

Left-Brain Right-Brain: Who's Who and What's the Difference?

You know it as Left-Brain ---- Right Brain. A more proper terminology is “logic brain” (in the left hemisphere in about 97% of people) and “gestalt brain” (in the right hemisphere in about 97% of people). Each hemisphere has an important role in learning. We all have both hemispheres but some people seem to operate almost exclusively out of one of them.

One of these hemispheres is “dominant”, which means that that is the person’s default way of operating--how they tend to operate when they are under stress. Ideally, most of the time a person has ready access to each hemisphere, but sometimes they don’t, either because of stress or for some developmental reason. And of course, when learning is difficult for a particular child, the more stress they incur, which tends to exacerbate their problem in utilizing only one hemisphere.

Brain Gym® can help mitigate the effects of stress and developmental issues which also create stress. It can help build the neuronal pathways to ease a person’s access to each hemisphere.

People often ask me what the characteristics of each hemisphere are, so here is a brief summary.

Gestalt Brain Gifts and Qualities

Gestalt Brain is on the right in about 97% of people

Likes color

It is relational

Connectedness is important

Lumps things together

Okay with unbounded aspects of the world (because it can connect them)

Can handle paradox, unconventionality

and ambiguity because it finds patterns

Handles the unknown, novelty, well

because of greater interregional connectivity

It is sensitive

The artist self

Is okay with feeling states

Likes things to be colorful!

Charts emotional nuances of thought
Produces imagistic thinking
Damage to this impairs ability to express/interpret feelings
Emotionally and physically expressive

In processing information

All-at-once (simultaneous) processing
Of many simultaneous stimuli
Processes things as single unit, e.g. it sees the whole face, whole poem, whole work of art
Transformative open-ended ideation

What it sees

The forest, not the trees
The whole
Sees correspondences, resemblances
Connects the world into related wholes

As a learner

It is visual
Can remember complex images
Uses pictures not words
Responds to words as images and words recalled as a single unit, e.g., jingles, poems
Has limited syntax
Discovers "what"
Receptive to words as design: "wide warm woman, white-thighed. Wooed and wed."
Tactile; kinesthetic
Likes movement; gestures when talking
Manual—hands on learning
Communicates in metaphors and stories

It is original/imaginative

Great at beginnings, initial start up Better in initial stages of doing something new
Wondering, exploring, inquisitive, receptive
It lives in the moment
It is intuitive

And, because it sees nuances, doesn't give "yes/no" answers

Logic Brain Gifts and Qualities

Logic Brain **IS** On the left in about 97% of people

Sees things in black and white

In processing information

Processes one thing at a time and only a small portion of a thing at a time

Processes in orderly sequence—A to B

Produces logical, linear thinking

Processes very quickly

Looks at the details (e.g., notices a wart, a hair on chin, details of painting,
without seeming to see the whole

Doesn't like to move a lot

It is distinguishing

Sees the trees not the forest

The critical self

Can be a critical censor

Analyzes component parts (of sentence, poem)

Splits the world into identifiable, namable bits

Sees differences

Is logical—sees cause and effect

Is receptive to verifiable aspects of the world

Charts informational aspects of thought

Rule governed

Draws on pre-existing fixed codes

Relies on previously accumulated information

Governs syntax—grammatical use of words

Has great command of language

Makes distinctions

What it sees and how it describes

Is expressive in words used primarily as description:

e.g., "A woman is a female human being."

Spelling

Remembers complex motor sequences

Talks and talks and talks

Sees things in black and white

As a learner

Knows "how"

Has sequential neuronal organization so is great with routine, already established processes

Can be extremely literal

Great at repetitively predictable information

e.g., you always do the same things to start car

Great at maintaining and utilizing existing systems

Prefers auditory information

Damage to this impairs speech

Thinkers

Needs to talk to learn

Analyzes

Takes notes

Prints

Exact communication

Careful with details

But there is more! Carla Hannaford, an expert in brain usage and a Brain Gym instructor has determined that most teachers are Logic Brain dominant and tend to teach in a way that is easy for Logic Brain people to understand and difficult for Gestalt Brain people to understand. Small wonder that there are more Gestalt Brain dominant children in special ed classes. These children are not stupid! They simply need to be given the tools to help them easily access both hemispheres of their brains. Brain Gym very often can help them!!!

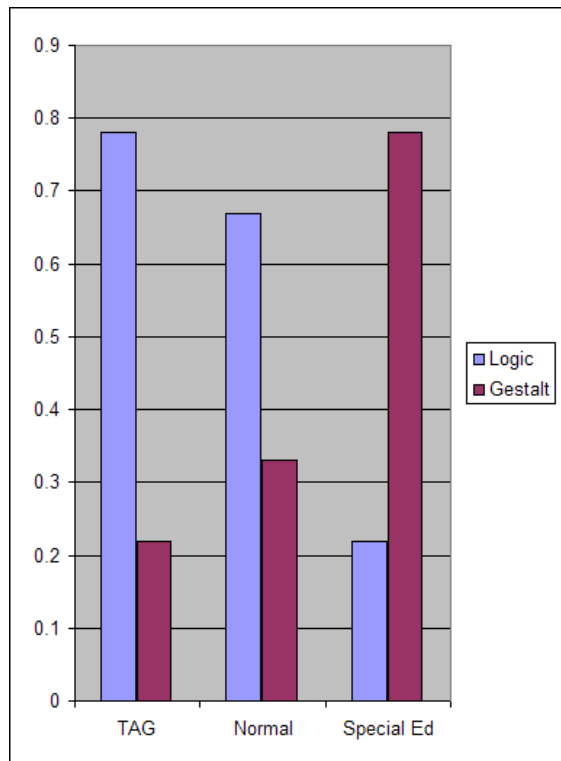
Comparison: Logic and Gestalt Brain Dominance

Talented and Gifted, Normal,

Special Education Students

(Source: Smart Moves, p. 203)

	Percentages	
	Logic	Gestalt
TAG	0.78	0.22
Normal	0.67	0.33
Special Ed	0.22	0.78



This material was taken from: Brain Gym® classes, Gabrielle Lusser Rico, *Writing the Natural Way*, Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1983 and
 Carla Hannaford, *The Dominance Factor*, Salt Lake City: Great River Books, 1997

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