



**McGill**

**James McGill Distinguished Speaker Series  
in Educational and Counselling Psychology**

**Monday, October 6, 2014**



**Dr. Kim Cornish, Ph.D.**

*Monash University*

## **Building Cognitive Architecture in Children with Developmental Disabilities**

*Cornish, K.M., & Kirk, H.E.*

Attention difficulties pose a number of concerns for cognitive and behavioural development, as well as significantly impacting on learning. Attention is more strongly associated with school readiness than IQ, serves as a predictor of literacy and numeracy skills and plays an important role in maintaining mental health across the lifespan. The high prevalence of attention difficulties in individuals with developmental disabilities, who are already vulnerable to learning impairments, highlights the need for interventions that target these core attentional deficits. Professor Cornish's team at Monash University (Australia) have developed the first attention training program (TALI: Training Attention and Learning Initiative) for children with developmental disabilities. This program is unique in being personalized to each child, comprises a game format, and uses the most current touch screen technology to deliver the intervention on portable android tablets. The training program has tested on a sample of 90 typically developing preschool children (3 to 5 years; mean age: 4 years 3 months). The results indicate TALI is valid in targeting core attentional processes and that it is also sensitive enough to trace age related changes in the development of attention. Preliminary findings from atypical groups after a double blind randomised control trial of 80 children with developmental disabilities will be discussed.

**3700 McTavish Street**

**Jack Cram Auditorium (EDUC 129)**

**12:00 p.m.**

Wine and Cheese will follow