



Call for Papers: Seminar on Memory & Education

Organised by the 'Advanced Pedagogical Theory' and the 'Higher Education Research & Pedagogy' research subthemes at the Strathclyde Institute of Education in co-operation with the PESGB Strathclyde-Glasgow Branch

“Life is not what one lived, but what one remembers and how one remembers it in order to recount it.” – Gabriel García Márquez

Memory is a central but controversial topic not only in Education Studies and the Philosophy of Education but also in educational practice. In many educational systems, memorisation is both required and seen as undesirable; numerous philosophies of education relate it immediately to the much-derided ‘rote learning’ while failing to present a convincing conceptual account of memory. Many institutions and curricula explicitly focus on skills rather than the retention of knowledge, but skilled action and thinking are bound up with what a learner knows and can recall (Baer, 2022; Willingham, 2017), for example when they engage in hypothesis testing or evaluation of a creative idea (Halpern, 2014). Students and educators alike are easily misled by counterintuitive memory processes (Yan et al., 2016), and rarely is the relevance of memory and remembrance for the development of personal identity (Ricoeur, 2004) acknowledged in pedagogical practice.

Further, memory is not simply an individual cognitive process; it is also a social, cultural and political category. Educational sectors as much as the individuals within them are shaped by collective memories, traditions, and inherited practices (Halbwachs, 1992; Olick et al., 2011); recent discussions around the cultural practices of remembrance are proof of the relevance as much as of the difficulties connected to such traditions (Enslin, 2020). There are major challenges in the selection of and therefore prioritisation among different cultural artefacts and perspectives, as well as a need to tread the line between educational influence and indoctrination (Lewin, 2022).

This **one-day seminar** supported by PESGB invites researchers to explore memory’s role in educational theory and practice (both concepts broadly conceived). We welcome contributions from all theoretical traditions as well as reflections on pedagogical practice. Issues relevant to the day’s discussion include (but are not limited to):

- What is understood by ‘memory’, and what is its relation to pedagogical theory and practice?
- What do teachers and lecturers need to know about memory processes?
- Can a person’s memory be improved?

- What are the implications of educational technologies for memory?
- How does memory connect to wellbeing, emotion, and lifespan development?
- What educational challenges relate to cultural and collective memory?
- How do rituals, traditions, art and narratives interact with memory?
- Historically, how has education reflected popular assumptions about memory?
- What are ethical and research questions link (to) memory and education?

The seminar aims to foster a broad academic dialogue about the many ways memory shapes educational theory, research, and practice. To this end, we invite proposals for 30-minute presentations, each followed by 10 minutes of discussion.

Deadline for proposals:	Friday 14 th August, 2026
Decision/feedback:	Friday 21 st August, 2026
Seminar date:	Friday 18 th September, 2026
Venue:	Lord Hope Building, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.
To submit:	Abstracts of approx. 300 words to jonathan.firth@strath.ac.uk

Attendance is free of charge; attendees must register via Eventbrite (link to follow). Tea/coffee will be provided; participants must organise their own travel and accommodation if necessary.

References

- Baer, J. (2022). *There's no such thing as creativity: How Plato and 20th Century psychology have misled us*. Cambridge University Press.
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- García Márquez, G. (2003). *Living to tell the tale* (E. Grossman, trans.). Alfred A. Knopf.
- Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press.
- Halpern, D. F. (2014). *Critical thinking across the curriculum: A brief edition of thought & knowledge*. Routledge.
- Lewin, D. (2022). Indoctrination. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 56(4), 612–626.
- Olick, J. K., Vinitzky-Seroussi, V., & Levy, D. (Eds.). (2011). *The collective memory reader*. Oxford University Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, history, forgetting* (K. Blamey & D. Pellauer, Trans.). University of Chicago Press.
- Yan, V. X., Clark, C. M., & Bjork, R. A. (2016). Memory and metamemory considerations in the instruction of human beings revisited: Implications for optimizing online learning. In Hattie et al (Eds.), *From the laboratory to the classroom* (pp. 61–74). Routledge.