

What Is The Theory Of Multiple Intelligences?

Among the numerous educational theories in existence today, Multiple Intelligences has gained both popularity and visibility because of its ability to successfully reach a wide variety of children. The theory of Multiple Intelligences was originally developed by Howard Gardner, in a 1983 publication titled "Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences". It originally stated that there are seven different kinds of intelligences, or ways that children think and learn: verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Gardner later added an eighth intelligence called the naturalistic intelligence.

The eight intelligences are defined as follows:

1. Verbal-Linguistic - This intelligence revolves around the spoken and written word. Children who excel in this area are often superb readers, writers, story-tellers, and absorb foreign languages more easily than others. They often excel in a traditional school environment that emphasizes reading, note-taking, and discussion.
2. Logical-Mathematical - Children who exhibit this intelligence may excel in mathematics and sciences, but also tend to grasp abstract concepts and pattern recognition. They often thrive in the traditional classroom, primarily in courses that involve logical instruction such as laboratory work and problem-solving.
3. Spatial - Spatial thinkers tend to have good visual memory and an artistic eye or ability, especially in multiple dimensions. They are also good with directions. For children who learn through the spatial intelligence, their classroom work can be enhanced through the use of manipulatives and hands-on work, such as models and dissections.
4. Bodily-Kinesthetic - This intelligence refers to movement and athleticism, whether sports, dance, or drama. Bodily-kinesthetic children often exhibit muscle memory, such as that used in memorization of dance or musical performance. They may also express themselves through the creation of objects, such as in engineering or craftmaking.
5. Musical - Musical learners exhibit abilities such as a strong sense of rhythm or absolute pitch. Not only do they excel in musical fields, but they may use music to assist other learning activities, such as putting a memorization assignment to music, or working while music plays in the background.
6. Interpersonal - Interpersonal thinkers approach life through relationships with others. They work well in a group, and generally have an extroverted personality. They communicate well, enjoy debate and discussion, and often excel in leadership and teaching.
7. Intrapersonal - In contrast to the interpersonal intelligence, those who exhibit the intrapersonal intelligence are often introverts, and explore the world through emotions, thoughts, and theories. They often excel in philosophy or theology. They may prefer to work alone to achieve a goal.
8. Naturalistic - This last intelligence was added to the theory much later than the original seven. Children strong in this intelligence have a greater sensitivity toward animals, plants, and non-living natural elements such as the weather. These children learn best in an "outdoor classroom" or natural setting.

Understanding your child's primary intelligences will allow you to assist them during their education, whether they are home-schooled or in a traditional classroom environment. Use their natural intelligences to strengthen and complement their education. You can also teach them how to use their strengths to support their weaknesses. For example, if your child is a bodily-kinesthetic learner, but dislikes memorizing facts for history class, have him repeat answers to trivia along with the toss of a ball, or encourage her to act out historical scenes in a dramatic form. Utilizing your children's natural learning capabilities will help ensure success throughout their school years and into college.

About the Author

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