



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

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Editorial

One of the recurrent themes in teaching is that of learning style - our idiosyncratic ways of perceiving the world we experience, processing information, learning and remembering. In his article *Culture and Learning: A Divisive Link*, Stephen Gibson introduces the concept of learning style, describes a number of types of learning style and discusses their relationship to Aboriginal learning.

Barbara Sayers (1988) in her article in "Learning My Way" focuses on characteristics of left and right brain functioning and suggests that such a model may well explain observed differences in Aboriginal and western ways of knowing and learning. Sayers provides the following comparison of left and right mode functioning and finds support from her observation and interaction with Wik-Mungkan adults:

<u>A Comparison of Left-Mode and Right-Mode Characteristics</u>	
LEFT-MODE	RIGHT-MODE:
Verbal: Using words to name describe, define.	Nonverbal: Awareness of things, but minimal connection with words.
Analytic: Figuring things out step-by-step and part-by-part.	Synthetic: Putting things together to form wholes.
Symbolic: Using a symbol to 'stand for' something. For example, the drawn form (☉) stands for 'eye', the sign + stands for the process of addition.	Concrete: Relating to things as are, It the present moment.
Abstract: Taking out a small bit of information and using it to represent the whole thing.	Analogic: Seeing likenesses between things understanding metaphoric relationships.
Temporal: Keeping track of time, sequencing one thing after another: Doing first things first, second thing second, etc.	Non-temporal: Without a sense of time.
Rational: Drawing conclusions based on 'reason and facts'.	Non-rational: Not requiring a basis of reason or facts; willingness to suspend judgement.
Digital: Using numbers as in counting.	Spatial: Seeing where things are in relation to other things, and how parts go together to form a whole.
Logical: Drawing conclusions based on logic: one thing following another in logical order for example, a mathematical theorem or a well-stated argument.	Intuitive: Making leaps of insight, often based on incomplete patterns, hunches, feelings, or visual images.
Linear: Thinking in terms of linked ideas, one thought directly following another, often leading to a convergent conclusion.	Holistic: Seeing whole things all at once; perceiving the overall patterns and structures, often leading to divergent conclusions.

The educational implications of such learning style work are many - especially in teaching and in teacher education. However, we, as teachers must beware of stereotyping any learner. The range of individual differences to be expected within any population and probability that learning style is very much a function of one's environment and child rearing makes learning style a useful, but not prescriptive, concept for teachers.

Kind regards



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Harvey, Barbara & McGinty, Suzanne (1988) "Learning My Way": *Papers from the National Conference on Adult Aboriginal Learning*. A Special Edition of Wikaru 16. pp 238 - 248.