

Preferences

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> HOW TO APPLY LEARNING STYLES AND A WHOLE BRAIN® APPROACH TO CREATE EFFECTIVE LEARNING

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Learning with Style

Everything we have learned about the brain, our behavior and our modes of learning requires that we assume difference in our learners! As the Talmud states: *"We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are."* Our knowledge of the brain and its inherent uniqueness show that each individual is a unique learner with learning experiences, preferences and avoidances that will be different from those of other learners. This means that learning designs must somehow factor in the uniqueness of the individual learner. An immediate implication for the education and training profession is that our assumptions about learning take this into account, that our unique learning similarities and differences become part of the learning design and experience and are made visible. As a result, learning is no longer one dimensional but rather includes the notion of multiple intelligences as Howard Gardner's work has demonstrated, so that the subject matter is understood by all the participants not just those that are in alignment with the design, delivery and teaching/training style or mode.

SUMMARY

P. 1 Learning styles and brain dominance
 P. 2+3 to create effective learning
 P. 4 Neuro-Events, Neuro-Program
 Neuro-Resources, Neuro-Case studies,
 Neuro-Publications.

PREFERENCES

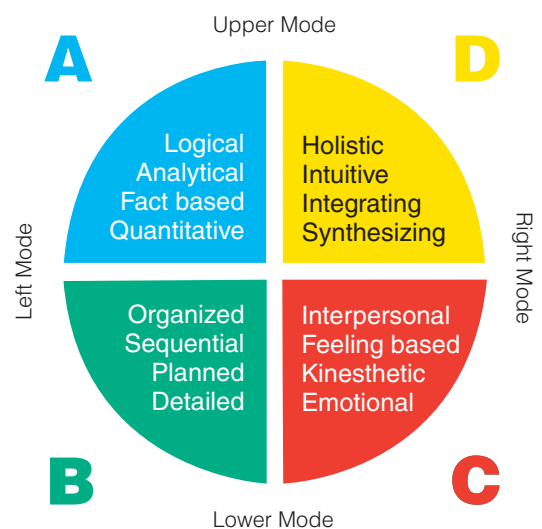
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Consider Marianne whose unique learning style, a result of her mental preferences, led her to prefer a highly structured learning design including step by step instructions and built-in practice segments. Attending a program with a trainer who focused exclusively on a discovery-style experience had a strong distaste for step-by-step approaches, Marianne was soon overheated with frustration, trying to figure out *"where they were"* and began *"checking out"* from the course. Experience with thousands of learners in workshops clearly demonstrates that when such differences are recognized by the teacher/trainer/designer and when a whole-brained approach is then used, it is highly beneficial to the learner as well as the entire learning group.

The concept of Whole Brain® Teaching and Learning is based upon our distribution of specialized modes throughout the brain system. The metaphoric model that has been developed from the initial EEG research at GE is divided into four separate quadrants, each one different and equal in importance. The Herrmann Model, which has been highly validated over the last 30 years with over 2 million learners worldwide. In the Whole Brain® Model, (see the diagram provided), the two left quadrants (A and B) are specialized in left-mode thinking processes. Logical, ana-

lytic, quantitative and fact based modes in the Upper Left A quadrant.

The Whole Brain® Model



The more planned, organized, detailed and sequential modes are processed in the Lower Left B quadrant. In contrast, the two right quadrants make up right-mode specialization. Synthesizing, integrating, holistic, and intuitive modes in the Upper Right D quadrant. The interpersonal, emotional, kinesthetic and feeling modes are associated with the Lower Right C quadrant. In addition, when combined, upper quadrants A and D represent more cognitive, intellectual mindsets and when lower quadrants B and C are combined, they represent the more visceral, emotional approaches.

*Adapted from the chapter: The Learner: What we Need to Know; The ASTD Workplace Learning and Performance Professional's Handbook, March 2008

If you think of each of these quadrants as four different people learning how to use a new computer, PDA or mobile device, imagine how each might approach the process. A-Albert would want to relish the technical aspects of the device, would be very comfortable with the mechanics and would approach the challenge quite logically. Ms. B-Brigitte on the other hand would be ready and organized, expecting instructions to follow and enjoying specific steps as they progressed: turn on the device, proceed through the set up wizard, etc. Mr. C-Carl would be thinking about the fun he will have and how he will be able to enjoy this device to connect with his friends. He might spend time talking out loud throughout the process, often preferring to learn with another person rather than alone. Ms. D-Donna is looking at all of the cool features, trying them out spontaneously and not too worried about the set up procedures or instructions—she will figure that out later. Anyone trying to teach these individuals may have all four at any given time, and certainly may prefer teaching one or more over the others. Fortunately, we are not limited to a one quadrant perspective, but are in fact *“hard wired to be whole.”* All of us have some degree of the four characters above available to us.

We all have connections that allow for direct interaction between these specialized areas, so we do have the bandwidth necessary to learn. Learning prompts interaction across this wiring. This also creates a sense of discomfort when we are not comfortable or knowledgeable of the subject. Try writing your name with you non-dominant hand. How does it feel? Responses often include: uncomfortable, tiring, unpracticed, frustrating etc. This is a terrific example of what is happening when we are engaging the brain in an area that is different and unusual. Does some discomfort mean we should not pursue this? Absolutely not, however, you want to maintain the balance between boredom and anxiety. This balance provides the energy required to make new neuronal connections. With motivation, preparation time and practice, the new connections will form and that feeling (which is actually been proven as a chemical reaction in the brain) of aha, insight and accomplishment will eventually occur. The key message is not to *“cave in”* to the style of the individual learners, but to plan around the challenges they present, learn the different languages they require and design a whole brained, multi-modal experience. This will allow each learner to get what they need while stretching into other, less preferred but available modes their brain provides them.

What does age have to do with it?

Much has been written in recent years about generational style differences. As you design

your learning, keep in mind the age groups you will be reaching. The following tips for each group may be helpful to consider:

Veterans (born 1922-45)

- Give detailed directions
- Use clear language that is non-emotional
- Information must be organized and factual

Boomers (born 1945-65)

- Let them know how to make a difference
- Focus on the future and challenges
- Present options
- Allow them to learn
- Try to build consensus

Generation X (born 1965-80)

- Share information on a regular basis
- Be straightforward, but use an informal style
- Allow for flexibility

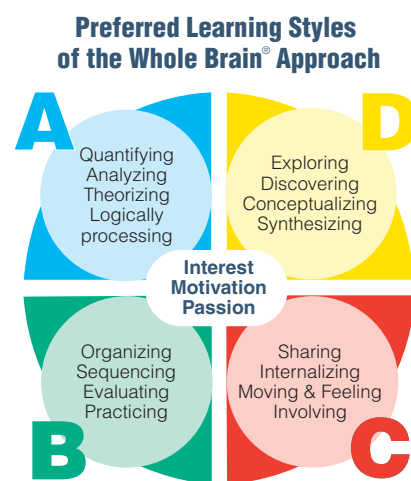
Millenials (born 1980-2000)

- Provide clear direction and share the whole story
- Discuss consequences
- Use humor
- Seek and provide them with regular feedback
- Use action words and challenge them at every opportunity.

LEARNING A LA MODE

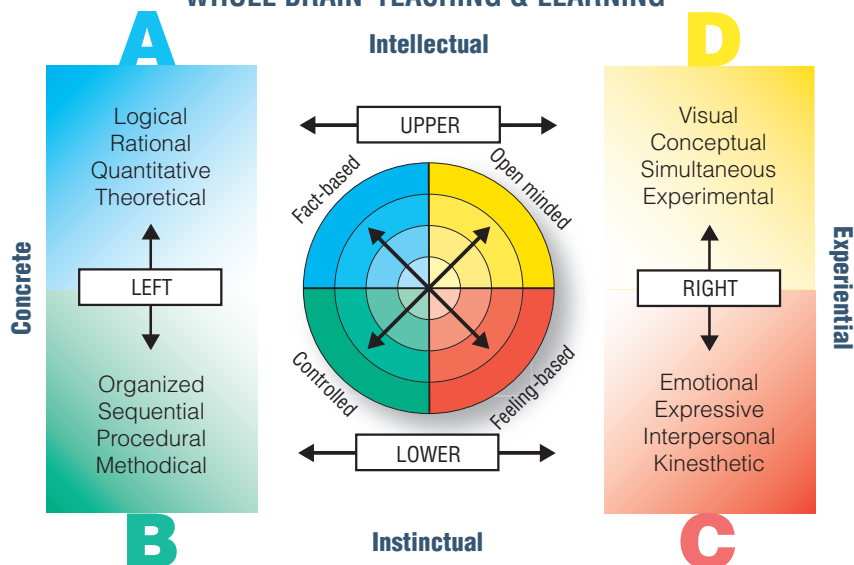
Most of us read at about 200-250 words per minute but think at speeds estimated of 350-500 words per minute. This is further complicated by the average speaking speed of 125 words per minute. Thus, the way we are physically designed means we can lose our learners attention at any given moment. In addition, our research has shown that your learner population will represent a very diverse group of learners. Using the HBDI® (Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument) with 2 million participants around the globe, we have learned that the world, taken as a whole, represents an equal distribution of learners

across the four quadrants. We have also learned that most individuals are not singular in their preference. The data substantiates that everyone has access to all four modes. Only 7% of the global population studied strongly prefers one mode over the others. Less than 3% is whole brained in their preferences, preferring all four quadrants more or less equally. The balance, 90%, has dual or triple preferences across the model. We must plan for these differences. In our experience, most learning designs reflect the preferences of the designer(s), the mental tilt of the content itself or both. How about your learning designs and programs? Where are your learners? Look over the model below to identify which quadrants they fall into most frequently.



It is also useful to think about those students you think of as really *“smart.”* We all have different smarts—have you ever met someone who is socially dumb but quantitatively brilliant? Great at detail but lousy at innovation? There are smarts all across the continuum as seen in the model provided.

WHOLE BRAIN® TEACHING & LEARNING



Remember what it was like to be in a learning situation where you just didn't fit? It is pretty painful, and in today's world, learners do not have the patience or tolerance and will quickly disconnect. Stop and think about how you can be more effective in your design and delivery with those learners who do not fit your style. Start by looking at the programs you control and pick a learning program you think is really great. What styles does it appeal to most? Look over the Instructional Strategies model below to find ways you can further stretch the design to be more inclusive of multiple styles. Next, think of resources you have available to you, colleagues, other professionals who can bolster your ability to best reach those learners. What resources, people, tools and activities can you use to make your learning more Whole Brained?

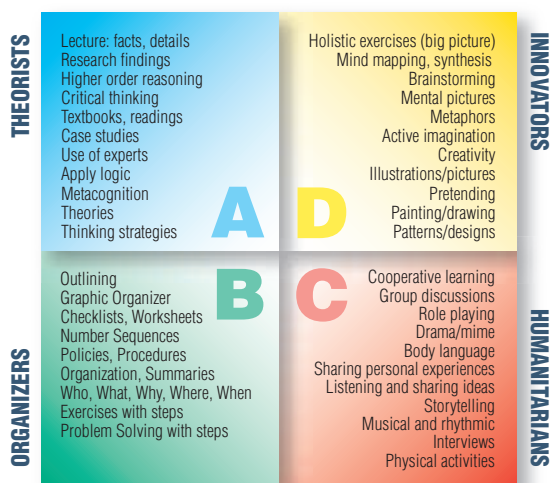
1. Human memory has two sources: pay attention to both visual and auditory inputs into memory but do not overdo it.
2. Only relevant, illustrative graphics really teach. Text and graphics need to be integrated and placed near each other to have full effect.
3. Use job context in your e-lessons to provide "retrieval hooks". New knowledge needs to be retrieved from long term memory back on the job and setting up that context will help set that up mentally.
4. Learning is enhanced by challenge. Engaging learners emotions is critical to retention and learner engagement.

Contact Herrmann International for a copy of our practical e-learning checklist and locator map of e-learning activities to aid in your design to make your e-learning programs more whole brained.

- 1) Understand how they learn.
- 2) Foresee and ramp up to what is coming (even if it is not in their preferred mode)
- 3) Access what they need to continue the learning in a form they can learn from, if the first pass did not work for them.
- 4) Have an opportunity to practice and reinforce what they have learned in order to strengthen the wiring and move it into long term memory.

This tapestry approach creates a design that moves back and forth with techniques and activities from each of the four quadrants. Each critical learning point needs to be paraphrased in each mode at some point in the learning process. Using a Whole Brain approach in your design and delivery helps ensure participants with different preferences and interests are able to learn effectively and consistently. Whether you are designing a learning point, module, workshop, or an entire course, look for ways to speak to the learners in all styles they may bring to the table. This can also be applied to help non-trainers and learning professionals in the organization better reach their colleagues and associates when rolling out an initiative in response to an organizational challenge. Judy Strock, while at a large computer manufacturer used this approach as part of a roll-out of new performance management system that was delivered by call center managers. With some minimal investment, the managers were significantly more successful in getting the message across and encountered much less resistance to the proposed changes. Andrew Stagg at Bendigo Bank in Australia has used this approach to design their entire training curriculum with very positive results. So what can you do to more effectively apply what we know about the brain and our styles?

Whole Brain® Instructional Strategies



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The Whole is More than the Sum of the Parts

Over 30 years of practical experience proves that using different design and delivery approaches improves and facilitates the learning experience by engaging each of these four specialized quadrants. As such, you need to provide options for the learner. This must be done thoughtfully so you do not, by the same token, overwhelm the learner by providing a deluge of modalities all streaming at them at once. Keep in mind that our learning preferences represent our "default mode" but we can and do "zig zag" around the

WHAT ABOUT E-LEARNING?

An entire chapter could be devoted to the topic of what you need to know about the learner in e-deliverables and programs. Learners can easily disengage of e-designs that do not engage the brain. The good news is that more and more e-deliverables today are part of a blended solution and provide multiple options for learners.

Again, one key consideration is the potential challenges based on generational styles, habits and comfort-levels. Veterans (born 1922-45) may be concerned about fraud, security issues and overly technical applications. Boomers (born 1945-65) may prefer traditional modes of learning, but are often open to technology based approaches once they have developed a level of comfort with them. Generation X (born 1965-80) is accustomed to using a wide variety of media. Millennials (born 1980-2000) prefer broad collaboration and expect e-deliverables.

As we look at the brain and e-learning, there is much we will learn in coming years. Four important elements will help make your e-learning more brain friendly:

model when we are learning, taking advantage of the array of processes we have available.

It is essential to consider the uniqueness of the learning group when designing programs, whether it is a classroom, coaching, e-learning, blended or any kind of format. With the use of the Whole Brain Model as a diagnostic tool, it is possible to better design the learning program to meet that unique requirement. In most instances you will not have access to information on your learners, or at best you will have a guess, unless you are using an assessment tool like the HBDI® (Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument) or others available in the marketplace. That means your most successful approach to your learning design and delivery is to create a whole brain experience for a whole brain learning group. A recent trip to Disney amusement park reinforced that idea—the longest lines were for the experiences that were the most whole brained. Have you noticed that the best websites appeal to different learning approaches in a very elegant way, not overwhelming the user?

I believe that good learning design threads together these different approaches like a tapestry giving the learner opportunities to:

- 1) Recognize the consequences of your preferences on how you think, learn and teach.
- 2) Understand that your learning community will always represent a very diverse thinking and learning group, a composite whole brain.
- 3) Teach to the way the diverse, specialized brain likes and needs to learn, honoring the uniqueness of the learner's brain by learning to speak its multiple languages.
- 4) Take the opportunity to use learning styles and brain-based methods to design and deliver learning.
- 5) Remember that the learning environment and approach must not in anyway damper or diminish the motivation of the learner or their passion for the subject at hand.
- 6) The proof exists that learning styles and brain based theories of teaching and learning do improve the effectiveness of our learning under the right conditions. Warning: learners should never feel like they are being trapped in one style or approach or put in a box.

What we know about the brain is that it can and will change. So for best results, use all styles regularly to ensure success!

NEURO-BOOKS INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY

"The Whole Brain Business Book" by Ned Herrmann, Ed. MacGraw-Hill – Language: English – Price: 30,07 € tax included (without shipping).

In his last book, Ned Herrmann himself shows how to apply his famous four-quadrant paradigm for maximum productivity and creativity at work! It is the first book to apply the whole brain thinking preferences exclusively to business.

"The Creative Brain" by Ned Herrmann, Ed. Brain Books – Language: English – Price: 30,07 € tax included (without shipping).

A book with many examples and exercises about solving problem strategies. A time-proven resource for developing creativity through understanding our most powerful creative resource: the brain.

"Demain, je parle en public" by Thierry Destrez, Ed. Dunod – Language: French – Price: 13,19 € tax included (without shipping). How to control your voice, your gesture, your emotion and... your ideas when speaking in front of an audience. Simple and effective techniques that will allow you to structure your interventions.

"De kracht van diversiteit" by Ernst Jan Reitsma, Ed. Lemma – Language: Dutch – Price: 40 € tax included (without shipping) (www.lemma.nl).

How to manage diversity within a team.

"Persönlichkeitsmodelle und Persönlichkeits-tests" by Seiwert, Wagner, Schimmel-Schloo, Ed. Acquisa – Language: German – Price: 89 € tax included (without shipping). A comparative study of principal personality tools (HBDI®, MBTI, LIFO, TMS).

NEURO-TRAINING

External or internal training sessions:

Managers, Human Resources professionals (human resources managers, training manager, recruiting managers, trainers, consultants), would you like to use the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument within your professional activities?

Herrmann International offers training seminars that will allow you to become a Herrmann Certified Practitioner and to use the Herrmann tools. These seminars can be organized within any company as an internal training.

HBDI® Certification Workshops Level 1 & Level 2.

Learning the principles and bases of the thinking styles preferences approach by Ned Herrmann.

- ◆ Level 1 – Understanding your individual profile and adapt yourself to others.
 - ◆ Level 2 – Understanding team profiles – Management and team cohesion.
- Training seminars allowing to become a Herrmann Certified practitioner and to use the HBDI® in different activities such as recruitment, outplacement, competences assessment, management, communication, training, orientation, sales...

Language: English – Seminars in Brussels

Level 1:
3 days: May 21 to 23, 2008
October 22 to 24, 2008
– Price: 2500 € VAT excluded.

Level 2:
2 days: December 15 to 16, 2008
– Price: 1800 € VAT excluded.

Language: French – Seminars in Paris

Level 1:
3 days: May 28 to 30, 2008
September 24 to 26, 2008
November 26 to 28, 2008
– Price: 2400 € VAT excluded.

Level 2:
2 days: July 8 to 9, 2008
October 9 to 10, 2008
December 11 to 12, 2008
– Price: 1700 € VAT excluded.

You will find all the information about training sessions and registration forms on our Website:

www.herrmann-europe.com

NEW APPLICATIONS, NEW PRODUCTS

Whole Brain Thinking Series

The Whole Brain Thinking Series is made up of a set of packaged modules of one day each. It will allow you to offer your colleagues training sessions adapted to their needs on themes such as:

- ◆ Whole brain communication
- ◆ Decision making
- ◆ Problem solving (creatively)
- ◆ Work in a team
- ◆ Develop your leadership

The first module, "Start Thinking", will allow you to discover your thinking style preferences and its consequences on all your professional and personal activities.

You can then compose your program according to your needs.

These "plug and play" modules can be implemented by HBDI® practitioners within your company.

More products and services
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