

Social Understanding, Social Lives: Part I – Development of Social Understanding and Social Influences

Part I: 4 July 2011 (Mon)

Part II: 6 July 2011 (Wed)

Time: 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

Venue: B4-LP-13

Speaker:

Dr. Claire Hughes

Reader at Centre for Family Research and
Department of Social and Developmental
Psychology, University of Cambridge;
Editor of British Journal of Developmental
Psychology.



The Speaker:

Dr. Claire Hughes' first degree and PhD (entitled "Executive Dysfunction in Autism") were both from the Experimental Psychology Department at Cambridge University. She then spent two years in Paris as a post-doctoral Fellow of the Fyssen Foundation, working at the Hospital Robert Debré and at the Université de Paris. Her research during this time focused on executive problems in relatives of children with autism. Next, she worked for six years with Professor Judy Dunn at the Institute of Psychiatry in London. During this time her research interests moved from autism to the cognitive and social difficulties of 'hard to manage' preschoolers. She began working at Cambridge University 10 years ago; first as a Lecturer and then as a Senior Lecturer and Reader. Her research is based at the Centre for Family Research and her teaching is based in the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, which is part of the Faculty of Politics, Psychology, Sociology and International Studies.

Alongside various collaborative projects, Dr. Hughes' main research programme is a longitudinal study (funded by grants from the ESRC and the Health Foundation) of a socially diverse group of children, recruited at the age of 2. Her most recent grants from the ESRC are entitled: "Social and Cognitive Predictors of Success in the Transition to School." and "Peer interactions: Developmental change from age 2 to age 6 and familial predictors." Many of the findings from this longitudinal study are presented in a new book entitled "Social Understanding and Social Lives: from toddlerhood through to the transition to school that just came out in February 2011, as part of the Essays in Developmental Psychology Series published by Psychology Press.

Dr. Hughes is also an action editor for the British Journal of Developmental Psychology and an associate editor for several other journals, including Child Development and Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry.

Abstracts of Part 1:

In this talk the speaker will first briefly review milestones in children's social understanding, from infancy through to late childhood. Next, she will report findings from two studies that address the question of social influences on individual differences in children's social understanding from two different perspectives. The first of these is the longitudinal 'Toddlers Up' study (around which my book is based) – here she will use latent variable analyses to present findings on the stability of individual differences in social understanding from ages 3 to 6, as well on how variation in the content and quality of maternal talk at age 2 predicts variation in children's later social understanding. The second is a cross cultural study, which aims first of all to demonstrate measurement invariance for latent factors of false-belief performance in 5- to 6-year-old children from the UK, from Italy and from Japan (carefully matched for age, gender and verbal ability). Having shown that mean differences are unlikely to reflect methodological artefacts, the speaker will next demonstrate that children from Japan outperform their Western counterparts on a naturalistic delayed gratification task (an index of inhibitory control, which is widely reported to be a robust correlate of false-belief performance), but that children from the UK obtain, on average, false-belief scores that are significantly higher than those obtained by either Italian or Japanese peers. Two alternative interpretations for these cultural contrasts are discussed.

Deadline for Registration : 4 July 2011 (Mon) 11:00 a.m.

All are welcome.

Registration: Ms Eva Ng (Email: pikchi@ied.edu.hk Tel: 2948 8760)

Social Understanding, Social Lives: Part II – How Does Social Understanding Shape Children’s Social and School Lives?

Date: 6 July 2011 (Wed)

Time: 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

Venue: B4-LP-13

Speaker:

Dr. Claire Hughes

Reader at Centre for Family Research and Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, University of Cambridge; Editor of British Journal of Developmental Psychology.



The Speaker:

Dr. Claire Hughes' first degree and PhD (entitled "Executive Dysfunction in Autism") were both from the Experimental Psychology Department at Cambridge University. She then spent two years in Paris as a post-doctoral Fellow of the Fyssen Foundation, working at the Hospital Robert Debré and at the Université de Paris. Her research during this time focused on executive problems in relatives of children with autism. Next, she worked for six years with Professor Judy Dunn at the Institute of Psychiatry in London. During this time her research interests moved from autism to the cognitive and social difficulties of 'hard to manage' preschoolers. She began working at Cambridge University 10 years ago; first as a Lecturer and then as a Senior Lecturer and Reader. Her research is based at the Centre for Family Research and her teaching is based in the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, which is part of the Faculty of Politics, Psychology, Sociology and International Studies.

Alongside various collaborative projects, Dr. Hughes' main research programme is a longitudinal study (funded by grants from the ESRC and the Health Foundation) of a socially diverse group of children, recruited at the age of 2. Her most recent grants from the ESRC are entitled: "Social and Cognitive Predictors of Success in the Transition to School." and "Peer interactions: Developmental change from age 2 to age 6 and familial predictors." Many of the findings from this longitudinal study are presented in a new book entitled "Social Understanding and Social Lives: from toddlerhood through to the transition to school that just came out in February 2011, as part of the Essays in Developmental Psychology Series published by Psychology Press.

Dr. Hughes is also an action editor for the British Journal of Developmental Psychology and an associate editor for several other journals, including Child Development and Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry.

Abstracts of Part 2:

In this talk, the speaker will ask whether it matters that some children acquire an understanding of mind earlier than others? Again, findings from two different data sets are brought to bear on this question. In the first, children from the Toddlers Up longitudinal study who did particularly well on social understanding tasks at age 3 appeared, at age 6, to share greater intimacy with their friends, engaging in conversations that are particularly rich in mental state talk. At age 6, these 'early mentalisers' also reported greater autonomy in the classroom, and were able to provide more coherent and detailed accounts of their lives at school. These children are currently being followed up at age 10, and preliminary work (involving more than 600 8- to 14-year-old children) has demonstrated that even in late childhood, individual differences in social understanding are related to both self- and peer-rated social inclusion and social competence. In addition, the speaker will review findings from other studies that highlight the importance of children's social understanding for their academic competence. Together, these findings indicate that individual differences in social understanding are important over an extended developmental period: from preschool to secondary school.

Deadline for Registration : 4 July 2011 (Mon) 11:00 a.m.

All are welcome.

Registration: Ms Eva Ng (Email: pikchi@ied.edu.hk Tel: 2948 8760)