PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
Department of Psychology

Kayla Ten Eycke
2010  Laurentian University  MSc
2008  Carleton University  BSc

Cognition and Drawing in Children with and without Autism Spectrum Disorder

Monday, December 2, 2013
1:00 p.m.
Cornett - Room B031

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Ulrich Mueller, Department of Psychology, UVic (Supervisor)
Dr. James Tanaka, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)
Dr. Sara Macoun, Department of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Constance Milbrath, School of Population & Public Health, University of British Columbia

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Dennis Hore, Department of Chemistry, UVic
Abstract

Children with autism spectrum disorder show imaginative and representational drawing deficits, despite reports of a “visual thinking style”. I examined whether these two drawing characteristics could be explained by the unique cognitive style of children with autism (specifically, executive dysfunction and a local processing bias). I administered a cognitive/drawing task battery to a group of 24 school-age children with autism and 29 mental age-matched neurotypically developing controls. I expected that better executive function ability would be associated with better imaginative and representational drawing, and that a local processing bias (weak central coherence) would be associated with better representational drawing but worse imaginative drawing. In children with autism, better executive function was associated with better imaginative drawing. Greater central coherence was associated with better representational drawing, but executive function was associated with worse representational drawing. Underlying cognitive components of imaginative and representational drawing were different for the neurotypically developing children. Overall, findings were unexpected, leading to novel theoretical suggestions for the field of autism cognition and drawing research.

Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships

2010 University of Victoria Fellowship
2009 Ontario Graduate Scholarships in Science & Technology
2009 Laurentian University Graduate Student Fellowship
2008 Ontario Graduate Scholarships in Science & Technology
2008 Laurentian University Graduate Student Fellowship
2008  Provincial Endowment Graduate Scholarship
2007  Claude Bissell Scholarship
2004  Gary S. Duck Scholarship
2004  Noranda-Falconbridge Scholarship

Presentations


Publications
