

## How Our Brains Function

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, creativity is the new commodity and we can stimulate and nurture this by encouraging our students to take risks by linking their thinking and learning.

For us to be in a position to deliver on this, we must understand how the brain works and be confident in integrating this knowledge into our students' learning and into our teaching.

The brain is composed of two very distinct operational sides; the left brain and right brain work together through a complex exchange of electronic connections.

The left brain controls the right side of our bodies and its strengths lie in working with:

- \* numbers and order
- \* logic
- \* time and motion
- \* verbal and written
- \* relating to our formal teaching

The right brain controls the left side of our bodies and its strengths lie in working with:

- \* visual perspectives
- \* creating and imagining
- \* music and rhythm
- \* lateral daydreaming
- \* looking for patterns and connections to how things relate to our world

Time spent learning more about our brain's functioning will considerably enhance learning and teaching in our classrooms.

Following are some strategies to use that will optimise our students' brain functioning:

Students' brains get bored very easily and as such:

- after 30 minutes on the same material their brains will "turn off" and very little remembering or connecting will occur
- therefore every 30 minutes move onto something different

For revision, every 50 minutes subject learning

- ask students to spend 10 minutes that night reviewing it
- encouraging nightly reviewing of the day's class learning will benefit understanding and retention
- without this reviewing, 60% of learning is lost within 24 hours; why bother learning the material in the first place?
- repetition, routine and recognising patterns are what the brain thrives on
- using our brain's strengths moves learnt material from the short term to the long term memory storage tanks and enables our students to extend their understandings.

Real learning takes place not in putting material into students' memory storage tanks, but rather when students have to retrieve it, apply it to situations and create new understandings to discover how it connects in their worlds.

"The chief purpose of the body is to carry the brain around" Thomas Edison