



An event sponsored by the **Socio-cultural and Cultural Historical Activity Theory Special Interest Group (SIG)** of the British Educational Research Association

**Integrating 'impact' in research design:
A workshop on developing your project's 'research path'**

This workshop is led by Seth Chaiklin, Reader, University of Bath

Friday 15 March, 2013, 10:30 to 4:30
University of Leeds

The aim of this event is to provide educational researchers with the space to explore ways to design research projects which have the potential to 'impact' upon educational practice. However, rather than debate the meaning of 'impact' and discuss the ways we measure it, we will turn our focus on the more fundamental question: what is the relationship between research and practice? To clarify this relationship, and to consider the problems we face in positively developing this relationship, Seth Chaiklin will present his activity theoretical interpretation of educational research and educational practice as historically-developed *practices*. His presentation will lay the groundwork for a workshop in which participants will be given the opportunity to work with each other on specific research design dilemmas.

For the workshop, we are asking participants to send us proposals for research topical areas or research problems which could become the objects of discussion (see registration form for details). The SIG conveners will identify topics from these proposals with the goal of representing the interest areas of the workshop participants.

The workshop is based on Chaiklin's chapter in a book, 'Reframing Educational Research: Resisting the "What Works" Agenda' due to be published in June 2013 by Routledge. The book problematises current demands for evidence-based practice and research on "what works" in education, where individual chapters examine the issues from theoretical and practice-based perspectives. The demand for research on "what works" in education is driven by a desire to ensure greater use of research in educational policy and practice (and in doing useful research). Chaiklin's chapter speaks most directly to this point by proposing a 'research path' that is intended to support a more productive research-practice relationship that aims to solve tensions and barriers that often arise in attempts to make research useful (e.g. have an impact).

The workshop, drawing on the 'research path' model and Chaiklin's activity theoretical interpretation of research and educational practice relationship, is intended to orient us as researchers to thinking about 'impact' from the start of a research project, but in a way that accounts for the diversity of researcher activity, method and epistemologies. The 'research path' challenges us to work backward from practice to research design. The session will conclude with a plenary discussion of the uses, limitations and lingering questions about the research path model and other approaches to improving the research-practice relationship through research.

This is a free event but spaces are limited. Since this is a BERA SIG funded event, priority will be given to BERA members (you are invited to join BERA at www.bera.ac.uk). Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Unfortunately, we cannot support travel costs for participants. For a registration form, please contact v.l.farnsworth@leeds.ac.uk or login to the SIG's wiki at <http://www.bera.ac.uk/signs/socio-cultural-and-cultural-historical-activity-theory/wiki/socio-cultural-and-cultural-historical-activity-theory-wiki>. Please complete and submit the form by **1 March 2013** so we can confirm participants.