**Taking Engagement Seriously: How infants feel minds.**

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If we take engagement seriously it puts us all on the line - as teachers, as psychologists, and as ordinary people.  It is a difficult thing to accept and live with, whether in the classroom, in research, or in common understanding of others.  In this talk, I explore the study of how infants come to understand others, and the assumptions that theoretical psychology has struggled and continues to struggle with.  Communicative phenomena are evident in everyday engagements in the first year of life, which show why these assumptions are problematic for us, and for psychological theory.  Understanding these origins of communication and their nature has significant implications for teaching, in the early years and across childhood.

**Vasu Reddy** has been interested in the origins and development of social cognition, mainly in young infants for three decades now, and has been exploring the role of emotional engagement in social understanding. She focuses on every day, ordinary engagements (such as teasing and joking and showing-off or feeling shy) which often tend to get ignored in mainstream theories. Her interest in engagement as the route to understanding has led her to questions about the nature and influence of culture on social understanding. Her book *How Infants Know Minds* published by Harvard University Press argues for a second-person approach to knowing minds, a dialogical and emotion-based route to an old problem. She is Director of the [Centre for Situated Action and Communication](http://www.port.ac.uk/department-of-psychology/research/situated-action-and-communication/) and a Professor of Developmental and Cultural Psychology at the University of Portsmouth in the UK.