Multiple Intelligences Re-Visited
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In "Multiple Intelligences: What It Is and Why It's Vital Today" *(New Chalk Talk, Volume 5, issue 10)*, we took an overview of the methodology and definitions of Howard Gardner's groundbreaking work in education and adult learning development. In this issue, we explore ways to begin thinking about incorporating MI in the AUC classroom.

It is crucial to reflect on our normal roles in the classroom as "experts" with the power to make decisions over course content as well as delivery method (stand-up lecture) and assessment (traditional exams). As professors remain focused on the traditional role of lecturer in control on information and knowledge and thus also its transmission, there leaves little possibility and freedom for students to participate except as passive recipients with little or no power or control over their learning experiences – resulting most often in poor retention, poor performance, poor morale. Empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning requires professors who can comfortably encourage them to explore and experiment with their own strengths and preferences, allowing them to become the "expert."

From a report of **MI** approach in classroom for adults in ESL courses:

"*Rather than functioning as a prescribed teaching method, curriculum, or technique, MI theory provides a way of understanding intelligence, which teachers can use as a guide for developing classroom activities that address multiple ways of learning and knowing*" (Christison & Kennedy).

How to Take the Leap?

It's best to start small and explore a few ways to loosen control and let go of power in the classroom. As comfort level grows and the resulting effects with students are observed, most educators are enthused and encouraged to continue making more and more changes in their teaching pedagogy.
First, a self-assessment is useful and beneficial in order to understand our own MI strengths. Here is a link to an online self-assessment: http://www.mitest.com/o7inte~1.htm
It's best to remember that this self-assessment is only *a guide to our preferences* – not a concrete judgment on our abilities or skills or talent!! H. Gardner's work clearly shows that all the MI areas are *competencies* that can be *strengthened with practice* - quite different from the traditional IQ test with concrete and judgmental scores leaving little possibility for growth and development!

Planning and Teaching Strategies

When Planning a Class Lecture, Ask the Right Questions!
Certain questions can help professors look at the possibilities for involving as many intelligences as possible. Here I include some examples of learning activities with possible assignments.

Linguistic: How can I use the spoken or written word? Use books, stories, poetry, speeches, author visits. Assigned activities: writing scripts, poems, storytelling.

Logical-Mathematical: How can I bring in numbers, calculations, logic, classifications, or critical thinking? Use exercises, drills, problem solving.

Spatial: How can I use visual aids, visualization, color, art, metaphor, or visual organizers? Use posters, art work, slides, charts, graphs, museum visits. Assigned activities: drawing, painting, collage, posters, photos, illustrations, graphic design.

Musical: How can I bring in music or environmental sounds, or set key points in a rhythm or melody? Use tapes, CDs, sounds. Assigned activities: performing, chanting, playing, composing.

Bodily-Kinesthetic: How can I involve the whole body, or hands-on experiences? Assigned activities: movement presentations, athletic events.

Interpersonal: How can I engage students in peer or cross-age sharing, cooperative learning or large-group simulation? Use teams, group work, specialist roles for plays, debates, panels.

Intrapersonal: How can I evoke personal feelings or memories, or give students choices? Give reflection time, meditation exercises. Assigned activities: journals, diaries, memoirs.

Examples of Classroom Activities Utilizing MI Areas

Group Discussion: Linguistic; Interpersonal
Journal Writing: Intrapersonal; Linguistic
Making a video: Logical; Musical; Linguistic; Interpersonal; Spatial
Building a model or 3-D display: Kinesthetic; Logical; Spatial

For a report on my own entrance to teaching through MI in 1994 please feel free to review the following article: *ERIC #: ED394408 "Masks and Mask-Making//Reading and Writing: A Kinesthetic Approach"* or email me at ezevik@aucegypt.edu and I can forward a PDF copy. The benefits to students are simply too numerous and too effective to ignore or to delay further.

As Thomas Armstrong states, MI applications "*can help us develop neglected intelligences, activate underdeveloped or paralyzed intelligences, and bring well-developed intelligences to even higher levels of proficiency.*" (Armstrong)

Sources:

Armstrong, Thomas. "Multiple Intelligences." April 2006
<http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm>.

Christison, Mary Ann & Kennedy, Deborah. "Multiple Intelligences: Theory and Practice in Adult ESL. ERIC Digest." ERICDIGESTS.ORG. April 2006 <http://www.ericdigests.org/2001-1/multiple.html>.

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Share with us your experiences by contributing to the New Chalk Talk series, or by simply sending comments/suggestions to aellozy@aucegypt.edu