The Inaugural Annual
Learnus® Lecture
2015

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Wednesday
18th November
6.30pm

Harvey Goodwin Suite,
Church House,
Dean's Yard
London SW1P 3NZ

The lecture will be followed by a Q & A panel discussion.

Entrance by Invitation only.
To receive your free invitation contact:

Caroline Shott at
communications@learnus.co.uk

Places at the lecture are limited so an early response is advised.

GENETICS *and* EDUCATION

Michael Thomas

Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience at Birkbeck, University of London
Director of CEN (Centre for Educational Neuroscience)

This lecture explores the potential contribution of modern genetic methods and findings to education.

It is familiar to hear that the 'gene' for this or that behaviour has been discovered, or that certain skills are 'highly heritable'. Can this help educators? Can knowing what abilities are more or less heritable directly help improve teaching techniques or educational outcomes?

To explore this question, Professor Thomas will describe the contemporary methods used to relate genetic variation to individual differences in high-level behaviours such as academic skills and educational achievement. These methods include twin studies and genome-wide association studies. He will then address the key question of what genetic data imply about the ability of educators to optimise educational outcomes for children across the range of abilities.

As was recently asked in a *Guardian* podcast with Professor Robert Plomin, might true equality in education mean testing children's genetics at the age of four, so that any learning difficulties revealed can be accommodated right from the start of primary education? Or alternatively, does a focus on genetic differences distract our attention from differences that stem from inequalities in the environment, which are more readily addressed?

Dr Emma Meaburn

Lecturer, Department of Psychological Sciences,
Birkbeck College, University of London

Dr Emma Meaburn will discuss cutting-edge developments in measuring and relating DNA variation to educationally relevant abilities. She will also explore emerging research on the biological effects of the environment on DNA expression (so-called 'epigenetic' studies).