

Abstract No. 4.7

Wednesday 6th September 2017 at 12:00-12:45

Title: Enhancing learning for a child with deafblindness by putting on the ‘cognitive glasses’: Assessment of learning through working memory

Presenter: Anne Schoone, Royal Dutch Kentalis, The Netherlands

Co-presenters: Monique Verberg

Main focus: Both research and practice/Congenital deafblindness

Abstract: In our daily practice as professionals of the Kentalis Diagnostic team in the Netherlands, we are often asked to assess the cognitive functions of people with congenital deafblindness. Questions regarding the person’s ‘learning potentials’ or ‘learning strategies’ often arise as part of the assessment.

Without reliable access to clear visual and auditory information, people with congenital deafblindness use their bodily-tactile sense to experience the world, gather information and guide learning. This means that we need to understand the features of the cognitive information processes in the bodily-tactile modality and the cognitive assessment should seek to identify the cognitive or learning or potentials rather than the deficits that the individual possesses.

Recently, we’ve been involved in developing and implementing an assessment scale for assessing working memory in the tactile modality. The scale is called the Tactile Working Memory Scale; TWMS (Nicholas, Johannessen & van Nunen, 2017). The TWMS has been developed for professionals to facilitate identification and promote effective interventions of bodily-tactile working memory in persons with deafblindness. The transactional model and the dynamic assessment model consist of the framework of the TWMS and these principles guide the assessment procedure when using the TWMS. In other words, providing scaffolding and active intervening are essential parts of the assessment process.

In this workshop we will share our experiences on how by using the TWMS and putting on the ‘cognitive glasses’ gave us some very useful new insights to support cognitive processes and enhance learning in a young boy with congenital deafblindness. We’ll be using video sequences to illustrate how we applied parts of the TWMS, how we looked at the interaction process through the “cognitive glasses” and how this cognitive approach has offered opportunities to meet the child’s learning potentials. During this presentation we would like to invite the participants to put on their ‘cognitive glasses’ too. Additionally, we would like to discuss the possibilities and benefits of using a bodily-tactile cognitive assessment scale (TWMS) in understanding and fostering working memory in our daily practical work with people with congenital deafblindness.

Nicholas, J., Johannessen, A. & van Nunen, T. (2017). Assessing Working Memory in the Tactile Modality: The Tactile Working Memory Scale. Manuscript in progress.