

Ian SMYTHE

Does Dyslexia Confer Visual Advantages in Society?

Many have argued that dyslexic individuals are creative and artistic, particularly in the visual arts. There are even some screening tools that use “visual intelligence” as a criteria to help identify the dyslexic individual. But does science confirm this viewpoint? If yes, what is that evidence, what is the cause, and what is its significance. And if not, why is the myth perpetuated, who fuels it and what misguided evidence are they using? This talk will use international evidence to evaluate the science and the assumptions made, as well as discuss the implications.

Ian SMYTHE is a Visiting Professor in International Education, School of Education at the University of Wales Newport as well as an independent consultant. His PhD was entitled “Cognitive factors underlying reading and spelling difficulties: a cross linguistic study”, looking at English, Hungarian, Portuguese, Welsh and Chinese. He has worked with foreign governments and non-governmental organisations – conducting workshops, lectures and seminars around the world, as well as being involved in more than ten literacy related EU projects. His work includes consultation and resource development for those with literacy difficulties in places as diverse as Angola, Brazil and China. He is author of many papers on reading difficulties, in particular with respect to technology and to multilingualism, and he has books published in Bosnian, Brazilian Portuguese, Bulgarian, Polish and Czech, as well as English. His most recent is *Dyslexia in the Digital Age*. Ian speaks English and Portuguese. E-mail: ianssmythe@gmail.com.

