

Dyslexia—The Invisible Gift

Kathy Sherman

Why is it that more inventors, creative people, and successful entrepreneurs are dyslexic? Most of the time, dyslexia is thought of as a deficit, but more and more research supports the fact that dyslexic individuals commonly have significant talent with visual spatial tasks. The relationship between dyslexia and visual-spatial abilities comes as no surprise. Anyone connected to dyslexia has likely either observed or lived with this awareness, so there is something very satisfying about the scientific community taking the time to research and verify that relationship does exist.

Visual-spatial learners do best with teaching methods that allow for creative approaches or solutions and also for *interaction* with the material in some form. This might be role-play, debate, creative projects that allow for divergent thinking, Socratic seminars, and the use poetry. They tend to do less well in a formal 'lecture then test' environment which presents information in a more linear sequential manner. Linda Silverman, of Denver, Colorado is an expert in the field of visual-spatial learning and one of the first people to provide understanding into this learning style. Her website is very helpful in identifying and understanding the visual spatial learner <http://www.visualspatial.org/>. Linda's book *Upside Down Brilliance* is also a great resource. For strategies to help the visual-spatial learner adapt better in a traditional classroom go to www.studygs.net/visual.htm.

Speaking of visual spatial thinkers . . . meet Ryan Elliott 5th grade Hillside student and inventor of the Automatic Egg Cooking Machine. Simply drop the egg in on one end, wait 5 minutes and your egg is ready to eat! Ryan thought of the idea and built the machine for a science fair project.

