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Session: Learning as Adaptation

Psychology and traditional evolutionary biology use quite different terms to describe how individuals change in response to circumstances. The language of 'learning' implies cognitive and cerebral capacities that are not implied by the term 'adaptation'. However, given that it is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate 'learning behaviour' from other behaviour, is this a false distinction? Perhaps the terms have only contextual value (older beings adapt, younger beings learn) or maybe there are special, identifiable features of human development that cannot be said to apply to other beings, sentient or otherwise. Whatever the case, can both 'learning' and 'adaptation' comfortably be couched within a model of semiosis? If so, what kind of account? This symposium will bring together bio- and edu-semioticians to throw light on these issues.

Learning, adaptation, signification, edusemiotics, biosemiotics