

Aim

This activity helps students understand the practical application of their own right/left brain preferences.

To the teacher

Make one copy of the worksheet and do the activity yourself.

Consider first which activities are related to which hemisphere – and the implications for your teaching. Then consider your own preferences – and whether you provide a balanced range of activities to take account of different learning preferences when you are teaching.

Decide how to exploit the activity most effectively with your students.

Method

- 1 Make one copy of the worksheet for each student.
- 2 Students work in pairs or small groups to decide which activities relate to which side of the brain, and then they decide individually which ones they are good at – checking their answers with a partner who knows them well, if they want to.
- 3 In small groups, students compare their answers and discuss the things they are good at.
- 4 Ask students to identify aspects of your teaching which appeal to the right and left sides of the brain. Can they suggest other things you can do?
- 5 Ask students if they know why you teach to the right brain, when language is located in the left brain. It is because the right brain learns 1600 times faster than the left!

Level * *

Notes

In traditional language teaching, teachers predominantly used methods which were processed by the left hemisphere. The learners listened to the teacher and wrote down what the teacher said. They did a lot of reading and reciting, and language was taught as a set of facts and rules (vocabulary lists and grammar rules). In this kind of traditional language teaching, left-brain learners did well in examinations, but not necessarily as users of the language, while right-brain learners did much less well. Classes got more and more difficult to teach because the difference of level between the left-brain and right-brain learners got bigger and bigger.

To appeal to the right brain, language teachers incorporate music, drawing, movement, rhythm and choice. They teach connected sequences of language in context (eg realistic texts and dialogues) and give students the opportunity to use the language in ways which are meaningful for them.

Good language teachers use a combination of these two approaches.

Of course the left/right split is an oversimplification. If someone is relaxing and listening to music, they are predominantly using their right brain. When musicians are studying music, they are probably using their left brains. What particularly helps learning is the use of both sides of the brain at the same time (whole-brain learning) which creates links through the 'corpus callosum', the area which connects the two sides of the brain.

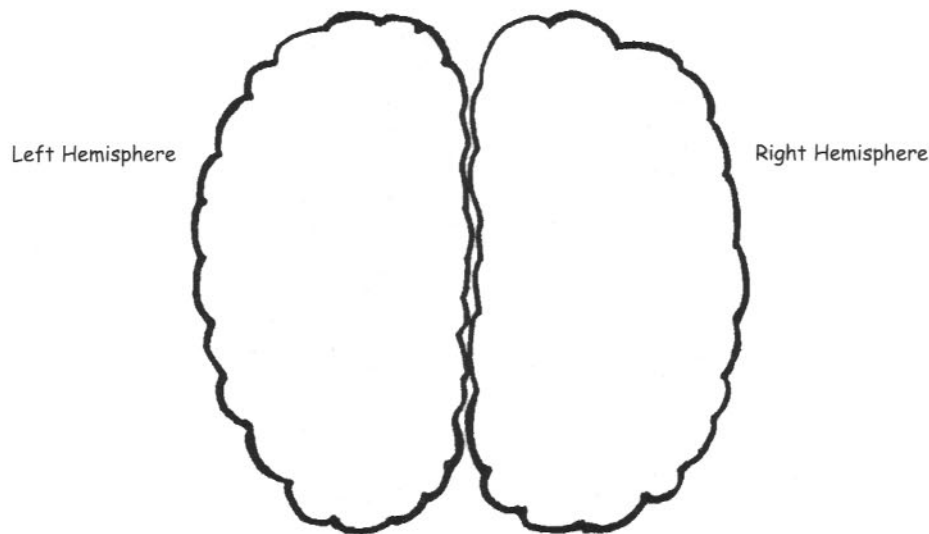
Incidentally, women's brains, on average, have many more links in the corpus callosum than men's!

Key

Left-hemisphere skills 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20

Right-hemisphere skills 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 19

WRITE THE NUMBERS of the activities listed below in the hemisphere of the brain they are more strongly related to.



✓ TICK the activities you think you are particularly good at.

- ___ 1 Reading
- ___ 2 Listening
- ___ 3 Singing and music
- ___ 4 Language
- ___ 5 Art expression (making or using pictures)
- ___ 6 Feelings and emotions
- ___ 7 Talking and reciting
- ___ 8 Colour
- ___ 9 Mathematical computation (adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing)
- ___ 10 Auditory association (eg you hear 'moo' and think 'cow')
- ___ 11 Shapes and patterns
- ___ 12 Following directions and rules
- ___ 13 Spatial relationships
- ___ 14 Creativity
- ___ 15 Locating details and facts
- ___ 16 Visualisation (picturing in your head)
- ___ 17 Handwriting
- ___ 18 Symbols (eg as used in maths and science)
- ___ 19 Body awareness (knowing you are sitting or standing, etc)
- ___ 20 Phonics (sounds in language which have meaning)