Workshop on:
Measuring Working Memory along
Development and across Language Groups

Working memory models vary structurally, but agree functionally in allocating an important role to attention-based and knowledge-based mechanisms in constraining working memory performance. However, it remains unclear whether these attention-based and knowledge-based mechanisms are entrenched within the cognitive system or whether they are malleable by experience (e.g., developmental level, language background, etc.). In order to answer these questions, the work in my lab examines the effects of bilingualism on working memory function in children and in adults. In this workshop, I will delineate the working memory models we take as the basis for our work, and the challenges these models present for examining the effects of bilingualism on working memory function. In the first set of experiments, I will present data that contrast the effects of bilingualism on working memory performance in childhood vs. adulthood, across different levels of task difficulty, and across the verbal vs. non-verbal domains. In the second set of experiments, I will present data that link working memory performance with performance on learning and literacy tasks in children vs. adults, and in monolingual vs. bilingual populations. Throughout the talk, I will emphasize how the tasks chosen to index working memory, with fluctuations across domains (linguistic vs. non-linguistic), the processes (item vs. sequence-based; short-term vs. working-memory) and the structures under study (nonwords vs. words, for example) can influence the performance patterns, and thus the conclusions reached with regards to the structure and the function of the working memory system.

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Tuesday, March 4, 2014, 09:00-12:30
At the Edmond J. Safra Brain Research Center for the Study of Learning Disabilities
Faculty of Education Building, Second Floor, Room 272