

# **Keith Sawyer, M.A, Ph.D.**

**Morgan Distinguished Professor in Educational Innovations at UNC-Chapel Hill**

Chapel Hill, NC, US

Morgan Distinguished Professor in Educational Innovations, with focus on creativity, innovation, and learning.

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## **Description**

Keith Sawyer studies creativity, innovation, and learning, with a focus on collaborating groups and teams. He uses qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the conversational dynamics of groups in real-world contexts - whether business meetings, classrooms, or informal learning environments. His research helps us answer questions such as: Which teams are more creative? What team processes result in greater creativity? Which groups are more likely to contribute to more effective learning of the participants? Which organizations and classrooms are most likely to foster effective group interactions?

Sawyer's current approach is inspired by his early empirical studies of the interactional processes in jazz ensembles, improvisational theater groups, and children at play. He connects these phenomena to learning within a theoretical framework, in the tradition of sociocultural psychology and distributed cognition, that he calls "collaborative emergence." He has studied collaborative learning groups in classrooms (including chemistry, computer science, and psychology) and other settings, and collaborative creativity in teacher teams and in business organizations.

In his current research, he is studying how teaching and learning are organized in professional schools of art and design, with the goal of identifying a core set of features that can be used to design more effective learning environments. He conducted ethnographic studies of the Savannah College of Art & Design, and of the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Art at Washington University in St. Louis.

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## **Industry Expertise**

Education/Learning, Design, Research, Health and Wellness, Professional Training and Coaching, Writing and Editing

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## **Topics**

Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy, Ethnography and Participant Action Research, Creativity and Innovation, Learning Sciences, Entrepreneurship, Dynamics of Collaborating Groups and Teams

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## **Affiliations**

American Educational Research Association , Academy of Management , American Sociological Association , European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction , International Society of the Learning Sciences

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## **Education**

**University of Chicago**

Ph.D. Psychology

**University of Chicago**  
M.A. Psychology

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**  
S.B. Computer Science

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## **Accomplishments**

**Honorary Visiting Professor, University of Exeter, UK**  
2010 - 2012; 2012 - 2015

**Washington University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Special Recognition for Excellence in Mentoring**  
2004 - 2005

**Recognition for Excellence in Mentoring**  
Washington University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Special Recognition for Excellence in Mentoring, 2004-2005

**Washington University Department of Education "Chair's Choice Award for Department Service,"**  
2004

**National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship**  
2000

**AERA Division E Outstanding Dissertation Award (Human Development)**  
1996

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