

**”TO SEE OR NOT TO SEE.
THAT IS THE QUESTION”**

Introduction

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This Project consists of two main parts: one of them is based on the methodology I am going to use to teach pupils how to draw. The other is focused on an English illustrator and writer, Quentin Blake.

The methodology used comes from the book "Drawing on the right side of the brain" by Betty Edwards, artist, trainer and teacher whose successful theory has been implemented with great results. Edwards affirms that the ability to draw depends on the ability to see the way an artist sees. It sounds quite simple but is it really that simple? Indeed it is, according to her. So, let's have a look at what she says:

1. Drawing is a skill that can be learnable and teachable: anybody with readable handwriting can learn to draw well.
2. Learning how to see, or in other words, how to process visual information in the way artists do, means using your brain in a different way from the ordinary, that is to say, using your right side of the brain instead of the left one.
3. The exercises she proposes are designed to help pupils make the mental shift from left to right so as to release the creative potential they already have but that may have been trapped by our verbal, technological culture and education system.
4. Realistic drawing is a stage that children pass through by the age of ten and they deserve to be helped how to learn to see.

To completely understand this theory, it might be convenient at this point to summarize how our brain works or what scientific research has found out so far, although the brain is still a vast mystery. The human brain resembles the halves of a walnut. These are called "left hemisphere" and "right hemisphere" and they are both connected by a cable called "corpus callosum". Those two hemispheres develop asymmetrically in terms of function. The left one analyses, abstracts, counts, verbalizes, uses logical procedures..... The right one understands metaphors, dreams, is intuitive subjective, non-rational, timeless...Because speech and language are so important and are related to the left side, this has traditionally been considered the leading hemisphere whereas the right one has tended to be considered subordinate and too often ignored.

However, it is believed nowadays that both hemispheres are involved in higher cognition which, though different, involves thinking, reasoning and complex mental functioning. And it is precisely the right brain which is the one that perceives in a mode suitable for drawing.

Reaching this point, the mental shift mentioned above from L-mode to R-mode is necessary and the sort of exercises in Edwards' book are designed to present a task

that the left hemisphere just can't or won't do.

To practise some of these exercises I am going to use Quentin Blake's pictures/picture-like activities. I have chosen this artist because his work is appealing to the children and because it is a way to develop their cultural awareness. I will basically use one book called "Mister Magnolia" which is written as well as illustrated by him and some of his book covers.

In addition to that, I am going to take into account the VAKOG core concept from NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) approach.

The representational system in NLP says that we experience the world through our five senses. The senses are at the same time very much related to the awakening of R-mode. And of course, the more senses involved, the better pupils take in information, although the first three are the ones more linked to teaching. So we would have:

- Visual: we look and see
- Auditory: we hear and listen
- Kinaesthetic: we feel externally (tactile), we feel internally (visceral or emotion), we feel movement (Psychomotor)
- Olfactory: we smell things
- Gustatory: we taste

To round up, I am going to use Brain Gym™ exercises which increase hemispheric integration by crossing our visual midline without interruption, thus activating both right and left visual fields and both right and left sides of the brain. I will also use classical music, especially Mozart's which according to research, increases creativity. I would also like to point out that this project includes activities which develop language at word, sentence and text level.