

The relationship between language learning and multiple intelligences



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Introduction

Students' ability to learn a second language differs from each other, and each student learns a material better in a special method. These differences rely on students' ability, or to be specially mentioned on their intelligence. When you study about intelligence regarding to language learning you will find a theory based on multiple intelligences. In this research I'm going to find definitions for these entities and try to recognize the relationship which exists between language learning and Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT).

Students should be presented various ways of work with text, words, etc. so they can find the best way that works for them. Also cooperation among teachers and psychologists must be established. So they can improve teaching and also students' learning. The University teachers should meet each other at conferences, solve and discuss some of their problems. They should also discuss their methodology issues. They should always develop their knowledge, skills and abilities in their field. And these are all because the traditional method of learning language doesn't fulfill today's need for training.

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) (1983, 1999) is a model that describes nine different intelligences. It has been developed to understand how individual differences can be improved in the classroom.

The nine intelligences are defined as follow:

Verbal/Linguistic:

Involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn

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languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information..

Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence.

Logical/Mathematical:

It is the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner's words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically.

This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

Visual/Spatial:

Consists of the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas.

Bodily/Kinesthetic:

Involves the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Howard Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related.

Musical/Rhythmic:

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It is the skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

Interpersonal:

It involves the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others. Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and counselors all need a well-developed interpersonal intelligence.

Intrapersonal:

Consists of the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations. In Howard Gardner's view it involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives.

Naturalist:

Makes human beings able to recognize, categorize and draw upon certain features of the environment. It ' combines a description of the core ability with

a characterization of the role that many cultures value.

Activities which can be used in classroom regarding to multiple intelligences are as followed:

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Linguistic-Verbal Intelligence: Write a letter to a friend that tells about the target country.

Mathematical-Logical Intelligence: Create a graph or chart that shows the highest mountains, rivers, vs. and the biggest cities, vs. to the target culture.

Spatial Intelligence: Prepare a journey brochure that shows the tourist destinations in the target country.

Interpersonal-Social Intelligence: Act out a play that presents a daily life in the target country.

Personal Intelligence: Listen to a cassette and then reflect some of the parts of daily lives in the target country by writing on a piece of paper.

Kinaesthetic Intelligence: Create a map and then show important cultural and historical buildings in the target country.

Musical-Rhythmic Intelligence: Sing a popular song by using an instrument and then present some of the popular singers in the target country to the class.

Naturalistic Intelligence: Explore the plants and animals that grow up and live in the target country.

Existential Intelligence: Analyse the cultural traits of the people in the target country by showing daily clothes and materials, which reflects the target culture, people wear and use there. (Bas, 2008, p. 9)

For learning language to the pupils several points should be noted:

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Words are not enough for language learning. Do not rely on the spoken word only. Most activities for the younger learners should include movement and involve the senses, colours and sounds. You will need to have plenty of objects and pictures to work with, and to make full use of the school and classroom and your surroundings. Demonstrate what you want them to do. The balance will change as the children get older, but appealing to the senses, colours, sounds, and movements will always help the pupils to learn.

Think about children telling jokes. Five year olds laugh because everybody else does, but they do not always understand the joke. If they are asked to re-tell the joke, it will be nonsense. Seven-year-olds think jokes are funny and they learn them off by heart. This means that they often get the punch line wrong or have to be prompted. Ten and eleven-year-olds remember jokes and can work out the punch line from the situation. The system of language and the understanding of it seems to fall into place for many children in the same way. Students, in this regard, can create puppets and then tell jokes to their peers. They can also compose a song for the joke and then act out the joke in the classroom. In this way, jokes encourage children to think.

Let the pupils talk to themselves. Make them play with the language by making up rhymes, singing songs, telling stories, etc. in the classroom. Children love songs, rhymes, stories and chants and their repetitive nature and rhythm make them an ideal vehicle for language learning.

Encouraging children to clap the beat as they go along or say rhymes will help to develop a sense of rhythm in English. Additionally, pupils draw (or

colour) pictures of songs, rhymes and chants: they can also act out the songs, rhymes and chants and then apply those to new atmospheres. As can be seen, according to Brewster et al. (2003), songs, rhymes and chants can contribute to the child's global development in many different ways. The main overall purpose, however, is that singing, chanting and acting together is fun and it stimulates the child's sense of humour. So this helps children play with the target language in humorous and fun environment.

4. Multiple Intelligences theory is based on cooperation not on competition. So because of this reason, avoid prizes and awards in the class. In this regard, make room for shared experiences because they are a valuable source for language work and create an atmosphere of involvement and togetherness. We all enjoy the feeling of belonging and this is particularly true of young children.

Group the children together whenever and wherever possible. This does not mean that they have to work in groups all the time, but most children like to have other children around them, and also sitting with others encourages cooperation. Genuine cooperative pairwork or group work is usually the result of a long process. Also, working with dialogues with pairs or groups is a useful way to develop the cooperative atmosphere in the classroom. Pupils with their own peers can collaborately work in the classroom. They can draw pictures, compose songs, rhymes and chants, play games (word, card games, vs.), act out drama, etc. together. So with this way, pupils do not afraid of a possible failure, or on the contrary of that, they work out in a

fearless and reinforcing atmosphere in the classroom that “ learning” materialises in a natural way.

5. EFL teachers of young learners are now more familiar with an acquisition-based methodology, and recognise the true value of using storybooks and storytelling as a way to create an acquisition rich environment and ideal learning conditions which provide comprehensible input. Children enjoy listening to stories in their L1 and understand the conventions of narrative. For instance, as soon as they hear the formula “ Once upon a time...”, they know what to expect next! For this reason, storybooks can provide an ideal introduction to the foreign language as it is presented in a context that is familiar to the child. Stories can also provide the starting point for a wide variety of related language and learning activities (Brewster, Ellis and Girard, 2003). Stories and storybooks have always been useful and rich in vocabulary and grammar patterns. Storybooks, additionally, that is to say, after positive concrete outcomes in the form of games, competitions, quizzes, drama, songs, projects, book making, colouring, etc. They also develop children’s learning strategies such as listening for general meaning, predicting, guessing meaning, and hypothesizing. Plus, they help children to link fantasy with the real world. Moreover, most children are familiar with most of the stories, so they work with familiar contexts when they work with stories. Teachers can also use picture strip stories where students are expected to re-tell a story by using the visual.

Once Multiple Intelligences Theory is understood, it can be applied
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in education in a variety of ways. There is no one definite way through which the theory can be applied in education. The theory is very flexible and it can be adapted to the context in which it is applied. The theory can be performed in a wide range of instructional contexts.

Using MI in instruction means that students learn in different ways and express their understanding in many ways. Using paper and pencil measures as traditional measures limits the students' capacity to the linguistic skills which they use in writing their answers.

Under the use of MI-Based instruction, the students are treated as individuals. The students' talents and interests are not ignored because it is not fair to concentrate on some students and neglect others whose capacities and talents are not well-identified.

Traditionally, many learning contexts have been organized and many teachers have taught as if all learners were the same. One of the most significant advances in education in the last decades of the twentieth century has come from a considerable amount of research done in the area of learning styles which recognizes that the students in our classrooms have greatly different learning profiles.

Gardner's research has shown that learners of any subject will make greater progress if they have the opportunity to use their areas of strength to master the necessary material. He recommends that teachers use a wide variety of ways to deal with the subject because "genuine understanding is most likely to emerge and be apparent to others... if people possess a number of ways of representing knowledge of a concept or skill and can move readily back and forth among these forms"(Gardner, 1991: 13).

A research has been done to find whether there is a significant difference between female and male students in terms of their types of intelligences.

Results show that intrapersonal, linguistic, logical, and musical intelligences were more common among females. Further analysis of group differences revealed a significant difference between males and females only in linguistic intelligence.

Another research concerned the relationship between parents' educational background and students' intelligence types. One way ANOVA test did not reveal any differences between groups of students whose parents had different levels of education.

Based on MIT intelligences are as tools that are changeable and trainable: "while traditional intelligence tests are based on the notion that the general faculty of intelligence is an inborn attribute that does not change over the time, the MIT asserts that there are skills universal to human species, related to the culture nurturing that domain and that develop according to

experience, age and training" (Armstrong, Kennedy & Coggins, 2002: 11).
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We know most individuals are capable of learning a second language to some degree of competence, but some learners are better equipped for the second language learning task than others. An expert emphasizes that language performance is memory and accessibility dependent; in classroom language learning MIT can provide a basis for developing more effective communicators in the target language by helping learners to connect with the learning activities and to activate linguistic information stored in memory.

Students learn better if they like what they are learning and enjoy

it. It is hard for students to learn without interest. When students do not

like what they learn, they feel bored and tired even if they are able to

learn well and succeed in the final exam. Therefore, it is better to create

an enjoyable classroom atmosphere in which students like what they learn

and enjoy it.

MI Theory is greatly required so as to deal with the different students who

have different minds. It will involve all the students with their different

personalities to have more chance for learning and achieving success in

spite of these differences that cannot be considered.

Applying MI theory in education involves using it as a content of

instruction and as a means of conveying this content at the same time.

This indicates that using MI Theory can take many forms. The ultimate goal of any form in which the theory is used is to facilitate instruction as much as possible, and reaching all the students at the same time.

Conclusion:

In teaching English, Multiple Intelligences-Based Instruction can be effective in many ways; the students are given many options and opportunities to express themselves in the English language. Most of University teachers would be willing to take part in the regular seminars, workshops or lectures where the latest trends in teaching would be presented. Teachers at the elementary and secondary schools are forced to their further professional development and also there are Methodology centers who regularly organize the meetings and schoolings of those teachers. On the other hand, the University teachers have chance to meet each other at conferences and solve and discuss some of their problems but still, many times they do not discuss the methodology issues but their field problems. The truth is that University teachers are still teachers, no matter that part of their duties is the scientific research in the particular fields, primarily they should be teachers. This means they should regularly develop their knowledge, skills and abilities in this field as well. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences makes educators question their work and encourage them look beyond the narrow confines of the dominant discourses of the four skills development (reading, writing, listening and speaking). The teachers have

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to do their best in order to develop the materials in a way that makes them appropriate to address the students' multiple intelligences.