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Langage et pensée

Mardi 15 mai – 18h15 – Salle MR040 – Uni Mail

Prof. Susan Goldin-Meadow, Department of Psychology, University of Chicago **How our hands help us think**



Susan Goldin-Meadow is the Bearsdley Rumf Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Psychology and Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago. A year spent at the Piagetian Institute in Geneva while an undergraduate at Smith College piqued her interest in the relationship between language and thought, interests she continued to pursue in her doctoral work at the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D. 1975). At Penn and in collaboration with Lila Gleitman and Heidi Feldman, she began her studies exploring whether children who lack a (usable) model for language can nevertheless create a language with their hands. She has found that deaf

children whose profound hearing losses prevent them from learning the speech that surrounds them, and whose hearing parents have not exposed them to sign, invent gesture systems which are structured in language-like ways. This interest in how the manual modality can serve the needs of communication and thinking led to her current work on the gestures that accompany speech in hearing individuals. She has found that gesture can convey substantive information – information that is often not expressed in the speech it accompanies. Gesture can thus reveal secrets of the mind to those who pay attention.

Résumé de la conférence

When people talk, they gesture. We now know that these gestures are associated with learning. They can index moments of cognitive instability and reflect thoughts not yet found in speech. What I hope to do in this talk is raise the possibility that gesture might do more than just reflect learning—it might be involved in the learning process itself. I consider two non-mutually exclusive possibilities: the gestures that we see others produce might be able to change our thoughts; and the gestures that we ourselves produce might be able to change our thoughts. Finally, I explore the mechanisms responsible for gesture's effect on learning—how gesture works to change our minds.

