

# Multiple intelligence

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One of the major questions that classroom teachers wrestle with is what strategy or method to use when teaching their students. One of the theories that library media specialists are finding to be effective as they teach information literacy skills is Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Brewer reviews Gardner's work and the work of other researchers in this area. Full Text One of the major questions that classroom teachers wrestle with is what strategy or method to use when teaching their students.

This is a question that plagues school library media specialists also. One of the theories that library media specialists are finding to be effective as they teach information literacy skills is Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. This article will review Gardner's work and the work of other researchers in this area. Examples will be given that illustrate how this theory can be put into practice in a library media center. Recommendations will be provided for using this theory in your library media center. Finally, a list of resources for further reading on this topic will be provided.

**Theory of Multiple Intelligences** When Gardner (1983) first described his theory of multiple intelligences, he suggested that "there are at least seven ways that people have of perceiving and understanding the world." Gardner labels each of these ways a distinct "intelligence"-a set of skills that allow individuals to find answers to the genuine problems they face. "Because the theory states that all of the intelligences are needed to function productively in society, teachers need to think of all intelligences as equally important (Burundi 1996).

In his book *Intelligence Referred: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*, Gardner (1999) expanded his definition of intelligence. Essentially, intelligence is the ability to solve problems or create products that are valuable in one or more cultural settings. He believes that people are not born with all the intelligences they eventually will have. They are able to learn and improve their intelligences throughout their lives. This theory dovetails with our vision of information literate students as lifelong learners. To date, Gardner has identified nine intelligences.

These are described in Table 1 (page 20). Many teachers and researchers have built upon Gardner's work. Most notable are Thomas Armstrong and David Lazar, who have applied the theory of multiple intelligences to the classroom. Armstrong (1994) provides us with a key to using this theory in our teaching in the following statement: "The master code of this learning style model is simple: for whatever you wish to teach, link your instructional objective to words, numbers or logic, pictures, music, the body, social interaction, and/or personal experience.

If you can create activities that combine these intelligences in unique ways, so much the better!" Armstrong also suggests asking yourself the following questions when creating lesson plans:

- CLC Q Linguistic: How can I use the spoken or written word?
- Logical/Mathematical: How can I bring in numbers, aids, visualization, color, art, metaphor, or visual organizers?
- 2 0 0 0 0 Musical: How can I bring in music or environmental sounds, or set key points in a rhythm or melody?
- Bodily/Kinesthesia: How can I involve the whole body or hands-on experiences?

Interpersonal: How can I engage students in peer or cross- age sharing, cooperative learning, or large group simulation? Interpersonal: How can I evoke personal feelings or memories, or give students choices? Laser's (1999) interest in the theory of multiple intelligences and its application in the classroom came from a number of experiences, including mentoring his two daughters through grade school and Junior high. His books, such as *Eight Ways of Teaching: The Artistry of Teaching with Multiple Intelligences*, provide practical advice for using multiple intelligences in the classroom.

One of his important contributions to the field is a *Multiple Intelligences Toolbox* of creative strategies (see Table 2, page 20). These strategies are useful when teaching students how to be information literate. Integrating Multiple Intelligences into the School Library Media Program Library media specialists who subscribe to the theory of multiple intelligences provide a strengthened environment. A student-centered program accommodates students' different learning styles. The collection contains information in a variety of media. The library media specialist practices flexible scheduling.

Thus, the students are able to come to the library media center as necessary and not just on a scheduled basis. When possible, library resources are available not only throughout the school via a network, but also via the Internet so that students may access them 24/7. In order to expand the resources of the library media center, connections are made with different agencies within the community, thus expanding the walls of the library media center. Their library media program does not offer information skills

instruction in isolation, but rather as a part of collaborative units with other teachers.

Table 1 . Description of the Multiple Intelligences Table 2. Multiple Intelligences Toolbox Integrating Multiple Intelligences into the Teaching of Information Literacy Standards Using multiple intelligences theory to teach information literacy skills is a natural strategy. The strategies defined in Laser's Multiple Intelligences Toolbox work well with an information literacy curriculum like Ginsberg and Breastwork's (2004) The Big, as the lesson plan below illustrates. Both the theory and the curriculum model are student-centered and propose that students be involved actively in their learning.

The following example of a research project about communities monstrence how multiple intelligences strategies can be used in a collaborative unit.

Title: Why do people want to move to my community (town, state)? Goal: Students will produce either brochure or Powering presentation that describes their community and the reasons people would want to move there. 3 five to seven positive aspects of their community (climate, amenities, available activities, etc. ). Describe their community (geographic information and demographic information). List major historical events.

List notable people who have lived in the community. Teachers involved in unit: Social studies, language arts, art, and library media pessimist

Information Literacy Skill: Students will use Boolean and keyword search strategies to locate information about their community and create a brochure or multimedia presentation with that information. Student

Activities: Task definition. Students brainstorm topics (Logical/Mathematical

intelligence) that they need to explore and places they might find information. They might use Saturation to record and organize their ideas. Information seeking strategies.

Students, working in groups (Interpersonal intelligence), identify what sources are available and which ones would be the best. Location and access. Students access each source and find the information needed within each source (Verbal/ Linguistic intelligence). Use of information. At this point, students need to decide how they can use each source and what information in each source is most useful (Interpersonal intelligence). Synthesis. Students decide how they are going to organize the information and present the results (Verbal/Linguistic and Visual/Spatial intelligences). Evaluation.