

Case Studies – Brain Damage

Directions: All of the following case studies are based on actual patients. Using the information provided, indicate as much as you can about the location of the brain damage experienced by each of the following individuals.

Note: Answers may vary, but be sure to explain your diagnosis.

Case Study #1

Jill Bolte Taylor, PhD describes her stroke in her book, *My Stroke of Insight*. As a neuroanatomist, Dr. Taylor is able to discuss what it felt like to live through a stroke and the experience of being very conscious of what was happening to her body. Dr. Bolte Taylor reported losing control over her right arm as it fell limp at her side. She also lost the ability to perceive where her body ended and where the space around her began. She tried to call for help, and after much effort dialed the numbers to both her workplace and her doctor's office only to find that she could not articulate the words she had been practicing in her mind. In addition, Dr. Bolte Taylor could no longer distinguish writing as writing, but rather viewed printed words as a series of squiggles she could not decipher.

Case Study #2

In his book, *The Man who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Oliver Sacks, PhD describes the case study, which became the namesake for the book. The individual displayed some minor issues with muscle strength, coordination and reflexes on the left side of his body. During a neurological exam, he took off his left shoe to scratch his foot but then forgot what he had just done. He could describe pictures in magazines only by indicating their more specific features, but was unable to describe the picture as a whole. He mistook Dr. Sacks for a grandfather clock until he spoke, and believed that his wife's hair was his hat. He lacked the ability to recognize facial expressions or the faces of specific people until they spoke. He often sang to himself as he completed tasks. He could easily complete a task uninterrupted, but when distracted could not recall the task on which he was previously focused.
