8 Ideas for the 8 Multiple Intelligences
by Lou McLaughlin

Not all students learn in the same way. Therefore, it is important that each learning style is catered to, and the onus is on the teacher to add variation in approach and instruction. The incorporation of multiple intelligence (MI) allows us to explore the ways in which each child learns best. This knowledge can assist teachers in classifying the instructions and learning activities they are using to achieve their objectives. Multiple Intelligence Theory is a term that was coined by Gardner (2003) in the early 80s; the theory developed from his work in the fields of psychology, human cognition, and human potential. It incorporates the different approaches to learning that go beyond the traditional visual, auditory, and kinesthetic categories of learners, and encompasses other elements such as learning through reading, writing, speaking, painting, and working with numbers. It was significant in that it revealed that intelligence is not based on one single way of learning but is related to learners' capabilities in individual areas.

The following learning styles have been broken down based on Gardner's MI theory (2003) and using Bloom's taxonomy. Teachers can choose to work through the multiple intelligences one at a time or, conversely, can incorporate an activity that addresses a number of these into each and every class. They are quick and easy-to-follow ideas for use in any English language classroom with students of any age and background. This gives all your students the opportunity to shine during class.

Note: The activities here can be used with any topic or language point in the English language classroom. Level of difficulty depends on the language used.

1. Body/Kinesthetic

Physical responses/movement during learning with a hands-on approach

- **Activity centres:** Students move from one "centre" to the next, working on a different activity at each centre.
  Example: Centre 1 = match lexical item to picture, Centre 2 = match lexical item to written description.
- **Construction:** Use Cuisenaire rods to construct language patterns.
  Example: Identifying parts of a sentence (verbs, nouns): Different colours represent different language components. (See an October 2013 article, "Cuisenaire Rod Activities for Language Development" for more activities.)
- **Role play/skits/charades/mimes**
  Example: Order food in a classroom "restaurant." Students prepare and act out various roles.

2. Interpersonal

Learning with other learners

- **Debates:** Set these up based on the issue being studied.
  Example: Put students in groups to prepare arguments for and against a motion, such as "Students should learn two foreign languages."

- **Giving feedback:** Respond to ideas forwarded by other groups during project work.
  Example: Students work on a poster. When these are displayed, they vote on their favorites and explain their reasons behind their choice.
- **Peer counseling:** Implement a mentor system for subject areas.
  Example: Students are paired (weak/strong) for particular activities or subject area work.
- **Think-pair-share:** Help develop ideas through initial thinking time, then allowing students to work in pairs. Answers are shared at a class level once the exercise is complete.
  Example: Answers to a reading comprehension exercise are completed alone, compared with partner, and then discussed and corrected in open class.

3. Intrapersonal

Learning by oneself

- **Have ownership:** Add to what is being learned in some way with the opportunity to personalize it.
  Example: Students choose what book report to write or what autobiography to read.
- **Journal it**
  Example: At the end of every lesson students note what they have learned (lexical items, grammatical structures) or what they have done (activities).
- **Metacognition:** Strategies for vocabulary learning.
  Example: List of lexical items related to food. Students decide whether to translate, draw pictures, or put items in a sentence.
- **Rehearse it:** Build silent preparation time into your lesson plan so students can rehearse what they are going to say before speaking publicly.
  Example: Give students a prompt, such as, "tell the class about what you would like to do for your career in the future," and then give them time to prepare in class.

4. Logical/Mathematical

Learning through working with numbers and logic, and involved abstractions, reasoning, and critical thinking

- **Analyze it**
  Example: Students analyze how their favourite app or computer program works and explain this to the class.
- **Create a number mnemonic:** Introduce students to devices that help them remember words or spelling.
  Example: Use numbers on telephone as a reference for spelling: "weird" = 93-473.
- **Use numbers & statistics:** Perform mathematical calculations of simple addition and subtraction using lexical items.
  Example: Allocate a numeric value to each animal on list of farm animal (duck = 1, horse = 5 etc). Students are given a "farm" with many animals, the quantity of animals ranging in number (four ducks, seven horses, etc.), and work out the value of their farm.

5. Musical/Rhythmic

Making and listening to music

- **Create a beat:** Students develop awareness of stress-time, syllable number, and connected speech through working with rhymes.
  Example: Listen to sentence and highlight stress through clapping.
- **Listen & identify sounds**
  Example: Listen for the correct phoneme in the word being read out.
- **React to sounds:** Decide what actions will accompany what sounds and use this when working on sound identification.
  Example: Identify phonemes in minimal pairs with actions.

6. Naturalist

Learning through relating information to natural surroundings

- **Classify & categorize it** (Language: nouns)
  Example: Students are given a list of animals and group them according to whether they are mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, or amphibians.
- **Discern patterns**
  Example: Investigate traits of felines (cats, lions, tigers) and identify patterns.
- **Do an experiment:** If this can be linked to what students are studying in science class, it will lend additional support to cross-curricular learning.
  Example: Plant three seeds in three individual cardboard boxes with a hole for light at different places (Box 1 has a hole on top, Box 2 has a hole on right side, Box 3 has a hole on left side). Leave to grow and observe the differences in growth patterns.

7. Verbal/Linguistic

Learning through reading, writing, and speaking

- **Chunk information**
  Example: Students are given a text and must break it into three distinct chunks (a) beginning/introduction, (b) middle, and (c) end/conclusion.
- **Recall it**
  Example: In groups A, B, and C, students are told part of a story. They are then regrouped (one student from each group) and retell their part of the story.
- **Use a language mnemonic:** Use devices that help students remember words or spelling.
  Example: BECAUSE = Big elephants can always understand small elephants.

8. Visual/Spatial

Learning through painting, drawing, and visualizing

- **Highlight/colour code**
  Example: When working with particular lexical sets, students colour-code words with similar sounds/the same stress.
- **Mind maps/graphic organizers**
  Example: Brainstorm lexical items related to food by examining food groups and putting this information on a mindmap.
- **Shape a word**
  Example: Design a school logo using adjectives that describe the ethos of the school.
- **Study illustrations**

Example: Students bring in favourite comic strips and discuss differences in relation to size, layout, characters, etc.

By taking the time to consider each of these learning styles and incorporate the various activities into daily classroom life, teachers will ensure that the needs of all of their learners are being catered to. It will also provide students with the opportunity to work on improving their language in a myriad of different ways and through different skills which will help to both challenge and motivate them.

Reference

Gardner, H. (2003). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: BasicBooks.

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