

**Institute for Education Policy Research,
Staffordshire University**

**Seminar on Threshold Concepts and Variation
Theory**

May 10th 2007



Room B141, Brindley Building, Stoke Campus (<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/maps/>)

The purpose of this symposium is to facilitate creative discussion of the relationship between recent and emerging ideas in the field of conceptual change that potentially have considerable power to guide teaching and learning towards more substantial outcomes. A particular purpose is to facilitate dialogue between colleagues who have played leading roles in the development of variation theory and threshold concepts.

It is proposed that some key questions and/or themes will be used as reference points during the day. The intention is to use the day to explore productive ways forward in relation to these questions and themes.

Since variation theory and threshold concepts emphasise ways in which the structure of conceptions is particular to fields of study we will make particular reference to one field of study, economics, to provide a shared focus for the day.

Programme

- 9.00** *Coffee*
- 9.30** Introductions and summary of key questions and themes
- 10.00** Erik Meyer and Ray Land “Threshold Concepts, variation and assessment”
- 10.45** Ference Marton
- 11.30** *Coffee*
- 11.45** Ming Fai Pang “The use of variation theory to develop domain-specific generic capability”
- 12.30** Review of key questions and themes
- 1.00** *Lunch*
- 2.00** Cecilia Lundholm “Conceptual change and students’ values: the example of ‘price’ in economics”
- 2.30** David Hay and Ian Kinchin “Making learning visible: the role of concept mapping in higher education”
- 3.00** Peter Davies “Conceptual change and the development of disciplines: an interpretation of threshold concepts”
- 3.30** Summary review of themes, questions and future directions
- 4.15** *Tea and Close*