmental pathway to poor reading.

TIMETABLE

18:00 Uhr

Introduction

18:10 Uhr

»Can neuroscience help us to understand how we learn to read?«

Prof Jo Taylor,
University College London

18:30 Uhr

»Language and Literacy:
New concepts of dyslexia.«

Prof Maggie Snowling,
University of Oxford

18:50 Uhr

Discussion and break

19:30 Uhr

»Essential Reading«

Prof Maximilian de Gaynesford,
University of Reading

19:45 Uhr

Discussion

20:00 Uhr

End of Workshop

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Comparing the developmental trajectories of children who develop 'pure dyslexia' with those who have dyslexia in the context of co-occurring impairments of oral language (DLD) suggests that risk factors accumulate to determine the severity of reading impairment observed. In closing she draws out the implications of this multidimensional view of children's reading difficulties for intervention, educational policy and practice. The classic view of dyslexia is of a specific learning disorder characterized by a selective impairment of phonological processing which compromises reading development. Research evidence now challenges this view and highlights the impact of poor language on learning to read. With findings from a longitudinal study of children at high-risk of dyslexia as a backdrop, Prof Snowling will argue that oral language is the foundation for literacy and that there is more than one developmental pathway to poor reading. Comparing the developmental trajectories of children who develop 'pure dyslexia' with those who have dyslexia in the context of co-occurring impairments of oral language (DLD) suggests that risk factors accumulate to determine the severity of reading impairment observed. In closing she draws out the implications of this multidimensional view of children's reading difficulties for intervention, educational policy and practice.

Maggie Snowling is Professor Emerita of Psychology, University of Oxford, and Research Fellow, St. John's College where she served as President of St. John's College, Oxford 2012-2022. Maggie Snowling is an expert on children's language and reading, and specific learning difficulties, and has co-led two Delphi studies seeking consensus among experts on the definitions of dyslexia and of developmental language disorder (DLD; CATALISE). She was appointed CBE for services to science and the understanding of dyslexia in 2016.

Prof Maximilian de Gaynesford

»Essential Reading«

Philosophy tends to prioritise what is spoken-heard over what is written-read. One reason to question this is proper but not exclusive to poetry: lineation. Here speaking-hearing is only ever a poor substitute for writing-reading, and sometimes no substitute at all. There are some interestingly different examples from poetry to look at.

*Born 1968, studied Modern History at Balliol (1986-9), Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at Lincoln College (1997-2002), Professor at the College of William and Mary (2002-06), Professor at the University of Reading (2006 -present). Publications mainly in the philosophy of language and mind, metaphysics and epistemology, including *The Rift in the Lute: Attuning Poetry and Philosophy* (OUP 2017) and *How To Be Radical In Philosophy* (Bloomsbury 2023).*

