

Multiple Intelligences

NAEYC's guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) maintain that teachers respond to children's needs, desires, and messages and adapt their responses according to the children's individual learning styles and individual abilities. In essence, responding to each child as an individual is fundamental to developmentally appropriate practice.

The concept of multiple intelligences is one of the most effective approaches teachers can take when planning for individual differences. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences comes from the work of Howard Gardner and was first published in 1983 in his book, *Frames of Mind*.

Until Gardner proposed the existence of eight ways of demonstrating one's high ability levels, we believed that intelligence could be measured by the score obtained when taking an intelligence test, primarily the Stanford-Binet. The problem with intelligence tests was that they measured only an individual's linguistic and mathematical skills. Gardner argued that there were other ways an individual could be smart. For example, musicians demonstrate a high ability to perceive, discriminate, transform, and express musical forms. Actors, dancers, and athletes demonstrate an expertise in using their whole body to express ideas and feelings. Craftspersons and sculptors show facility in using their hands to produce or transform materials.

Gardner not only expanded the identification of the number of ways an individual can be intelligent, but also the definition of intelligence. He suggests that intelligence has more to do with the capacity for solving problems and fashioning products in a context-rich and naturalistic setting than it does with performing isolated tasks on a test.

As he developed his theory, Gardner used a stringent system of eight criteria through which all potential skills, talents, and mental capacities must pass before they are determined to be true human intelligences. Thus far, only eight ways of being smart have passed the test to be recognized as intelligences.

Gardner also proposes that everyone possesses all eight intelligences to varying degrees. Some intelligences are stronger than others, and the profile of intelligences varies from person to person. Each of the intelligences can improve with practice and will continue to be enhanced over a lifetime.

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences is now widely accepted in most educational settings. In the past decade it has become a core component in curriculum development. There is nothing magical about planning curriculum activities that address each of the multiple intelligences. The activities are typical experiences that are usually offered on a regular basis in a developmentally appropriate environment.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences provides a powerful framework to help teachers create authentic and innovative learning experiences. It provides scope to validate and mobilize the strengths of each individual student. Although Multiple Intelligences is not a step-by-step recipe for success, it offers a pragmatic structure for designing curriculum. In addition, Multiple Intelligences enables teachers to address the needs of each student on an individual basis and make content and curriculum exciting and accessible to every learner (Johnson, 2007).

Intelligence	Description
Linguistic (Word Smart)	The capacity to use words effectively, whether orally (for example, as a storyteller, orator, or politician) or in writing (for example, as a poet, playwright, editor, or journalist). Most teaching today is geared to the expectation that children absorb information by listening, reading, speaking, and writing.
Logical-Mathematical (Number Smart)	The capacity to use numbers effectively (for example, as a mathematician, tax accountant, or statistician) and to reason well (for example, as a scientist, computer programmer, or logician). This intelligence also follows traditional teaching practices, using number facts and scientific principles, as well as observation and experimentation. Children who are logic smart respond well to "what if" questions.
Spatial (Picture Smart)	The ability to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately (for example, as a hunter, scout, or guide) and to perform transformations upon those perceptions (for example, as an interior decorator, architect, artist, or inventor). This intelligence involves sensitivity to color, line, shape, form, space, and the relationships that exist between these elements. It includes the capacity to visualize and graphically represent visual or spatial ideas.
Bodily-Kinesthetic (Body Smart)	The ability to use one's whole body to skillfully express ideas and feelings (for example, as an actor, an athlete, or a dancer) and facility in using one's hands to produce or transform things (for example, as a craftsperson, sculptor, mechanic, or surgeon). This intelligence is related to physical movement and the knowledge/wisdom of the body, including the brain's motor cortex, which controls bodily motion.
Musical (Music Smart)	The capacity to perceive (for example, as a music aficionado), discriminate (for example, as a music critic), transform (for example, as a composer), and express (for example, as a performer) musical forms. The musical learner also has the ability to pick up sounds and remember melodies. This intelligence is based upon the recognition of tonal patterns, including various environmental sounds, and also sensitivity to rhythm and beats.
Naturalist (Nature Smart)	The ability to discriminate among living things (for example, as a botanist, biologist, veterinarian, or forest ranger) as well as to be sensitive to other features of the natural world (for example, as a meteorologist, geologist, or archaeologist). The skill to recognize and classify cultural artifacts such as cars or sneakers may also depend upon the naturalist intelligence.
Interpersonal (People Smart)	The ability to perceive and make distinctions among the moods, intentions, motivations, and feelings of other people (for example, as a teacher, politician, actor, or philanthropist). Also the ability to process information both verbally and nonverbally through interpretation of all forms of dance, hand gestures, body movements and music (for example, as a dancer, mime, actor, or musician). This intelligence operates primarily through person-to-person relationships and communication.
Intrapersonal (Self Smart)	This intelligence includes having an accurate picture of oneself—strengths and limitations; awareness of inner moods, intentions, motivations, temperaments, and desires; and the capacity for self-discipline, self-understanding, and self-esteem (for example, as a theologian, psychologist, psychiatrist, or a philosopher). This intelligence is very private and uses other intelligences for self-expression.