

Is creativity driven by the right side of the brain? Not necessarily, according to this study of jazz guitarists

According to a popular view, creativity is a product of the brain's right hemisphere – innovative people are considered “right-brain thinkers” while “left-brain thinkers” are thought to be [analytical and logical](#). Neuroscientists who are skeptical of this idea have argued that there is not enough evidence to support this idea and an ability as complex as human creativity must draw on vast swaths of both hemispheres. A new brain-imaging study out of Drexel University's Creativity Research Lab sheds light on this controversy by studying the brain activity of jazz guitarists during improvisation.

The study, which was recently published in the journal *NeuroImage*, showed that creativity is, in fact, driven primarily by the right hemisphere in musicians who are comparatively inexperienced at improvisation. However, [musicians](#) who are highly experienced at improvisation rely primarily on their left hemisphere. This suggests that creativity is a “right-brain ability” when a person deals with an unfamiliar situation but that creativity draws on well-learned, left-hemisphere routines when a person is experienced at the task.

By taking into consideration how brain activity changes with experience, this research may contribute to the development of new methods for training people to be creative in their field.

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