

# Hyper-Visual in a Verbal World – Autism and Communication Disorders

By Cheri L. Florance, Ph.D.

[www.ebrainlabs.com](http://www.ebrainlabs.com)

A child or adult with Autism or a Communication disorder will have difficulties fitting into our extremely verbal world. These difficulties can create isolation from others and threatening walls of silence. However, there is a specific sub group of people diagnosed with these disorders who have a hyper-visual system. In these cases, when the visual system is harnessed, teaching communication becomes much easier.

## I Rode the Train; I Want to be an Engineer

Hyper-visual people are experiencing visually when speaking. Their communications may appear to be almost nonsensical rambling but in fact they are following a very logical pattern. The difference is the pattern followed is visual rather than verbal. The exchange below illustrates this point.

I asked Mark, a college student, "How did you get here today?" He replied, I took the train in from Long Island. My family went to the beach (Mark was seeing himself on the train but did not say this). Maybe I will be a engineer. The reason I like engineering is that there are serious problems. (Mark was thinking about being a transportation engineering and designing train tracks and freeway intersections) I have always been good in math. When teachers are difficult to understand. (Mark is seeing himself at school doing well except when the teacher is confusing and then associating to a video he watched about Einstein) Like Dr. Einstein- There was an exhibit on Einstein at the history museum did you see it?

Mark was attempting to answer my question but his picture mind took him on quite a ride as one picture blended into the next from the train- to a vacation to an engineering career to Einstein, at the museum. The expected answer was "**TRAIN**". This very verbal illustration demonstrates how the visual pathway can create leap-frog thinking- which to verbal people can seem like impulsivity.

Instead of negotiating the world with verbal reasoning, a visual person often negotiates with patterns. As a result the "sameness of routines"

becomes the template to make sense of the chaos of everyday life. We refer to these visual learners as "Mavericks." We often ask Mavericks to adjust to changes in schedule or adjustments in plans based on how we typically explain things - by talking. These words can create more confusion and frustration as they may not be processed at the speed expected. This lag in processing time can create resistance, immature behavior, odd play, tantrums or reluctance to participate. As a result the normal teaching methods that are based on processing incoming language can fail.

## Sequencing & Associating

Visual people often use the brain's **Associator** to form memories. They learn of a new idea and they relate that idea to their own knowledge base. The opposite of the Associator is the **Sequencer** from the verbal pathway.

The Sequencer is rigid and ordering, one sound following another to make a word, words produced in specific order to form grammatically correct sentences and ideas linked in order to make paragraphs.

The Associator is time-independent and the Sequencer is very time based. Understanding consequences depends on a time based understanding of cause and effect.

My son, Whitney, at age 4, wanted to jump off of the roof to fly like Superman, without understanding, from verbal reasoning, the danger involved. Whitney would sit mesmerized watching Disney's Snow White as if he were deaf. In fact, at times, I could scream in his ear and he could not hear me even though all of the parts of his ear to brain physiology were judged to be normal. At these times his visual brain powered by his associator were shutting down his verbal sensory system.

If the pictures drive the thought, children can appear to be oblivious to cause and affect. They may disregard threatened consequences. Often Mavericks feel that they must complete the pattern to finish the thought they have developed through the associator before they can transition to the next idea. If the thought is disrupted the Maverick may hit a wall and resort to talking with lines from a movie or echoing what was said or get stuck like a broken record and repeat the same thing over and over again.

With the appropriate training, Mavericks can learn effective verbal communication. The teaching methods must first then harness the visual system first before moving forward to teaching communication.

Dr. Cheri Florance is a brain scientist with training and clinical experience in how to teach the brain to replace symptoms of communication and language disorders. In her books, Maverick Mind, ([www.penguinputnam.com](http://www.penguinputnam.com) ) and A Boy Beyond Reach ([www.simonschuster.com](http://www.simonschuster.com) ), she describes how she taught her own autistic son, Whitney to replace disability with ability and become symptom-free. To learn more about her own personal journey and successful methods visit her complimentary Learning Library at [www.ebrainlabs.com](http://www.ebrainlabs.com).