
Gardner's Theory Of Multiple Intelligence

— Myth or Truth? —



What is Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence



Intro

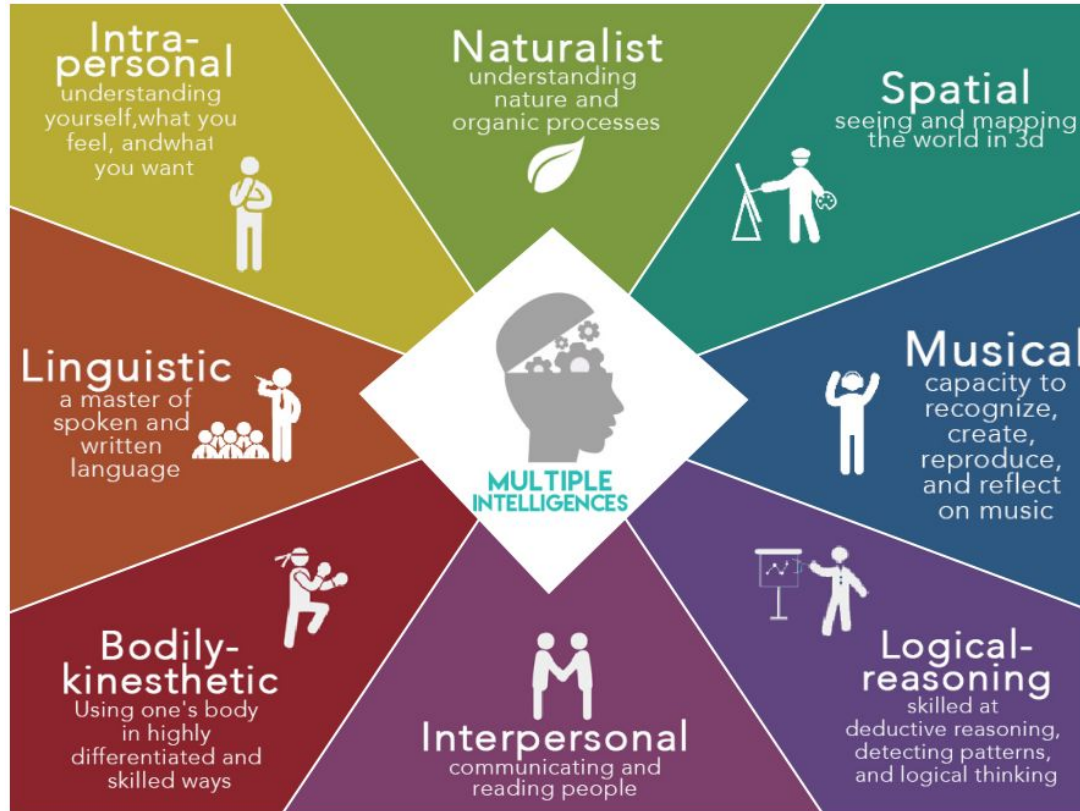
- This theory was proposed by Howard Gardner in the year 1983.
- He proposed that intelligence can be classified into 7 different and specific modalities.
- Gardner, later added 'Naturalistic' as the 8th type of intelligence.
- He postulated that people might possess one type of intelligence in high amounts but might lack other types of intelligence.



Types of Multiple Intelligence



8 Different types of intelligence



1. Musical Intelligence:

- People having this intelligence can sing well, compose music, identify pitch, tone, rhythm, and raags (or raagas) more accurately than the general population.

2. Visual-spatial intelligence:

- It is a mental skill to solve spatial problems related to navigation, visualization of objects, facial recognition etc.
- People having this intelligence can grasp the transformation of the whole from the changing parts.



3. Logical-mathematical intelligence:

- Is related to logic, abstract thinking, reasoning, critical thinking and deductive thinking.
- helps in identifying causality or principles of causation of any phenomenon.

4. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence:

- Is the ability to control one's bodily motions and handle objects skillfully.
- This intelligence is important in the fields of sports, armed forces, acrobats, dance, skilled manual labour like sewing, knitting, handicrafts etc.



5. Interpersonal intelligence: (social and emotional intelligence)

- Is important in any field that involves working, collaborating, communicating with other people.
- It involves skills such as verbal communication, non-verbal communication, negotiation, assertiveness etc.

6. Intrapersonal intelligence:

- Is the ability to introspect and understand one's self.
- This intelligence is needed for effective control and regulation of our emotions.



7. Verbal-linguistic intelligence:

- Relates to a person's ability to understand, speak and write in a language or various languages.
- The 4 essential underlying functions that are key to this intelligence are:
 1. speech generation
 2. speech comprehension
 3. writing generation and
 4. writing comprehension



5 Myths surrounding Multiple Intelligence



Myth 1: A person might be intelligent in one field but not necessarily good at other things!

- Unfortunately, this is not true!
- Scientific evidence shows that there are strong correlations within the 7 different types of intelligences.
- People who tend to be intelligent in one area, tend to be good at other areas also. Of course, exceptions will always be present.



Myth 2: There are different types of intelligences!

- Gardner himself admits that there is no empirical evidence for this theory.
- Mostly 'abilities', 'skills' and 'aptitudes' are being inaccurately equated with an 'intelligence' in this theory.
- If one could precisely define multiple intelligences, one would be able to develop a test to determine which type of intelligence dominates in a person.
- Unfortunately, no such test exists.



Myth 3: Different students think in different ways. And depending on their style of thinking, we ought to teach them in a way that suits them.

- There is no evidence for this statement.
- Gardner himself has cautioned against the misconceptions related to 'learning styles'.



Myth 4: Neuroscience shows that different parts of the brain are associated different capabilities. This supports the theory.

- Strong evidence exists to suggest that there are shared and overlapping neural pathways for many of the intelligences.
- The brain structure, therefore, supports a theory of general intelligence rather than 7 or 8 specific intelligences.



Myth 5: But surely a theory this popular cannot be wrong!

There is sufficient evidence to show that learning outcomes improve:

1. When we provide children multiple ways to access content.
2. When we provide children multiple ways to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
3. When teaching style understands the specific needs and areas of growth of a student. This is not the same as adopting a particular 'teaching style' because the student has a particular 'learning style'.



Conclusions and Takeaways:

- There are a lot of problems with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences.
- Intelligence is more general and unified in nature than comprising 7 independent types, as claimed by the theory.
- No evidence for different "learning types" among students. Suggestion of "teaching types" should be viewed with scepticism.
- Any claims being made by the school or educator about their pedagogy being compliant with this theory should be viewed with scepticism.



Finally,

- Do not think that your child has only one type of intelligence or learning style.
- Instead, focus on improving the general intelligence with the right kind of exposure.

Read more about Multiple Theory of Intelligence [here](#).





Everyone is a genius.

“But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid”

- Albert Einstein



Thanks!

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feedback@iraparenting.com

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