

Learning: a never-ending journey

Dr. Wayne Jacobs
Interim Dean, School of Education
LeTourneau University

What do you believe?

- 1. We only use 10% of our brains.
- 2. You should drink 8 glasses of water daily.
- 3. Fingernails and hair grow after death.
- 4. Shaved hair grows back faster, courser, and darker
- 5. Reading in dim light ruins your eyesight.
- 6. Eating turkey makes you drowsy.
- 7. Mobile phones are dangerous in hospitals.

Where does learning happen?

- As we receive stimuli and initiate movement, our neurons form extensions (called dendrites) to other neurons which form pathways through which we interact with the world. The process of nerve cells connecting and networking is **learning and thought**.



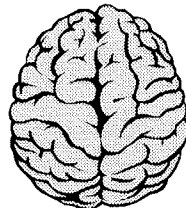
What does learning look like?

- Whenever we engage in NEW behavior, our brain remodels itself – a process that continues throughout life.
- The more we use our brain AND body, the more our brains will grow.



How do you learn?

- We are all uniquely wired – some of our neural wiring came with our birth package.
- Learning may be influenced by dominance of our eyes, ears or hands.
- One way to determine dominance is through **Laterality**.

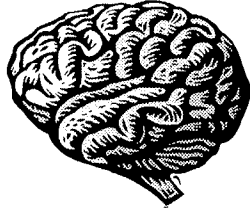


Laterality

- Handedness – left or right, finger crossing
- Eye – Aligned or Cross dominance
- Ear – quiet tests
- Foot – reach/kick, leg crossing
- Mouth – chewing preference
- When we are confronted with a new learning situation, we will access it through laterality.

Which side of the brain do you use?

- <http://www.news.com.au/perthnow/story/0,21598,22492511-5005375,00.html>



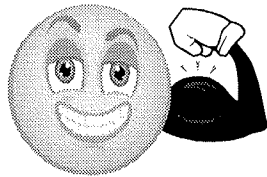
What is your learning preference?

- Visual
- Auditory
- Reading/writing
- Kinesthetic



Exercise your brain

- Exercise fuels the brain with oxygen and feeds high energy nutrients needed for learning.
- Vigorous exercise improves productivity and performance (20 minutes/day, 3 days per week)



The research says:

- “No other drug or behavioral intervention seems to be as effective as exercise in terms of having both neuroprotective and neuroplasticity effects.”

Cotman, CW. *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews*, 30, 75-79.

Exercises for your brain

- Brain buttons
- Cross Crawl
- De-stressor
- Stretching
- The Energy Yawn
- The Thinking Cap
- Lazy 8's

A final thought

- *In today's business environment, finding better ways to learn will propel organizations forward. Strong minds fuel strong organizations. We must capitalize on our natural styles and then build systems to satisfy needs. Only through an individual learning process can we re-create our environments and ourselves. (How Adults Learn, Marcia L. Conner)*

Brain Dominance Test

Directions: Every time you read a description or characteristic that applies to you, circle the number. There is no certain number of characteristics you must choose. After you are done, view the key on the back of this sheet. For each one you circled, write whether it was a L or an R. Count up the number of L's and R's. Whichever number is higher represents your dominance. If the numbers are close, that means you use both sides of your brain equally.

1. I constantly look at a clock or wear a watch
2. I keep a journal or diary of my thoughts
3. I believe there is a either right and wrong way to do everything
4. I find it hard to follow directions precisely
5. The expression "Life is just a bowl of cherries" makes no sense to me
6. I frequently change my plans and find that sticking to a schedule is boring
7. I think it's easier to draw a map than tell someone how to get somewhere
8. To find a lost item, I try to picture it in my head where I last saw it
9. I frequently let my emotions guide me
10. I learn math with ease
11. I'd read the directions before assembling something
12. People tell me I am always late getting places
13. People have told me that I'm psychic
14. I need to set goals for myself to keep me on track
15. When somebody asks me a question, I turn my head to the left
16. If I have a tough decision to make, I write down the pros and the cons
17. I'd probably make a good detective
18. I learn music with ease
19. To solve a problem, I think of similar problems I have solved in the past
20. I use a lot of gestures
21. If someone asks me a question, I turn my head to the right
22. I believe there are two ways to look at almost everything
23. I have the ability to tell if people are lying or guilty of something, just by looking at them
24. I keep a "to do" list
25. I am able to thoroughly explain my opinions in words
26. In a debate, I am objective and look at the facts before forming an opinion
27. I've considered becoming a poet, a politician, an architect, or a dancer
28. I always lose track of time
29. When trying to remember a name I forgot, I'd recite the alphabet until I remembered it
30. I like to draw
31. When I'm confused, I usually go with my gut instinct

Brain Dominance Test KEY

1. L
2. L
3. L
4. R
5. L
6. R
7. R
8. L
9. R
- 10.L
- 11.L
- 12.R
- 13.R
- 14.L
- 15.R
- 16.L
- 17.L
- 18.R
- 19.R
- 20.R
- 21.L
- 22.R
- 23.R
- 24.L
- 25.L
- 26.L
- 27.R
- 28.R
- 29.L
- 30.R
- 31.R
- 32.L

VAR K

visual aural read/write kinesthetic

The VARK Questionnaire (Version 7.0)

How Do I Learn Best?

Choose the answer which best explains your preference and circle the letter(s) next to it.
Please circle more than one if a single answer does not match your perception.
Leave blank any question that does not apply.

1. You are helping someone who wants to go to your airport, town centre or railway station. You would:
 - a. go with her.
 - b. tell her the directions.
 - c. write down the directions.
 - d. draw, or give her a map.
2. You are not sure whether a word should be spelled 'dependent' or 'dependant'. You would:
 - a. see the words in your mind and choose by the way they look.
 - b. think about how each word sounds and choose one.
 - c. find it in a dictionary.
 - d. write both words on paper and choose one.
3. You are planning a holiday for a group. You want some feedback from them about the plan. You would:
 - a. describe some of the highlights.
 - b. use a map or website to show them the places.
 - c. give them a copy of the printed itinerary.
 - d. phone, text or email them.
4. You are going to cook something as a special treat for your family. You would:
 - a. cook something you know without the need for instructions.
 - b. ask friends for suggestions.
 - c. look through the cookbook for ideas from the pictures.
 - d. use a cookbook where you know there is a good recipe.
5. A group of tourists want to learn about the parks or wildlife reserves in your area. You would:
 - a. talk about, or arrange a talk for them about parks or wildlife reserves.
 - b. show them internet pictures, photographs or picture books.
 - c. take them to a park or wildlife reserve and walk with them.
 - d. give them a book or pamphlets about the parks or wildlife reserves.
6. You are about to purchase a digital camera or mobile phone. Other than price, what would most influence your decision?
 - a. Trying or testing it.
 - b. Reading the details about its features.
 - c. It is a modern design and looks good.
 - d. The salesperson telling me about its features.
7. Remember a time when you learned how to do something new. Try to avoid choosing a physical skill, eg. riding a bike. You learned best by:
 - a. watching a demonstration.
 - b. listening to somebody explaining it and asking questions.
 - c. diagrams and charts - visual clues.
 - d. written instructions - e.g. a manual or textbook.

8. You have a problem with your knee. You would prefer that the doctor:
 - a. gave you a web address or something to read about it.
 - b. used a plastic model of a knee to show what was wrong.
 - c. described what was wrong.
 - d. showed you a diagram of what was wrong.
9. You want to learn a new program, skill or game on a computer. You would:
 - a. read the written instructions that came with the program.
 - b. talk with people who know about the program.
 - c. use the controls or keyboard.
 - d. follow the diagrams in the book that came with it.
10. I like websites that have:
 - a. things I can click on, shift or try.
 - b. interesting design and visual features.
 - c. interesting written descriptions, lists and explanations.
 - d. audio channels where I can hear music, radio programs or interviews.
11. Other than price, what would most influence your decision to buy a new non-fiction book?
 - a. The way it looks is appealing.
 - b. Quickly reading parts of it.
 - c. A friend talks about it and recommends it.
 - d. It has real-life stories, experiences and examples.
12. You are using a book, CD or website to learn how to take photos with your new digital camera. You would like to have:
 - a. a chance to ask questions and talk about the camera and its features.
 - b. clear written instructions with lists and bullet points about what to do.
 - c. diagrams showing the camera and what each part does.
 - d. many examples of good and poor photos and how to improve them.
13. Do you prefer a teacher or a presenter who uses:
 - a. demonstrations, models or practical sessions.
 - b. question and answer, talk, group discussion, or guest speakers.
 - c. handouts, books, or readings.
 - d. diagrams, charts or graphs.
14. You have finished a competition or test and would like some feedback. You would like to have feedback:
 - a. using examples from what you have done.
 - b. using a written description of your results.
 - c. from somebody who talks it through with you.
 - d. using graphs showing what you had achieved.
15. You are going to choose food at a restaurant or cafe. You would:
 - a. choose something that you have had there before.
 - b. listen to the waiter or ask friends to recommend choices.
 - c. choose from the descriptions in the menu.
 - d. look at what others are eating or look at pictures of each dish.
16. You have to make an important speech at a conference or special occasion. You would:
 - a. make diagrams or get graphs to help explain things.
 - b. write a few key words and practice saying your speech over and over.
 - c. write out your speech and learn from reading it over several times.
 - d. gather many examples and stories to make the talk real and practical.

VARK

visual aural read/write kinesthetic

The VARK Questionnaire Scoring Chart

Use the following scoring chart to find the VARK category that each of your answers corresponds to. Circle the letters that correspond to your answers

e.g. If you answered b and c for question 3, circle V and R in the question 3 row.

Question	a category	b category	c category	d category
3	K	V	R	A

Scoring Chart

Question	a category	b category	c category	d category
1	K	A	R	V
2	V	A	R	K
3	K	V	R	A
4	K	A	V	R
5	A	V	K	R
6	K	R	V	A
7	K	A	V	R
8	R	K	A	V
9	R	A	K	V
10	K	V	R	A
11	V	R	A	K
12	A	R	V	K
13	K	A	R	V
14	K	R	A	V
15	K	A	R	V
16	V	A	R	K

Calculating your scores

Count the number of each of the VARK letters you have circled to get your score for each VARK category.

Total number of V s circled =	<input type="text"/>
Total number of A s circled =	<input type="text"/>
Total number of R s circled =	<input type="text"/>
Total number of K s circled =	<input type="text"/>

Calculating your preferences

Use the online VARK spreadsheet (available from the www.vark-learn.com web site) to work out your VARK learning preferences.