

## Multiple Intelligences

In his book *Frames of Mind* (Basic Books, 1993; \$18), Howard Gardner showed that there are many intelligences, each one representing a different way to learn. Almost two decades later educators around the world are using MI in their classrooms. Intuitively, good teachers have always known that children learn in different ways and that their job is to use this knowledge to create a setting in which every child can succeed. Recognizing that children possess many different intelligences means that teachers design curriculum in ways to speak to how individual children learn. In programs where MI is used, all children have opportunities to succeed. Below is a list of each of the eight intelligences as identified by Gardner and the preferences of children with strengths in these different areas:

### The Theory of Multiple Intelligences

<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Children who are strong in this intelligence like to:</b>
linguistic	sensitivity to the meaning and pleasures of words	tell jokes, riddles, or puns; read, write, tell stories; play word games; use an expanded vocabulary
logical-mathematical	the ability to handle chains of reasoning and to recognize patterns	work with numbers; know how things work; ask questions; collect and keep track of their collections
musical	sensitivity to pitch, melody, rhythm tone	listen to and play music; sing, hum and move to music create and replicate tunes
bodily-kinesthetic	the ability to use the body skillfully and handle objects adroitly	play sports and be physically active; use body language; dance, act, or engage in mime
spatial	the ability to perceive the world accurately and to recreate or transform aspects of that world	doodle, paint, or draw; look at maps; work puzzles or complete mazes; take things apart and put them back together
naturalist	the ability to recognize and classify the numerous species, the flora and fauna, of an environment	spend time outdoors; observe plants; collect rocks; catch insects; notice relationships in nature; classify flora and fauna
interpersonal	the ability to understand people and relationships	have many friends; lead, share, mediate; build consensus; be team players
intrapersonal	access to one's emotional life as a means to understand oneself and others	control own feelings and moods; set own agendas; observe and listen; work alone

From *Succeeding with Multiple Intelligences*, by the faculty of the New City School (The New City School, 1996).

<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm> has the following information about spiritual/existential intelligence:

### **Are there additional intelligences?**

Since Howard Gardner's original listing of the intelligences in *Frames of Mind* (1983) there has been a great deal of discussion of other possible candidates for inclusion (or candidates for exclusion). Subsequent research and reflection by Howard Gardner and his colleagues has looked to three particular possibilities: a naturalist intelligence, a spiritual intelligence and an existential intelligence. He has concluded that the first of these 'merits addition to the list of the original seven intelligences' (Gardner 1999: 52).

**Naturalist intelligence** enables human beings 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' (*ibid.* 48).

The case for inclusion of naturalist intelligence appears pretty straightforward; the position with regard to **spiritual intelligence** is far more complex. According to Howard Gardner (1999: 59), there are problems, for example, around the 'content' of spiritual intelligence, its privileged but unsubstantiated claims with regard to truth value, 'and the need for it to be partially identified through its effect on other people'. As a result:

'It seems more responsible to carve out that area of spirituality closest 'in spirit' to the other intelligences and then, in the sympathetic manner applied to naturalist intelligence, ascertain how this candidate for intelligence fares. In doing so, I think it best to put aside the term *spiritual*, with its manifest and problematic connotations, and to speak instead of an intelligence that explores the nature of existence in its multifarious guises. Thus, an explicit concern with spiritual or religious matters would be one variety - often the most important variety - of an existential intelligence'.

**Existential intelligence**, a concern with 'ultimate issues', is, thus, the next possibility that Howard Gardner considers - and he argues that it 'scores reasonably well on the criteria' (*ibid.* 64). However, empirical evidence is sparse - and although a ninth intelligence might be attractive, Howard Gardner is not disposed to add it to the list. 'I find the phenomenon perplexing enough and the distance from the other intelligences vast enough to dictate prudence - at least for now.' (*ibid.* 66)

The final and obvious candidate for inclusion in Howard Gardner's list is **moral intelligence**. In his exploration, he begins by asking whether it is possible to delineate the 'moral domain'. He suggests that it is difficult to come to any consensual definition but argues that it is possible to come to an understanding that takes exploration forward. Central to a moral domain, Howard Gardner suggests, 'is a concern with those rules, behaviours and attitudes that govern the sanctity of life - in particular, the sanctity of human life and, in many cases, the sanctity of any other living creatures and the world they inhabit' (*ibid.*: 70). If we accept the existence of a moral realm, is it then possible to speak of moral intelligence? If it 'connotes the adoption of any specific moral code' then

Howard Gardner does not find the term *moral intelligence* acceptable (*ibid.* 75). Furthermore, he argues, researchers and writers have not as yet 'captured the essence of the moral domain as an instance of human intelligence' (*ibid.* 76).

‘As I construe it, the central component in the moral realm or domain is a sense of personal agency and personal stake, a realization that one has an irreducible role with respect to other people and that one's behaviour towards others must reflect the results of contextualized analysis and the exercise of one's will.... The fulfillment of key roles certainly requires a range of human intelligences - including personal, linguistic, logical and perhaps existential - but it is fundamentally a statement about the kind of person that has developed to be. It is not, in itself, an intelligence. 'Morality' is then properly a statement about personality, individuality, will, character - and, in the happiest cases, about the highest realization of human nature.’ (*ibid.* 77)

So it is that Howard Gardner has added an eighth intelligence - naturalist intelligence - to his list. He has also opened the door to another possibility - especially that of existential intelligence - but the court is out on that one.