

Understanding the relationship between language acquisition and working memory development (and why it matters)

In this talk I will consider the empirical question of how language acquisition and working memory development are related. This question has a long history, and the answer(s) matter for education, language support, and theories of development. Drawing on my own research and that of many others, I discuss (1) the history of this research, (2) the ways in which conceptualisations of the relationship between language and working memory have been tested in different groups of children (including deaf children who use a sign language, and children with developmental language disorder), (3) what the current evidence suggests, (4) the implications for educational practice and language support, and (5) avenues for future research.