

Visual Thinking and Neurodiversity

Presentation abstract

Anna Györfi, 2009-10-16

The process of learning relies on multisensory stimuli and can happen in diverse environments. Indeed, everyday life offers many more channels and settings for learning than what our schools take up in their everyday educational practice. The required abilities and criteria for school success in mainstream education are one-sided, based on the cognitive skills and learning preferences of the majority of children within what may be considered as a factory process. It is very much language and text-centered, leaving little room for the demonstration and improvement of other talents such as visual-spatial, musical or bodily-kinesthetic skills. Those who are facing difficulties in acquiring fluent reading and writing (i.e. dyslexic individuals), become 'disabled' in education, whereas outside school they often prove to be highly intelligent, creative and successful. The difference in the working of the dyslexic mind – more visual, global and divergent thinking – in some instances may be an advantage, since it can offer an alternative approach to problem solving. If we investigate the learning preferences of dyslexic individuals, we will not only learn how to support them to better achieve academically, but also might find ways to enrich the skills of the 'normal', non-dyslexic students.

The presentation will look at the background of visually enhanced teaching with particular reference to the dyslexic learner and present some practical implementations of the theory into practice.