

The impact of integrating multiple intelligence theory education essay



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Research in the field of English as a Second Language has sought to determine the effectiveness of Multiple Intelligence Theory MI on English learning. This paper presents the efficacy of MI on the achievement of students in the 2nd High School in Qatif in all skills of English learning. The goals were clearly set to examine the effectiveness of MI in developing the students' skill levels and to follow their advance by taking tests and their participation in the lesson. This research was carried out by using some research tools such as an electronic questionnaire, observation and tests to elicit learners' perceptions, scores and reactions about integrating MI in the classroom. Finally, the sample group answered the e-questionnaire. The application of MI resulted in improving the students' level regardless of their religion, social class, intelligence level, languages, cultures, civilizations, nationalities as it differs from traditional learning styles. More studies involving the use of MI were recommended since educational philosophies bring new applications and methods into language teaching and learning.

Key words: Multiple Intelligence Theory (MI)

Integrating Multiple Intelligence Theory in ESL Teaching

for First Secondary Stage in the 2nd Secondary School in Qatif

1- Introduction

English is the foreign language in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Ministry of Education concerns about teaching the English language at schools since the fourth elementary stage because it has become especially important for later education and instruction in universities and institutes. It is also a basic requirement to get a good job.

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Nowadays, there are many teaching styles which help the teachers providing a good instructional and learning environment for their students and enhance the teaching process. One of the modern approaches in teaching provided by constructivists is “ the Theory of Multiple Intelligence” which is created and developed in 1983 by Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University. It was first published in his book, ‘ Frames of Mind.’

Gardner first defined intelligence on that book as “ the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings” (Gardner, 1999, p. 33) Then after about 20 years he gave a more advanced definition of intelligence. He conceived it as “ a biopsychological process of information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” Gardner opposed strongly to those psychologists who believed that an individual has one faculty and one is either “ smart” or “ stupid”. He expanded the term intelligence to include more than faculty and these faculties are relatively independent on one another. Gardner concerned about the educational implications of MI theory so that he conducted some research on education in the concluding chapters of Frame of Minds.

Gardner believes that each individual has a different mind, and no two profiles of intelligence are the same. He states that an individual may excel in one, two or more than of these, but no one surpasses at them all. Gardner first declares that human beings have seven different kinds of intelligence that reflect different ways of interacting in our life and communicating with the world. These intelligences are musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences. Then in 1994, <https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-integrating-multiple-intelligence-theory-education-essay/>

he appraise evidence for the existence of two new intelligences a naturalist intelligence and existential intelligence. Also he discovered much more deeply the relation between intelligences and introduced three distinct uses of the term "intelligence". According to Howard Gardner, "intelligence can be defined in three ways as: (i) a property of all human beings; (ii) a dimension on which human beings differ; and (iii) the ways in which one carries out a task in virtue of one's goals" (Gardner, Howard, 2003)

On his Paper titled as Multiple Intelligences After Twenty Years presented at the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Gardner declared that he is exerting efforts to suggest new intelligences. Adding to the discovery of emotional intelligences, he works hard to describe a spiritual intelligence and a sexual intelligence. His "colleague Antonio Battro has proposed the existence of a digital intelligence.... and at this conference, Michael Posner has challenged me to consider "attention" as a kind of intelligence." (Gardner, Howard, 2003)

Gardner says that these dissimilarities between learners "challenge an educational system that assumes that everyone can learn the same materials in the same way and that a uniform, universal measure suffices to test student learning. Indeed, as currently constituted, our educational system is heavily biased toward linguistic modes of instruction and assessment and, to a somewhat lesser degree, toward logical-quantitative modes as well." (Gardner, Unschooled Mind, 2011)

Gardner indicates that by introducing a broader range of learning methods, (known as the intelligences) educators and indeed parents, can address an

individual's strengths and weaknesses by determining their preferred learning style. This would consequently give them the opportunity to learn in ways more productively to their unique minds.

Teachers should take in regards the learning styles of their students before integrating the MI Theory in any lesson. There are three main learning styles in the educational field, visual, kinesthetic and auditory.

Garner declared that " I am less persuaded that it can be useful in mastering a foreign language-though I admire those teachers of foreign languages who claim success using MI approaches." (Gardner, Howard, 2003) My research paper explores the impact of integrating Multiple Intelligence Theory of Gardner in teaching English as second language. It deals with its influence on the final outcome of teaching and learning process as it provide a suitable educational and instructional climate for learners of English. Also, it sheds the light about integrating it with technology to be more effective. Hoping that this research paper will be a supported source for English teachers in the Saudi schools who teach English in the traditional method and may encourage them to make more research about its effectiveness in the future as there is insufficiency of researching in this domain in Saudi educational system.

2- Statement of the Problem

The multiple intelligences theory has important entailments for education in general, and for language acquisition, in particular as many educators indicates. The theory has a successful and effective method for improving

English as a Second Language (ESL) and can help to develop students' achievements.

On the other hand, teachers and educators should renovate their teaching styles as a result of the broad concerns of researches in the educational field. Educational philosophy had adapted many philosophical theories which have their impacts on educational programs and curricula. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the effectiveness of such MI Theory on the performance of learners as providing various ways for identifying human intelligence and its impact on language acquisition.

2. 1. Aims of the Study

The main aim of this study is to clarify the importance of applying MI to improve the level of achievement among students in English language acquisition in The 2nd High School in Qatif. The results of this study shed some light on the advantages of using MI Theory as a new approach for teaching a foreign language used by teachers nowadays marking a revolution of the new century progress in the educational system and for better understanding and achievements. The second aim concerning my study to test the validity of integrating MI Theory into technology in the classroom.

2. 2. Research questions

The study attempts to answer this basic question:

1 - Are there significant differences, as measured by post-test, between the level of achievement among controlled student group who studied English language lessons in the traditional teaching style (based on the textbook in

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the classroom only) and the experimental student group who followed the same curriculum but applied by integrating MI together ?

The following sub-questions are included in the study:

- a) What are the appropriate examinations and evaluation methods for students in integrating MI in learning English language?
- b) How can students benefit from MI Theory?
- c) How can we improve the use of MI by integrating it with technology?
- d)-What are the implications of designing a classroom with different centers to apply MI instead of the traditional classroom?

2. 3. The Importance of the Study:

The domain of integrating MI Theory in Saudi Arabia is limited and_ more research is needed to prove its validity. Almost no studies about applying MI in English language acquisition or other subjects to Saudi students in different educational system have been conducted. Nasser Mansour conducted a research paper titled as Saudi Arabia secondary school teachers' views of the Multiple Intelligence

theory as an inclusive pedagogy in which he stated that " In Saudi Arabia schools, students come from a variety of ethnic, social and educational backgrounds. Secondary education has been slow to take diversity into account in the teaching/learning process, and developments like MI and other inclusive pedagogies are not common in Saudi Arabian schools.

Knowledge acquisition is the main function and transmission of knowledge

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through lectures is the main mode and the teacher-centered approach is dominant". (Mansour, 2007)

This study will shed light on the advantages of using MI in language learning generally and in other subjects learning particularly. This study also attempts to build a bridge connecting _ the theoretical and practical sides of using MI Theory as a new approach of teaching in Saudi schools. Therefore, the findings of this study may be useful and practical for many teachers and educators to develop instructional styles from the traditional into the most modern ones. Moreover, this study may help teachers obtain a new teaching approach in the classroom and to follow the progress which represents the new educational age.

Finally, this study may encourage other researchers to make more studies on the same domain and to enlarge them to include all school subjects which will enhance and enrich both local and international literature.

3. Limitation of the Study:

This study has the following limitations:

Thematic Limits:

To study the effect of MI in students' achievements of English language acquisition.

Place Limits:

The 2nd high School in Qatif- First Stage Secondary- 16-18 years old students.

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Time Limits:

Throughout the second term of the academic year 2011-2012.

4. Literature Review

There are many research papers conducted around the world to test the validity of Gardner's theory on Multiple Intelligences. In reviewing literature, the researcher found that it was rich of studies which encourage applying it in the classroom. Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory (MI) is the most practical and active policy for the new age which calls for applying it because it relies on many educational and instructional methods constructed on the appreciative differences in today's classrooms and educational institutions. MI as presented by McFarlane in his research paper titled as Multiple Intelligences: The Most Effective Platform for Global 21st Century Educational and Instructional Methodologies, is among different intelligence theories that has its exceptional platform dealing with human diversity characterizing individuals, and hence leads to a more effective and utilitarian approach to address unique learners in the classroom. As he stated that only multiple intelligences (MI) hold the influence and essential prospective for instructors or educators to develop elastic and broad enough methodologies and learning styles to address this different learners with their various skill sets or abilities. (A. McFarlane, 2011)

MI Theory in the EFL classroom helps language teachers to give importance to the whole and universal nature of learners and concerns about student diversity. It enables them to organize various ways that increases the attraction of language learning duties and therefore create favourable

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motivational conditions in the teaching field. Mirzazadeh in her research paper titled as Impacts of Multiple Intelligences on Learning English in the ESL Classroom stated that the possibilities of MI Theory improving academic scores in diverse disciplines such as foreign language teaching have been discussed universally. Beyond this, however, ideally learning in any classroom will include personal growth and development in all human dimensions. We are all so different basically because we all have different combinations of intelligences. If teachers familiar with this, they will have at least a better chance of dealing appropriately with the numerous problems that we face in the world. (Mirzazadeh, 2012)

MI Theory could help educators & teachers to explore the learning styles of each learner, improve learners attitudes towards learning and to develop their intelligence and thinking skills in English learning. Soleimani, Moinnzadeh, Kassaian & Ketabi conducted a research paper about The Effect of Instruction Based on Multiple Intelligences Theory on the Attitude and Learning of General English. According to the results of their research which indicated a significant difference between improving in General English course between experimental and control groups, the students taught based on MI theory exceeded the traditionally instructed students both in general and in each sub-skill of learning English (vocabulary, reading comprehension, and structure). The results also showed that attitude towards learning English in experimental group improved significantly. They mentioned that “ By applying MI theory EFL/ESL teachers can address the great diversity in learner, develop learner’s intelligences and “ create an individualized learning environment”. They stated that one of the problems of education

nowadays is lack of interest and motivation for those students who suffer weakness in acquiring English language. They believe strongly of the validity and effectiveness of MI Theory in improving the levels of students in learning English language. (Habib Soleimani, 2012)

MI Theory instruction is more effective compared with the traditional styles of teaching which don't attract and motivate students towards learning. They concentrate on some students' learning styles ignoring others'. They result in boring and unexciting classroom. On the other hand, it can be inferred that one of the reasons for efficiency of MI theory on the progress of students in English is the fact that in this method learning activities are in line with each of the Multiple intelligence. Thus all learners will have the opportunity of learning. In the same field of consistency with that notion, Mahnaz Saeidi on a research paper titled as The Implementation of Multiple Intelligences Theory in the Classroom: Different Ways of Learning and Teaching pointed out that there was a significant difference between post-tests of experimental and control groups in each of the three sub-skills of vocabulary, structure and reading comprehension when applying MIT. The results indicated that MI Theory has its role in changing the level of the experimental group. Saeidi declared that " Hall's research (2004) shows that teachers who have utilized multiple intelligence-based instruction in second or foreign language classrooms have observed students been more satisfied and had more positive attitudes towards learning English in experimental than the control group." (Saeidi, 2009)

MIT helps teachers to enhance classroom management skills. It has an effective and amazing effect in developing positive attitudes towards <https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-integrating-multiple-intelligence-theory-education-essay/>

learning and teachers using a variety of instructional strategies as well as assessment practices that addressed the multiple intelligences. Teachers attribute this positive reaction to the greater degree of flexibility, variety, and choice that MI strategies allowed students in their classrooms. MI theory in daily instruction develop academic achievement and student motivation. Haley and Marjourie Hall conducted a research paper about Learner-Centered Instruction and The Theory of Multiple Intelligences With Second Language Learners in which they pointed out that MI Theory based instructions strengthened the weakness of students in a Learner-centered instruction approach. It also demonstrated students' improvement can be affected greatly by a teacher's pedagogical style. They resulted that the experimental students were more enthusiastic about learning and behavior problems were minimized. They stated that the results provides further evidence that the theory of multiple intelligences may have significant implications for instruction in foreign and second language classrooms. MI theory has supported educational goals may discover multiple paths to contribute to their overall effectiveness as educators. (Hall, 2004)

Another research paper results consistent with the above view of MIT was conducted by Bas and Beyhan titled as Effects of multiple intelligences supported project-based learning on students' achievement levels and attitudes towards English lesson in which they declared that MI Theory instruction was more effective in the positive development of the students' attitudes and acquisition level. At the end of the research, it is revealed that there is a significant difference between the two groups. The experimental sample of students who are taught by MI supported project-based learning

has developed more positive attitude towards learning. They were more successful, happier during the learning process by providing them with rich learning environment and have a higher motivation level than the students who are taught by the traditional teaching ways. (Gokhan Bas, 2010)

MIT make a strong connection between the learners' social environment and knowledge acquired at schools. Hence, it facilitates learning and relates it to their real life. It converts the learner into an active member in the classroom. Honglin Zhu on his research paper titled as The Application of Multiple Intelligences Theory in Task-based Language Teaching has mentioned that "Bruner (1983) investigated why children find school learning so difficult. He discovered that this was because children experienced it as very separate from their real lives. His theory of learning is essentially "constructivist", a model of learning in which the child is seen as an "active agent" in his or her own learning, retaining, selecting and transforming information to construct knowledge which is shaped by his or her unique way of seeing and interpreting the world". "Bruner (1983) also thought that the child's learning is a process, not merely a product, which can be accelerated or enhanced by social and group processes." He has achieved a great influence on his students of the experimental group when applying the MI Theory. He found out that teaching ESL has a vital importance on the students' attitudes towards learning and it improves the teaching process. It resulted in the validity of combining the basic concepts of Howard Gardner's MI theory to improve the quality of teaching as well as the comprehensive qualities of students. (Zhu, 2011)

MIT contributes in changing the teachers' attitudes towards the learning and teaching styles positively. A study aimed to identify the effective application of MI Theory in English teaching resulted that teachers were affected profoundly by that approach. They felt that their concentration shifted into more learner-centered classroom. They were become more active and enthusiastic about applying that pedagogy. As Marjorie Haley on his research Understanding Learner-Centered Instruction from the Perspective of Multiple Intelligences stated that students showed great interest in MI concepts as positive responses to the increase variety of that instructional strategies used in teaching English language. The experimental students also indicated marvelous outcomes related to classroom performance and amazing achievement. It also had a positive impact on their attitude towards learning. (Haley)

As I indicated in my introduction that integrating MI Theory into technology results in more affective outcomes as technology is the aspect of the new age of information. Students engaged more in classroom activities merged with electronic games, drills, videos, power points, e-cards, tracks, multimedia flashes and so on make lessons more vital and motivate students to learn better than without it. As a proof of the validity of technology, In-Seok Kim conducted a research paper on The Relevance of Multiple Intelligences to CALL Instruction. The study indicated that CALL instruction assisted students increased their TOEIC listening scores as well as their MI quotients in significant ways. A general appreciative understanding of MI theory supports the concept that multimedia technology and CALL have a important part in the classroom. Since technology and MI offer a captivating

combination, maximizing the use of technology in language teaching is both encouraged and desired. (Kim, 2009)

According to Donovan," Further evidence of the formidability of multiple intelligences as the most suitable and effective platform for 21st century instructional and educational methodologies can be gleaned from the application of various technologies in the learning process." As technology is the aspect of the new age, we should integrate it in our educational system mixed with MI in order to create a new realm of modern instruction. (A. McFarlane, 2011)

In conclusion, having reviewed the above studies, we find that many researchers has affirmed the significance of applying MI Theory into language learning to improve students' achievement. It is obvious that using MIT is more effective in developing the students' level than using traditional teaching aids. Not many studies were found by my search which showed the inconvenience of using MIT in teaching English language. I searched in the international and local literature review fortunately most studies confirmed its validity but a Saudi researcher mentioned on his research paper that " his study's critique of applying MIT in Saudi schools concerns with Gardner's descriptions of the traditional approach to teaching/learning as `westist', `bestist' and `testist'. `Bestist' refers to the belief that the answer to any problem can be found in one approach. This approach ignores the Socio-cultural issues of Saudi Arabia which are different from other western cultures. ' Westist' refers to the tendency of Western societies to promote one or two qualities or characteristics over others, for example, privileging individual work over collaboration. ' Testist' refers to focusing on the human

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abilities or intelligences that are most easily testable, like achievement, and ignoring the other abilities. This study is based on the belief that MI is not the only pedagogical approach but it does take into account the ways in which students learn, not based on teacher myths on the way they should learn.” (Mansour, 2007)

Lynn Waterhouse conducted a research paper titled as Inadequate Evidence for Multiple Intelligences , Mozart Effect, and Emotional Intelligence Theories to criticize the MI Theory and it is not inapplicable in the educational field. On his abstract, the reader knows his contradictory opinion of applying MIT into classroom instruction. In details, he stated that ” multiple intelligences, the Mozart effect, and emotional intelligence theories have inadequate empirical support and are not consistent with cognitive neuroscience findings, these theories should not be applied in education..... However, Gardner and Moran offered no validating evidence for multiple intelligences... their studies should be disregarded, and Cherniss, Extein, Goleman, and Weissberg agreed that emotional intelligence lacked a unitary empirically supported construct.” They were mistaken in their claim about its validation. (Waterhouse, 2006)

5. Methodology and Procedures

5. 1. Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consisted of 26 students of the 1st high stage in the 2nd high School in Qatif. They were chosen randomly in a mixed level classroom. They were classified into two groups: the first group was the controlled group which were taught all skills of the English language by using

the traditional methods consisted of 13 students. The second one was the experimental group which was taught the same language skills by using MI Theory, electronic lessons, interactive drills and PowerPoint presentations. This experimental group consisted of 13 students of mixed levels. The curriculum of both groups consisted of four periods every week. Each period takes 45minutes.

5. 2. The Subject of the Study

The study dealing with a problem which based on:

1 - Most Saudi students suffer from English language acquisition as a foreign language despite the earlier background of studying almost the same skills in the intermediate stage.

2 - Measuring improvements using MI Theory integrated with technology aids for a sample of 13 students of different academic levels compared with 13 students of the control sample using traditional styles.

3- The effectiveness of MI Theory to improve English language skills and to enhance motivation to learn for the experimental group.

5. 3. The study hypotheses

The study will aim to test the following hypotheses:

There are no statistically significant differences in the level of English language skills acquisition among students of the experimental group who used the lessons applied by using MI Theory as well as traditional book and

the students of the controlled group who used traditional learning in the classroom in English language skills as measured by a post-test.

5. 4. Study tools

A) – Attainable tests:

Three kinds of tests were applied to find out the effect of MI Theory on students' achievement in English language acquisition. The tests comprise (30) multiple-choice items of four alternatives for the pre and post test. The midterm-test was consisted of (20) items. The instructions of the test were introduced for both paper and on line tests. The students were asked to choose one correct answer of the four answers. The time allocated for the pre and post tests was 45 minutes and 15 minutes for the midterm test. The pre-test was applied to test only their previous knowledge of language skills that they had in an intermediate stage so it wasn't included in the final scores. The post test was conducted to measure the progress of both groups' achievement and to investigate the validity of MI Theory for improving their level. The final scores were related to the midterm and post-test only. Regarding marks distribution, there was one mark for each item, so the total score was out of (30). The three kinds of tests were applied to both groups the controlled and the experimental one. The three tests were as the following:

1 - Pre-test: It measures the previous attainment of students before starting any project for improvement by using the following website to take online tests [www. easytestmaker. com](http://www.easytestmaker.com) and getting the scores directly.

2 – Mid-term test to measure the initial improvement of the of their levels. Some of them were paper-based tests and the others were online tests applied at school.

3 – Post- test: measures the final improvement over the samples' progress after using MI Theory. It was a paper-based test.

B) – Observation:

Observe the students during the lesson and follow up their participations, activities and projects to analyses their progress. Affirmative and summative feedback were given to the students by using feedback form.

C) – A special final electronic questionnaire:

It was a basic requirement of the final results that students answer special e-questionnaire about the effect MI Theory to improve their level. It was published on my blog: <http://naizak2010.blogspot.com> . Some questions were designed especially for the experimental group only while the rest were allowed for both groups.

5. 5. The Procedure:

At the beginning of the second term, a pre online test was conducted included all language skills that they have attained in the intermediate stage. All students were informed about their scores directly as they finished the test and the central frequency and other measurements were calculated. Then I divided the students into two groups randomly. Two ways of teaching methods were used as the following:

5. 5. 1. Teaching by Using Traditional Aids:

The two groups were taught the same book of the first stage secondary curriculum English For Saudi Arabia / First Year Secondary / (Term2), English2, Student's Book. The book contains six units each unit consists of eight lessons including all the language skills as reading, discussion, listening, speaking, writing, vocabulary, activities. Each unit lasts two weeks in curriculum distribution because they take four lessons per week.

The control group had their lessons by using the traditional aids as the Student's Book and the printed worksheets. Students answered all the drills and exercises adding to the pair and group worksheets. They got feedback for their answers during the lesson. The assessment was done after taking a written test as soon as finishing each unit so they had six tests with multiple-choice questions. After correcting all sheets, students get their scores to know their strengths and weakness and to work hard to develop their achievement.

5. 5. 2. Teaching by Using MI Theory:

According to Suzanna Gangi's research paper Differentiating Instruction using Multiple Intelligences in the Elementary School Classroom, a teacher first should understand the nine intelligences in order to be able to impel Gardener's MI theory into her/his classroom. Then, the teacher should identify the intelligence strengths of his/her students. After that, she / he should target those intelligences and prepare suitable instructional materials to pursue those intelligence strengths and she/ he should give her/ his students the chance to advance and express the suitable way to acquire the instructional goals. Gangi states " Studies have shown that teaching to <https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-of-integrating-multiple-intelligence-theory-education-essay/>

students' strengths using MI has many benefits, including meeting students' learning needs and engaging students, which can lead to higher student achievement." (Gangi, 2011)

First of all, I identified my students' intelligences by applying The Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS) and the Teele Inventory of Multiple Intelligences (TIMI) that helps me determining students' intelligence needs and preferences in order to have a vital approach in the classroom. Also, I observed my students in the classroom to know the teaching styles which they need. After knowing various intelligence strengths of students, I moved to the next steps to educate them by MIT. I planned the lessons on the basis of my students' strengths as a foundation learning activities in the classroom. I incorporate learning activities and use different materials which match students' skills. I used my learners' strong intelligences to gain acquaintance to the intelligences which may be weaker.

The daily learni