The Seating Chart Problem: The Case of Philip

The phenomenon of left-handedness initially captivated my attention in 1977. In that year, I completed my university education. At a school with a unique art program, I started my teaching career.

A task requiring spatial orientation and imagination was difficult for a left-handed student to comprehend and complete. In each class, I asked a student chosen at random to create the seating chart from the viewpoint I see the class. With the exception of a seventh-grade class, I received the requested seating chart without any errors.

Philip (12 years old) initially mirrored the seating chart horizontally, resulting in the back row becoming the front row from my perspective. I told him that it was wrong and asked him to draw another one. In my opinion, the new chart switched the order of the right and left sides. Philip had now turned the seating chart around vertically. This had never happened before, and I was surprised that the child had trouble giving me the right seating chart. Philip looked lost and stumped; he had no idea what was wrong with his seating chart.

This sudden and shocking event has led me to wonder if handedness is more than just a preference for one's hand.

Since the first time I encountered the startling phenomenon, I have been collecting case studies to support the idea that left-handed people experience the world essentially differently. After some time, it has become evident that there are existing patterns in the thought processes and world sensations of left-handed individuals, with clear outlines that support the accurate and certain identification of the observable differences. It was feasible to identify underlying structures and relationships that were not immediately apparent through the observation of behaviors, interactions, responses, or reactions. Observing the phenomena associated with left-handed dominance in their natural environment facilitated a more profound contextual comprehension.

In my book I try to find answer and proper explanation for all these experiences.