

- Espace Louis-Agassiz 1
- CH-2000 Neuchâtel

The Institute of psychology and education of the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, invites application for

PhD POSITION (100%) FOR 2 YEARS (ev. 3)
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENTATION IN 4-7 years old CHILDREN

The candidate is expected to begin his work as soon as possible, preferably in August 2010

The doctoral school "Argumentation Practices in Context" (Argupolis)

The position is opened at the Institute of psychology and education of the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland), within the framework of the doctoral School "Argumentation Practices in Context" (Argupolis), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. The doctoral school is organized by the University of Lugano (*Institute of linguistics and semiotics*), in collaboration with the University of Neuchâtel (*Institute of psychology and education*), the University of Lausanne (*Institute of psychology*) and the University of Amsterdam (*Department of Speech Communication, Argumentation Theory and Rhetoric*). In this framework, the PhD student will become part in an important international research community.

The research project

The selected PhD student will conduct a research project to explore how argumentation can emerge as a context-bounded activity in 4-7 years old children. The objectives of the projects are: to understand under which psychological and institutional conditions children invest themselves in argumentative moves; to analyse the quality of the arguments and strategies of the discussants; to design experimental and educational settings that sustain the learning of argumentation; and to contribute, through minute psycho-social descriptions, to a better understanding of what argumentation in context is. A particular attention will be paid to the contribution that such studies, inspired by socio-cultural research, can make to the post-Piagetian tradition.

The student's project will concentrate either on quasi-experimental research on argumentative activities organized in laboratory situations (i.e., in controlled settings organized by the researcher out of the classroom) or on classroom situations designed in collaboration with the teacher. Careful attention will be paid to the implicit rules that structure the classroom context, to the teacher's representations of his/her role, and to the integration of newly designed argumentative activities into the natural functioning of the classroom.

Requisites

- A master degree, a four-year degree or equivalent, preferably in psychology and/or educational studies; eventually in linguistics, argumentation theory or speech therapy.
- Fluency in oral and written English and French.

Ideal profile

The ideal candidate for the position has a background in psychology and education and is interested in the study of argumentation and dialogical interactions among adults and children. Candidates should have a strong interest in the doctoral school program, and a willingness to engage in an interdisciplinary research network.

Working tasks

- To participate in all the phases of the research projects. The doctoral student will be in charge of co-designing the interventions, collecting, coding and analyzing the data.
- To develop a PhD thesis in relation to the contents of the research project
- To actively participate in the study program and in the other activities offered within the frame of the doctoral school "Argumentation Practices in Context" (Argupolis).
- To collaborate with the other members of the research team in the organization of scientific activities within the academic and teacher training institutions.
- To contribute to the psycho-social understanding or argumentation.
- To work with professionals (researchers, teachers, teacher trainers) in the design of proper settings to foster learning via argumentation.

Financial support

The project is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Its financial and social conditions are applied. (see http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_doktorierende_f.pdf).

Applications

Applications must include a cover letter, a complete CV, and a list of publications (if available). A letter written by the master thesis supervisor is also welcome.

Please submit your application by June 30th 2010 (electronic or paper format) to the following address:

Prof. Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont

email: anne-nelly.perret-clermont@unine.ch

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Additional information can be found at www.unine.ch/ipe and informal requests can be addressed to anne-nelly.perret-clermont@unine.ch