

Education NEWS & NOTES

Educator Proposes Engaging The Whole Mind

(NAPSA)—Increasingly, students are called on to handle schedules crammed with classes, sports, volunteering, jobs, and family and social obligations.

According to one leading educator, students might find life—and multitasking—a little easier if they were encouraged and trained to call on both the logical and the emotional when learning.

Sometimes referred to as “left brain” and “right brain” learning, each approach emphasizes a different way to organize and process information. According to Dr. Karen M. Ristau, president of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), a student characterized as a “left-sided learner” tends to be more analytical and verbal. This individual responds to logic, thinks ahead, is punctual and prefers a formal approach to study.

The “right-sided learner” is said to be more visually oriented and spontaneous and responds to emotion. He or she may be more impulsive and studies best when music is in the background. The left-brain student prefers to work alone while the right-brain child opts for working in groups.

Said Ristau, “Nurturing a whole-brained child should be the goal of both parents and teachers. Too often, schools emphasize the left brain and the wonders and capabilities of right-side thinkers are downplayed.”

She also believes that as the primary educators of their children, parents should be pleased to know that babies do not have a left or right preference.

Said Dr. Ristau, “The good news is that it’s possible to expand the mind so a child becomes more of a whole-brain



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person—no matter what the age.”

The NCEA president, who has taught elementary through graduate-level students, noted that what’s referred to as left-brain learning can be enhanced through lectures or assigning individual reports. Using videos, role-playing and group projects are among the ways a teacher can tap into the strengths of right-brain learners.

The right brain is also seen by some as the avenue to the arts. “I’m strongly in favor of a vibrant arts program in all schools,” said Dr. Ristau, “including music, dance, poetry and theater. These activities help students develop creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They help young people think outside the box,” added Dr. Ristau.

Established in 1904, the NCEA is the largest private professional education organization in the world, representing 200,000 Catholic educators serving 7.6 million students.

To learn more, visit www.ncea.org.