

YOUR FREE GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEEN'S THINKING STYLE

A Parent's Guide to Supporting Career
Choices & Academic Success



CLARITATE

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CHAPTER ONE

Supporting Your Teen's Journey

As your child approaches the end of high school, they face some of the most consequential decisions of their young lives. Which path should they pursue – work or study? What should they study? Which career path should they take? How can they find fulfilment in their future work?

As a parent, you want to provide guidance—but how can you help without imposing your own preferences or biases?

Consider these sobering statistics:

- 75% of Australian and New Zealand employees are disengaged or actively disengaged in their jobs (Gallup, 2024)
- 58.7% of secondary school students don't have enough information to make a career choice (Education Services Australia, 2018)
- More than 2 million Australians report their highest qualification is unrelated to their current role (ABS, 2024)

These numbers reveal a troubling pattern: many young people enter career paths that don't align with their natural thinking styles and preferences, potentially leading to disengagement, wellbeing struggles, and multiple career changes being made in an attempt to find the right fit.

This guide will help you understand how your teen's thinking preferences influence their learning style, decision making process, and potential career satisfaction. With this knowledge, you can better support them in making choices that truly align with who they are.

CHAPTER TWO

What is the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument?

The Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI®) is a powerful assessment tool that identifies and measures thinking preferences. Developed by Ned Herrmann while he was a manager at General Electric, the HBDI has been used by millions of people worldwide to gain insights into their cognitive processes.

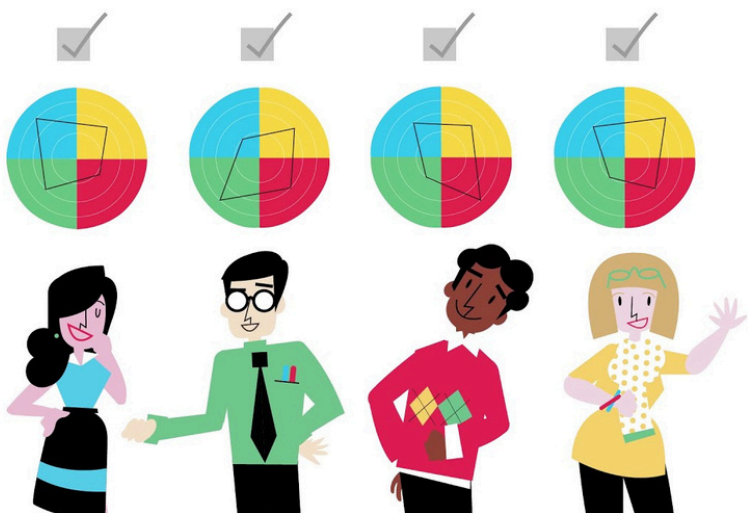
Unlike personality tests that categorise people into fixed types, the HBDI recognises that everyone uses all thinking modes, but typically has stronger preferences for certain approaches. These preferences shape how we:

- Process information
- Make decisions
- Communicate with others
- Approach problems
- Learn new material
- Experience satisfaction in our work

Understanding these preferences can help your teen identify study methods that work best for them, recognise potential career paths where they'll naturally excel, and develop strategies to strengthen less preferred thinking styles when needed.

CHAPTER THREE

The 4 Thinking Styles



The HBDI model divides thinking preferences into four distinct quadrants, often represented by different colours:

Blue Quadrant (Analytical Thinking)

- Logical, rational, and fact based
- Focused on numbers, analysis, and technical aspects
- Values precision, clarity, and quantifiable results
- Learns through logical reasoning and critical thinking

Green Quadrant (Practical Thinking)

- Organised, sequential, and detail oriented
- Focused on implementation, structure, and procedures
- Values reliability, timeliness, and practicality
- Learns through step by step processes and hands on experiences

CHAPTER THREE

Red Quadrant (Relational Thinking)

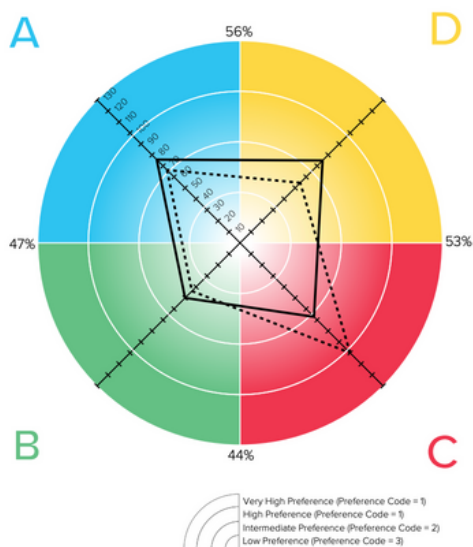
- Intuitive, empathetic, and people focused
- Centred on emotional connections and interpersonal dynamics
- Values teamwork, communication, and emotional expression
- Learns through discussion, collaboration, and personal connection

Yellow Quadrant (Experimental Thinking)

- Creative, holistic, and big picture oriented
- Focused on innovation, possibilities, and future implications
- Values originality, experimentation, and conceptual understanding
- Learns through exploration, visualisation, and making connections

Everyone uses all four quadrants to some degree, but most people have stronger preferences for one or two.

Your teen's particular combination of preferences creates a unique thinking profile that influences how they learn, communicate, and approach challenges.



Individual Result Example

CHAPTER FOUR

How Thinking Preferences Impact Career and Study Choices

Your teen's thinking preferences have profound implications for their educational and career satisfaction. When students pursue paths aligned with their natural thinking styles, they typically experience:

- Greater enjoyment of their studies or work
- Improved academic or occupational performance
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Higher motivation and engagement
- Clearer sense of purpose, direction and connection to their career

Conversely, when there's a significant mismatch between thinking style and chosen path, students can struggle with:

- Motivation and focus issues
- Difficulty mastering required skills
- Feelings of inadequacy or impostor syndrome
- Confusion about their future direction
- Diminished confidence in their abilities

CHAPTER FOUR

Understanding these connections can help your teen make more informed choices. For example:

- A student with strong analytical (blue) preferences might thrive in engineering, mathematics, finance, or scientific research
- A student with dominant practical (green) thinking might excel in accounting, project management, healthcare administration, or skilled trades
- A student with relational (red) strengths might find fulfilment in counselling, teaching, human resources, or community services
- A student with experimental (yellow) tendencies might flourish in entrepreneurship, marketing, design, or creative fields



Of course, many careers draw on multiple thinking styles, and understanding one's whole profile including areas of more and less preferred areas provides the most complete picture for career planning.

CHAPTER FIVE

Signs Your Teen May Be Heading Down the Wrong Path

Sometimes teens choose directions based on external pressures rather than internal alignment. Watch for these warning signs that your child might be pursuing a path that doesn't match their thinking preferences:

- Persistent procrastination on course selection or application processes
- Heightened anxiety when discussing certain subjects or career options
- Enthusiasm about the outcomes of a path (salary, prestige) but not the actual work involved
- Difficulty articulating why they're interested in a particular field beyond "it's what I should do"
- Dropping previously enjoyed extracurricular activities related to their natural strengths or areas of enjoyment
- Sudden personality changes when discussing future plans
- Comparing themselves negatively to peers who have different thinking styles or approaches

If you notice these signs, it may be time for a deeper conversation about thinking preferences and authentic career alignment.

CHAPTER SIX

Beyond University: Exploring Alternative Pathways

While university remains a valuable option for many students, it's not the only path to a successful, fulfilling career. Different thinking styles may naturally gravitate toward different educational approaches:

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Hands on learners (often with green quadrant strengths) frequently thrive in structured, skills based training programs. VET qualifications can lead to rewarding and well paying careers in high demand fields like:

- Construction and trades
- Healthcare support
- Information technology
- Hospitality management
- Advanced manufacturing

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

These programs combine practical work experience with structured learning ideal for many practical and relational thinkers. Benefits include:

- Earning while learning
- Building industry connections
- Gaining recognised qualifications
- Developing real world skills
- Clear career progression

CHAPTER SIX



Entrepreneurship and Self Directed Learning

Creative, big picture thinkers (yellow quadrant) sometimes flourish outside traditional educational structures, pursuing:

- Business startups
- Online education and certifications
- Portfolio careers
- Creative industries
- Technology innovation

Gap Years with Purpose

A structured gap year can provide valuable exploration time for teens still discovering their thinking preferences through:

- Volunteer programs
- Work experience in various fields
- Travel with educational components
- Skill building workshops and short courses
- Industry immersion programs

As a parent, one of the most valuable things you can do is familiarise yourself with these alternatives and discuss them openly, without judgment or preconceptions about which paths are “best.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

How to Have Meaningful Conversations About the Future

Discussing career and study options with your teen can be challenging. Here are some strategies for productive conversations that honour their thinking preferences:

Create a Safe Space

- Approach discussions with genuine curiosity rather than an agenda
- Acknowledge that their thinking style may differ from your own
- Listen actively without immediately offering solutions
- Validate their concerns and aspirations

Ask Thoughtful Questions

- "What would you want to do as a job if you couldn't fail?"
- "Which subjects energise you versus drain you?"
- "What problems do you enjoy solving?"
- "When do you feel most confident and capable?"
- "What would you like to do in your job?" ie tasks as opposed to "What do you want to be?"

CHAPTER SEVEN

Share Information, Not Directives

- Offer resources about various career paths
- Connect them with people in fields that might match their thinking style
- Discuss labour market trends without pressure to conform to them
- Explore case studies of people with similar thinking preferences

Support Exploration

- Encourage job shadowing and informational interview opportunities
- Help them find internships or volunteer opportunities
- Attend career expos and university open days together
- Suggest they complete relevant online short courses to test interest

Remember that your role is to guide and support, not to choose for them. By understanding their thinking preferences, you can help them discover paths where they're most likely to thrive.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Common Misconceptions About Thinking Styles

When supporting your teen, it's important to avoid these common misunderstandings about thinking preferences:

Myth: Thinking preferences are the same as intelligence.

Reality: The HBDI measures preferences, not capacity. Your teen can do well in any area with proper support and motivation, regardless of their natural preferences.

Myth: Some thinking styles are better than others.

Reality: Each thinking style brings valuable strengths to different situations. There is no "best" profile only different approaches that contribute in different ways.

Myth: Thinking preferences never change.

Reality: While core preferences tend to be stable, thinking styles can evolve through experience, education, and conscious development. Your teen is not locked into one way of thinking.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Myth: Career choices should be based solely on thinking style.

Reality: While thinking preferences are important, values, interests, skills, and market opportunities are also factors to be considered in career planning.

Myth: Focusing only on preferences is the best approach.

Reality: While leveraging stronger preferences is important, developing capacity in less preferred thinking styles creates greater versatility and opens more opportunities.

Understanding these nuances helps you provide balanced guidance that recognises your teen's unique cognitive profile while encouraging growth and exploration.

CHAPTER NINE

The HBDI Assessment Experience: What to Expect

The Assessment

A 25-minute, 120-question online inventory exploring preferences in activities, subjects, and communication styles. There are no right or wrong answers - just honest self reflection.

The Results

You'll receive a detailed profile showing thinking preferences across four quadrants, plus visual representations of your style, communication preferences, career insights, and strategies for leveraging strengths while developing adaptability.

The Debrief Session

A certified practitioner guides you through your results, connecting preferences to educational and career options while developing practical, personalised strategies.

CHAPTER NINE



The Application

Receive tailored study recommendations, career pathway exploration, communication strategies for family and school relationships, and approaches for developing all thinking quadrants.

Many families complete the process together, with parents taking their own assessments or joining their teen's debrief, creating stronger foundations for support and communication.

CHAPTER TEN

Real Success Stories: Parents & Students Share Their Experiences

"The assessment gave me real insight into my thinking preferences and career alignment, but the personal conference made all the difference. It was tailored to my goals and made me feel truly heard. I definitely feel more confident about my future." — Charlie, Year 12 Student

"The process was streamlined and the report thorough, but Christina's consultation was fantastic. She linked the data to real-world situations that helped us think about making our daughter's future study and work enjoyable and meaningful." — Tijana, Parent

"The debrief gave me clearer understanding of my daughter's decision making and possible career paths. It fostered open communication and built confidence for both of us." — K, Parent

"Claritate helped my Year 12 son understand how his thought patterns align with career paths, and these insights have become a reference point in our family discussions. I'm now considering the assessment for our whole family." — Nicole, Parent

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Practical Strategies for Supporting Different Thinking Styles

Once you understand your teen's thinking preferences, tailor your support accordingly:

For Analytical (Blue) Thinkers: Provide research and data about career options, discuss long term outcomes, respect their need to thoroughly analyse decisions, and connect them with analytical mentors.

For Practical (Green) Thinkers: Offer structure and concrete information, break decisions into manageable steps, provide hands-on experiences, and support organisational systems.

For Relational (Red) Thinkers: Create space for emotional processing, facilitate conversations with career professionals, validate social concerns, and discuss how choices align with values and relationships.

For Experimental (Yellow) Thinkers: Encourage exploration of unconventional options, allow brainstorming time, help translate ideas into plans, and support their need to see the bigger picture.

Remember: Most teens have combined preferences, so effective support often blends these approaches to match their unique profile.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Taking the Next Step with Claritate



The HBDI assessment helps your teen make better decisions about study and career paths by understanding their thinking preferences.

Claritate offers professional HBDI assessments, personalised debrief sessions, family discussions, and practical application strategies.

100% of participants gain actionable insights to align their thinking preferences with meaningful study and work.

Ready to help your teen gain clarity? Visit Claritate's website today to start the assessment process. You're providing your teen with self-awareness that will benefit them throughout their educational journey, career, and life.



www.claritate.com.au

The Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) is a registered
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