

SPAN Meeting Minutes  
March 24, 2015

Welcome

Apryl Henry (Co-President) welcomed everyone and announced the next meeting. On Thursday April 23rd, Carol Malueg, President of MCGT, will lead a CHAT night on sibling relationships. The meeting will be at 7pm, in the WestWood Media Center.

Speaker

Apryl introduced our speaker Katy Hallberg. Katy was employed for thirty years in the Prior Lake–Savage Area School District, where she taught all but two existing math classes from grades seven through twelve. During her final eighteen years, Katy taught the AP Calculus classes at Prior Lake Senior High, developing the BC class after taking over the AB class. All of Katy's students took the AP exam, and 80 to 100% every year received the top scores of four or five. Katy was a frequent presenter at state and national math conferences.

Katy helped develop the district-wide Synergy program and led the gifted program at Prior Lake Senior High for over twenty years.

Although retired since 2007, Katy currently tutors between ten to twenty students a week in math, helping them move from underachievement to grades of A or B.

Katy received the Distinguished Educator Award from the Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation in 1991, the Prior Lake Secondary Teacher of Excellence Award in 1990, and was selected by the National Science Foundation in 1995 to receive the Minnesota Presidential Award for Excellence in Secondary Mathematics Teaching. In 2010, Katy was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Prior Lake Patrons of the Arts and Activities.

Katy began her talk by describing 21st century skills: students need to know how collaborate, work as part of a team, be creative, and use their imagination, critical thinking, and problem solving abilities. Gifted kids also need to view their abilities more as a talent, worthy of development, rather than as a gift, a known quantity with a limit to it. Gifts should be seen as strengths to be built upon and developed by teachers who can challenge them and in tough classes. Goal setting is important, as is developing dreams.

"Work," she reminded us, "is not a four-letter word, but a key to moving forward." Students for whom early computation came easily need to learn to see mathematical processes and others' ways of solving problems.

Students need to develop confidence in themselves and to learn from others. Mistakes are an important part of growth. Everyone has weaker areas and confidence can be found in overcoming adversity.

Students also need to develop study skills and organizational skills. These skills will be necessary for them to stay in and succeed in tough classes. They need to learn to work in study groups.

Katy then discussed right- vs left-brain learners. Left-brain learners learn sequentially but right-brain, or visual-spatial, learners need to see the big picture first and then can fill in details and algorithms. Visual-spatial learners need to see the reasons why they are doing something and see a simplified version of

the process to identify patterns and processes. Most people can learn either way but may prefer a visual-spatial learning process for a complicated problem and sequential (left-brain) instruction for easier problems. For some kids, as many as 1/3 of all middle school students, visual-spatial instruction is best.

Katy shared a checklist for self-evaluating whether you are a visual-spatial learner. The checklist is reproduced below. Right-brain learning uses the 21st century skills Katy listed at the start of the presentation. Visual-spatial learners are often not identified as gifted but are visionary leaders and creative people who make innovative breakthroughs. Visual-spatial learners might not know they are smart. They live in the present and don't see the consequences of their decisions.

A couple of books Katy recommended during her presentation are "Winners Dream: A Story from Corner Store to Corner Office" by Bill McDermott and "Upside Down Brilliance: The Visual Spatial Learner" by Linda Kreger Silverman.

Checklist for "Are You A Visual-Spatial Learner?" from "Upside Down Brilliance:"

## Are You a Visual-Spatial Learner?

**Please complete the following quiz to find out more about your learning style.**

	Yes	No
1. Do you think mainly in pictures instead of in words?		
2. Do you know things without being able to explain how or why?		
3. Do you solve problems in unusual ways?		
4. Do you have a vivid imagination?		
5. Do you remember what you see and forget what you hear?		
6. Are you terrible at spelling?		
7. Can you visualize objects from different perspectives?		
8. Are you organizationally impaired?		
9. Do you often lose track of time?		
10. Would you rather read a map than follow verbal directions?		
11. Do you remember how to get to places you visited only once?		
12. Is your handwriting slow and difficult for others to read?		
13. Can you feel what others are feeling?		
14. Are you musically, artistically, or mechanically inclined?		
15. Do you know more than others think you know?		
16. Do you hate speaking in front of a group?		
17. Did you feel smarter as you got older?		
18. Are you addicted to your computer?		

If you answered yes to **10** of the above questions, you are very likely to be a visual-spatial learner.

**This book was written for you!**  
(Hint: Start with the last chapter.)

From Silverman, L. K. (2002). *Upside-Down Brilliance: The Visual-Spatial Learner*. Denver: DeLeon Publishing.  
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