

Title: It's a Multi Coloured World

Domain: Student Engagement

What Happened:

I was invited by our principal to attend a Learning to Learn conference in Adelaide during my second month in Australia. It was a two-day workshop about Herrmann Brain dominance.

I was very curious to see what Learning to Learn was, and figured it must be something like Professional Development. I knew that at the session we would be given the results of the survey that we had taken weeks before. At first it was just a colour wheel but as the activities and explanations of the 4 learning styles progressed over the next two days I began to realise not only what my dominant style was but also its strengths and weaknesses.

After I returned to school I put the folder on the shelf where it sat collecting dust for a couple of months.

A few weeks ago I discovered that there was a child-friendly version of the Herrmann Brain test on each of the computers in the computer room. I decided to let the class "have a go" as the Aussies say. They read and answered the questions without a lot of thought or interest and produced their graphs that they turned in.

The next week we looked at the 4 styles and what each meant. Lights Went ON! Kids suddenly were actively engaged in the anecdotal comments that described themselves. Comments like "that's why I'm always talking out" or "No wonder I love maths" were bantered about. They also started to connect that other students in the class learn and relate to things differently than themselves. It was an awakening for many.

It is too soon to tell if this will have a lasting affect for the students or for myself, but we now look at various ways of presenting learning and talk about how to take risks, and present learning in a style that is not your dominant one. It has also opened up a level of tolerance and understanding (mostly in me) of the way students react and learn in various subject areas.