

VISION AS A LEARNING BLOCK



N.L.E
NON LINEAR EDUCATION

Module 4

"If a man never contradicts himself, the reason must be that he virtually never says anything at all." - Erwin Schrodinger

The 6 learning blocks to equal education are:

- **Vision Problems (often unidentified)**
- "Reading Comprehension" Issues
- "Executive Function" delays
- Assuming "Intellectual / learning Disability"
- A label such as Down Syndrome, Autism, CP, learning disability, etc.
- Differences in Teaching philosophies

In this worksheet, you will be given a brief summary of Vision to accompany the video lessons, followed by HomeWork exercises.

Vision and Visual Comprehension

If your child is near- or far- sighted, we are talking about visual acuity **which is NOT what this section is about.**

1. Acuity

Or PRECISION or ACCURACY of vision. A simple lens adjustment is often enough to fix this. I wear glasses, maybe you do. When you go to your local optometrist, 99% of the time, this is the ONLY test that is done.



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2. Visual Convergence

This is the ability of the eyes to work together.

Often prism lenses are prescribed, but they are far from enough in children that have significant ocular motor issues.

Issues with Visual Convergence are a huge reason for a “false” diagnosis of ADHD and learning disability. This is often only measured by a behavioral optometrist or a vision therapist.

This is not as easily corrected as acuity, but it takes time and practice, and definitely can be corrected, to often amazing results. I often tell parents with kids with a diagnosis of ADHD or Learning Disability : to go see a Vision Therapist NOW, just to make sure their eyes aren't getting in the way of learning.

3. Ocular Motor Issues

Ocular Motor is the muscle tone / the motor ability of the muscles of the eyes. It includes convergence - which we talked about in the earlier bullet, but is much more. Children (and adults) with systemic fine motor challenges will often have challenges with ocular motor - because the movement of the eyes is a fine motor activity.

Here, I would suggest an excellent podcast with Dana Johnson (episode 24) who really takes this in detail for us.

When a child struggles with ocular motor, they may struggle to look at you, they may struggle to read a book, because tracking across a page is difficult - NOT because they don't know how to read, NOT because they can't understand what is written in a book.

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Teaching a child with ocular motor issues in a traditional classroom on a blackboard may be hard, because they can't "see" what is on the blackboard correctly.

Working with ocular motor issues - is a long journey. While a lot of improvement can be made, to wait for this improvement to be made before starting the teaching journey is a waste of time!

It is in such children that understanding the learning pathway, and changing the teaching medium to auditory + kinesthetic + with some visual input that is close to them, but not relying on visual input is key.

Audiobooks are great! This is where you might need to get really creative with the teaching medium.

4. Sensory Visual Issues

Soma Mukhopadhyay, the visionary founder of RPM, a teaching methodology, talks about three types of vision in her books - Global, Selective and Generalized.

A child with global vision is essentially taking on the entire world around him with every glance, and is not able to select and isolate what he wants to see. A child with selective vision, on the other hand, is fixating on specific objects, and is unable to move their vision to the object of interest.

Rapid Prompting Method is an excellent teaching method for kids that have Global or Selective Vision. Again, this is a process of changing how we teach.

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5. Visual Processing and Visualization

At this point, it becomes less of an eye-issue, and more of how your child's brain processes visual information. I am hearing more and more often that some children cannot visualize ideas - that is - what they read does not become a mental image, like it does in neurotypical folks.

My answer to this is twofold -

1) we simply do not know if this is the case - our understanding of our kids's visual processing is based on their communication, and their communication is imperfect. So we are making assumptions.

2) Even if visual processing and visualization are real issues, they are unique in every kid, and while a vision therapist + occupational therapist can really help you work on them, as can movement therapy based techniques like Anat Baniel Method, now known as Neuromovement,

From a learning perspective, I would recommend fine tuning your teaching strategy to be more auditory, kinesthetic, and somewhat visual - but in close quarters, with tracking support.



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HW:

1. I want you to brainstorm what you have observed about your child's eye contact, about their vision, their ability to read, whether they show low focus, etc.

2. How is their body language when they enter a room - are their eyes roving all over the place?

3. Which of the above visual blocks do you perceive in your child?

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4. Can you think of a few creative techniques that you can use to teach anyway? These could be glasses, audiobooks, visual training, auditory or kinesthetic teaching styles, RPM or S2C for unreliable speakers, or more...



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