

Dr. Temple Grandin biography

Dr. Grandin did not talk until she was three and a half years old. She was fortunate to get early speech therapy. Her teachers also taught her how to wait and take turns when playing board games. She was mainstreamed into a normal kindergarten at age five. Oliver Sacks wrote in the forward of *Thinking in Pictures* that her first book *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* was "unprecedented because there had never before been an inside narrative of autism." Dr. Sacks profiled Dr. Grandin in his best-selling book *Anthropologist on Mars*.

Dr. Grandin became a prominent author and speaker on both autism and animal behavior. Today she is

“Parents get so worried about the deficits that they don't build up the strengths, but those skills could turn into a job,” said Grandin, who addresses scientific advances in understanding autism in her newest book, “The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across the

Educating Students with Different Kinds of Minds

If algebra had been required course for college graduation in 1967, there would be no Temple Grandin. At least, no Temple Grandin as the world knows her today – professor, inventor, best-selling author, and rock star in the seemingly divergent fields of animal science and autism education. “I probably would have been a handyman, fixing toilets at some apartment building somewhere,” said Grandin. “I can’t do algebra. It makes no sense. Why does algebra have to be the gateway to all other mathematics?”

The abstract concepts in algebra present a common stumbling block for many with an autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, or other learning problems. Many of the kids would do well if geometry was substituted for algebra. For autistic and photo-realistic visual thinkers, such as Grandin, understanding comes from being able to see and work through a concept in images, creating what is in effect, a virtual reality program that plays out in the brain. In this manner, Grandin, who didn’t speak until she was almost 4, conceptualized down to minute details her design for a humane livestock restraint system now used on nearly half to the cattle in the U.S.

Fortunately, the academic trend in the late 1960’s was finite math, a course Grandin passed with the help of tutors and devoted study, satisfying her college math requirement. She went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in psychology and both masters and doctoral degrees in animal science. For the past two decades, she’s been a professor at Colorado State University.

In her book, *The Autistic Brain*, she presents research findings that definitely show three types of