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J. Piaget



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18th Advanced Course

Cognitive Development, Mechanisms and Constraints

3 – 5 July 2008

Thursday morning, July 3, 2008

11h00

John Towse, University of Lancaster

Development of working memory skills; insights from macro-analysis and micro-analysis

Abstract:

Working memory is now a central construct in cognitive science and development. It is used on the one hand as a specific experimental model that comprises a particular cognitive architecture and which can be subjected to fine-grained or micro-level experimental analysis of its cognitive components and processes. Dual task methodologies are especially prominent here. On the other hand working memory capacity is deployed as a more general construct for exploring and understanding individual differences in cognition. Such macro-level approaches involve greater attention to psychometric issues, and the emphasis is often on establishing the factors that mediate the relationship between working memory and criterion cognitive skills. I will argue that we can gain the greatest benefit from viewing these two perspectives as complementary and potentially symbiotic. I will draw on empirical evidence from children and adults to exemplify this argument.