



Case name: Creating a Learning Community

Organization name: University College Chester

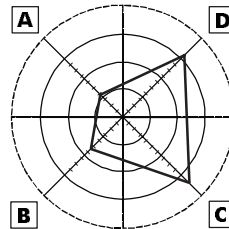
Contributor: Dennis Martin
Herrmann International
UK North

The Challenge & Purpose: To create an action learning community in which co-operative experiential learning would be carried out as a means of enabling B.A. (Ed.) students to compare and contrast Whole Brain learning with more traditional learning approaches.

Existing conditions:

The research Director, and senior psychology tutor, David carried out an activity with a group of 27 B.A. (Ed.) undergraduates to explore the use of the Whole Brain model in learning.

**Profile of
Research Director**



All of the students had their HBDI profile scores available and attended an introductory workshop to explain the model. The research involved the students in teaching each other using the HBDI, and differences in thinking profiles, to research their subjects and then design and deliver Whole-Brain peer-group learning experiences.

The 27 undergraduates were part-way through their program and had experienced "traditional" university teaching and learning situations. As most of them were likely to become teachers themselves after graduating, David wanted them to experience Whole Brain learning to research its effects on learning content and to encourage the use of Whole Brain processes by the students in their future teaching roles.

Desired outcomes:

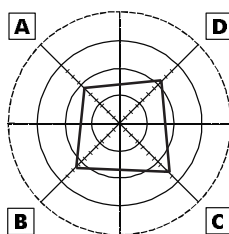
Short term: To research the validity and effects of an experiential Whole Brain learning community.

Long term: To encourage continued research and use of Whole Brain learning methods by students after graduation. To research the possible continuing use of the HBDI and Whole Brain learning, in University College Chester degree and post-graduate programs.

Whole Brain intervention methods, processes and strategies:

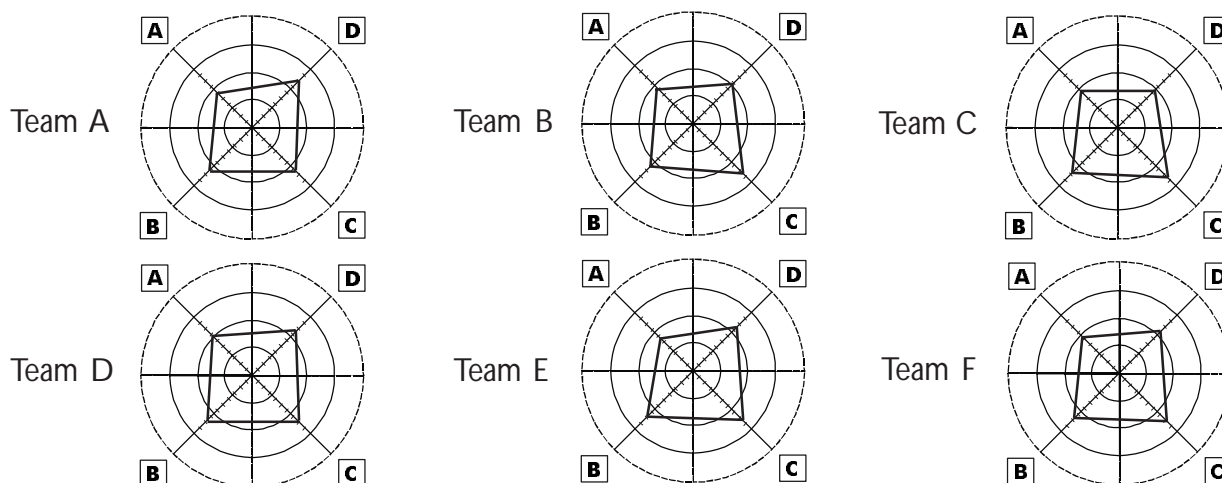
The 27 under-graduates were HBDI profiled and attended a one-day workshop to explain the Whole Brain model and receive their profiles.

Average profile
for student group



Emphasis in the workshop was placed on application of the Whole Brain model to teaching and learning – in particular, the use of thinking style profile differences as a learning resource; the concept of “matching and stretching”; iteration and paraphrasing of key learning points across the four quadrants and modes of the model; and Whole Brain design and delivery techniques.

A continuum of the 27 students' profiles were compiled and used to split the group into two “Whole Brain” teams. Within each of these two groups, students were asked to use their profile data, and the continuum, to form into sub-teams of 4/5 with a spread of thinking styles in each sub-team – this yielded six “Whole Brain” teams in total. The average profiles of the teams were:

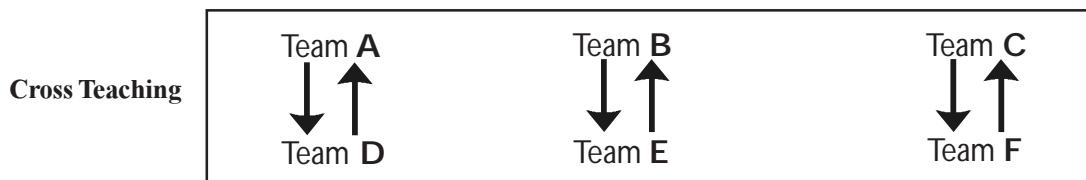


Each team was then given the following aims:

- Research in your Whole Brain team a specific topic (either “listening skills” or “negotiation”) in line with a set of learning outcomes.
- Devise a teaching and learning strategy, which will satisfy all four quadrants of the Whole Brain Model.
- Implement your strategy with a team from the other half of the class.
- Be aware of the group dynamics.
- Be aware of cognitive and effective learning involved in the process.
- Consider how you will know that you're teaching and learning strategy has been successful.
- Consider how the other group will know that it knows?

The students had two weeks in which to research their subject, and design a Whole Brain teaching

and learning process.



One day was then allocated for the students to cross-teach their peers. Thus, team A taught team D; team D taught team A; B taught A; A taught B; C taught F and F taught C. Each team, therefore, applied their strategy to another team (i.e. they were in the role of “teachers”) and experienced another team’s strategy (i.e. they were in the role of “learners”)

A full-group, and sub-groups, review of the experience was held before students prepared essays and write-ups of their experiences. Subsequently, a written evaluation of the research was carried out with each student.

Summary of outcomes:

Some sample comments from the evaluation reports will illustrate outcomes:

Evaluation question 1: How did your HBDI profile relate to the ways in which you approached the activity? Were you “stretched”? Did you deliberately “stretch” yourself in any way?

- My profile is 2-1-1-1. (My least preferred is the A quadrant) In researching the information I needed, I had to stretch myself by looking for factual, relevant material.
- I approached the activity of thinking about how I could provide a learning style for every different part of the brain. This is why I had worksheets, OHPs and a video.
- My own profile (C and D dominant) made me aware of a need to concentrate on developing skills from quadrants A and B, but also looking to others in the group with these skills. Deliberately made myself try to plan/structure and organize so, yes, stretched myself in this way.
- I felt I was stretched as I was doing a practical activity with the other group, something I find particularly hard. Initially we didn't set out to stretch ourselves, although personally I think in the end we all were stretched to some extent.
- My C dominant profile was appropriate to my role in the group, as I was fairly verbally active. I wasn't stretched in the group, as I was interested anyway in the concept of active listening.
- I am quadrant A dominant and my part, I felt, was very much interpersonal. When I was doing it I felt stretched, but it wasn't really deliberate.

Evaluation question 2: What was the effect of the “Whole Brain” approach on your understanding of the content you researched and taught to the other group?

- It illustrated that different people are stimulated by different teaching styles.

- As a group, we tried to cater to the “different brains” in the other group. By including all different types of learning (e.g. role-play; drama; video; worksheets), I think we managed to do this. I think the “brain” which was most difficult to cater to was the mathematical brain.
- I never really thought before, that people like to learn in different ways.
- I found the whole brain approach more interesting. Many different approaches were used both in researching and when being taught by the other group.
- I could see that some people were switching off when it wasn't relevant to their preference.
- Having to listen and organize all the different approaches made by my group members, then prepare them for another group to learn, made me understand more deeply the content of the researched subject.

Evaluation question 3: What was the effect of the “Whole Brain” approach on your understanding of the content taught to you by the other group?

- I found that their activities were very good. All quadrants were satisfied. I understood what they were trying to get at. I feel I responded to the activities well.
- I understood the content taught to me very well, mainly because they used different techniques of teaching (e.g. activities, handouts, etc).
- I preferred learning by the lecture part of the presentation. I understood less when I was involved in more creative and more active learning because I felt uncomfortable.
- Being aware of why the other groups were using different methods to “get across” their researched subject made me more “tolerable” of the different methods, hence being more aware and tolerable made me understand the contents.
- Different styles of teaching meant that some parts stood out to me more than others – rather than all or none.
- Heightened awareness of content – made for more enjoyment.

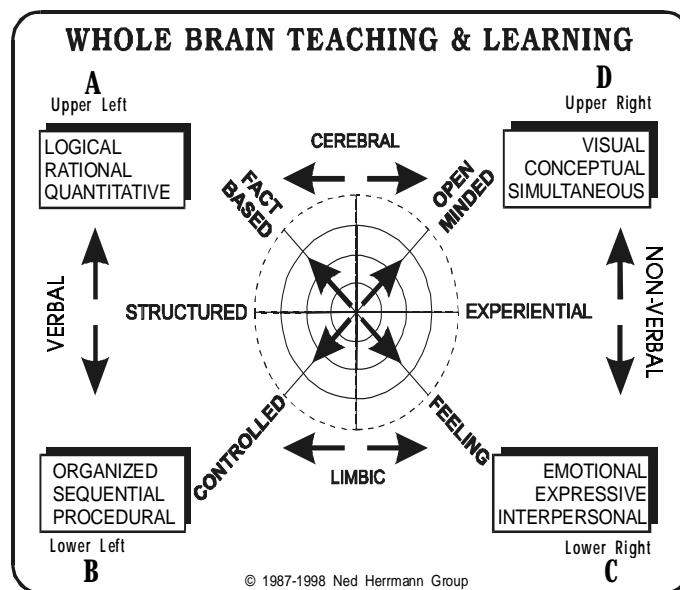
Evaluation question 4: As a result of having participated in the “Whole Brain” exercise, do you have any different views of the nature of teaching and learning?

- Yes, I feel the HBDI style of learning (i.e. picking up on people's strengths and helping them grow in their weaker areas) helped my own style of learning. From a teaching point of view, it would be nice if more teachers recognized the different ways in which people learn and adapt some lessons accordingly?
- I personally feel it is an excellent method of teaching and learning.
- Yes, having participated in this exercise, I now feel that there is a way of holding everyone's attention when teaching. It is possible to make it interesting.
- I feel it would be difficult to change your way of teaching to suit different brain dominance's. It

has made me more aware of how children or people learn. But in the overall learning it would be useful but impractical.

- I think that by considering all different approaches when teaching a lesson, you will be able to cater for all your pupils in a class. The pupils will all have increased understanding of the subject and will be using their different brains, therefore improving the quality of their understanding in each one.
- By preparing the presentation it was interesting to note that some members were more creative in thinking up ideas on how to present the information. Other members did more research and admin work. It was also clear that people prefer to learn in different ways.

Evaluation question 5: What, in your view, are the strengths and weaknesses of the "Whole Brain" teaching learning approach compared with more "traditional" approaches?



- The strengths of this approach are that it is possible to teach a subject in a way that it will appeal to the whole audience at some point.
- Weaknesses are that it is time-consuming for teacher/learner (possibly?) and might be frustrating. Therefore, strengths are that it has the ability to reach the different people who have different learning styles, especially if one person has more than one style; it is enjoyable; it has the ability to appreciate "people".
- If the information is presented in the way that the individual prefers then he is more likely to learn. The Whole Brain technique of teaching may take longer to prepare as you are trying to satisfy all areas of learning.
- Whole Brain teaching makes allowances that not everyone enjoys sitting looking at an overhead for two hours. It considers other elements, which appeal to certain individuals, which are not traditionally incorporated. The strength of whole brain teaching is that it is more

interesting and variable and gives scope for everyone to find lectures interesting.

- Learning that the individual retains info more successfully if presented in a way that appeals to them. The “Whole Brain” approach doesn’t take too much more work when preparing. However, the person preparing needs to be aware of their weak quadrant as I would have thought they are less likely to present work in that form. Certainly more interesting than the “traditional” approaches. Makes you more aware of others; strengths and weaknesses and more tolerant.
- Weaknesses – personality differences; time/resources/money doesn’t always allow; group work may be difficult; tutors need training first. Strengths-aids understanding; start learning “where you’re at”; learning increased; more than one method of learning; confidence.

Any other comments?

- A useful exercise and enjoyable. It has enabled the lectures previously undertaken to take on more relevance and enable me to see which style is more attractive to me. In the future, I will have to do more practical elements within my revision in order for it to sink in more.
- An excellent learning activity, which I personally feel, will benefit me in the future.
- It was an enjoyable exercise. I feel we all benefited from it and saw the advantages in it after we had done it.
- A good experience. Loads learned and taught.
- I found the concept of the “Whole Brain” technique very interesting and it is knowledge that I will use in the future.
- I think that teaching and learning should be done in this context, (i.e. “Whole Brain” teaching and learning, as it employs different methods of teaching and learning). The activity was a worthwhile and enjoyable experience.

Optimizing the results:





There was an overwhelming view from the undergraduates, and David, that the Whole Brain learning activity had been extremely worthwhile and should be repeated in the future. In particular, it had enabled students to create and experience a learning community in which they valued and used their differences in thinking preferences as a learning resource. The experience had created a deep understanding that Whole Brain teaching and learning was more effective than traditional methods. It had also enabled the students to experience the power of Whole Brain teaching and learning as a personal, and team, growth process.

Some of the student groups felt that even greater benefits would have been achieved if the activity had been organized in a different term when the undergraduates’ workload was not so heavy. Others felt that the use of a Whole Brain learning log to capture the process would also have been worthwhile.

Success measurement criteria applied:

The success measurement process allows up to 100 points to be allocated to each of the four quadrants of this whole brain process. The success measurement points for this case are allocated as follows:

- A quadrant: Effective cognitive learning take place
- B quadrant: Structure and sequence well received
- C quadrant: Team learning and cross teaching effective
- D quadrant: Variety, flexibility and creativity were key components

Metaphors		Success measurement points	
A 	D 	A 100	D 100
B 	C 	B 100	C 100

Proforma of success measurement

