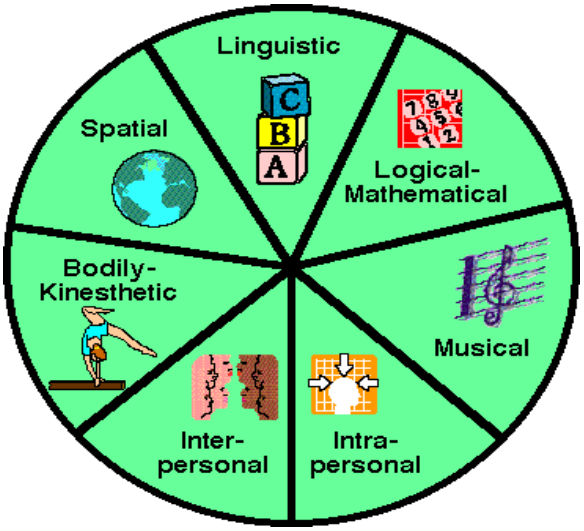
Multiple Intelligences



The theory of multiple intelligences was developed in 1983 by Dr Howard Gardner (*Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. 1983). Originally there were just the eight intelligences as shown in the diagram above, Gardner has now added a further two – Spiritual Intelligence and Pictorial Intelligence.

Whilst many educational practitioners apply this in finding ways to teach children who find it difficult to learn, it also has implications for adult learning and development.

This theory opens up the possibility of greater self-awareness and understanding. Furthermore, when we adults are able to recognise that those things that we can do instinctively with innate ability is a reflection of intelligence, as opposed only considering intelligence in IQ scales we begin to understand our own potential.

This is not only good for self-esteem, feelings of self-worth it will impact on our level of motivation. Equally, it might give insight into the type of professional development we could consider.

Since the 1860's research has been undertaken to measure intellect and relate this to skills. Binet was the first to produce a test that accurately determined intelligence with the results determining mental age. After further research Turman renamed it the Stamford Binet Test. This single score intelligent quotient built on the work of Binet produced the common use of IQ as a descriptor of one's intelligence.
In the early 1900's Spearman a psychologist further developed our understanding of the need for a common factor to show the mean. This is now known as Factor Analysis. This is split into the 'general factor' or 'g' factor and 'specific factor' or 's' factor. General factors are what all the tests have in common and Specific factors are the unique abilities the tests need. Thurston created 56 tests and used his own factor analysis to work out the significance of the scores. However, he only used a small sample of college students to analyse his theories, which flawed his original research. However when this was revisited it was noted that he had recognised the 'g' factor. Sternberg in the 1980's was familiar with the Stamford Binet tests as the basis of further research that led him to determine the Triachic Theory of Intelligence – Creative, Practical and Analytical – his theory was that intelligent individuals apply what they have learned in different settings and had the self awareness allowing him/her to compensate for weaker areas and adapt accordingly.
Howard Gardner in 1983 then developed his theory on multiple intelligences. He believed that all previous research was based on a

very narrow base line overlooking the potential in each individual.

Look at the following table and you could discover why you have those negative feelings towards your employment, your prospects, your employer and indeed yourself:

Intelligence type	Career choices
Linguistic	Creative use of language skills used by: Lawyers, editors, writers, interpreters, teachers, fundraisers
Logical-Mathematical	Number smart and good at reasoning – skills used by: accountants, economists, engineers, doctors, scientists and programmers
Spatial	The ability to make mental models of the world – skills used by: architects, painters, sculptors, interior designers, decorators, and inventors.
Musical	A good ear for music, skills required by singers, composers, choreography and teaching these disciplines.
Body kinaesthetic	Having a well co-ordinated body – skills required by athletes, sports, martial arts, dancers, artisans and builders.
Interpersonal	People skills, the ability to get on with people. Skills used by Politicians, Emergency services personnel, Human Resources, Managers, sales people and teachers/trainers.
Intrapersonal	Emotions. The ability to understand oneself and apply ones talents - a gift for all areas of life
Naturalist	The ability to understand and organise the patterns of nature. Skills required by: farmers, conservationists, horticulturalists, gardeners, zoologists, animal husbandry. Veterinarians.
Pictorial	The ability to appreciate pictures, shape and form. Skills required by: artists, designers, advertisers, photographers, graphic designers and engineering/construction surveyors.
Spiritual	Sensuality. The ability to sense, feel and explain the meaning of life. Skills required by: religious leaders, counsellors, psychologists, therapists and doctors.

The table includes only some of the career possibilities given one's innate intelligence.
The problem is, however, that we have become so conditioned by the over use of IQ scales that we tend to overlook the other factors that make us who we are.

What is Intelligence?
There are many and various definitions of intelligence and this debate is set to divide professionals as there is still much controversy about its definition.

In the school environment we tend to think of it in terms of verbal (crystallised) and non-verbal (fluid) intelligence to predict attainment levels and discrepancies in learners. There are a number of tests that can be used to provide evidence of strengths and weakness. The Wide Range Intelligence Test for example is a widely used reliable tool for this purpose.

The experienced and wide assessor will not use this test in isolation but rather as part of a bank of tests looking at the learners abilities in reading, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, numeracy and so on. They will also observe the learner during the tests to pick up on other useful information that will assist them to interpret the scores and report holistically.

It is often the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that can interplay with the learner's scores to confuse overall results.

The value of results however, are only useful if stringent attention has been paid to the administration of the standardised tests and if the assessor has the experience and observational skills to fully appreciate the strategies employed by the learner to achieve his/her responses.

In my experience it is far more challenging to give feedback on a learner who has underperformed when more was expected of him/her. However, in my endeavours to produce positive feedback I have discovered the significant benefits of reporting on the learners multiple intelligences. This provides information defining his/her potential strengths in areas that are predominantly overlooked. It gives vital information to teaching and learning support as well as to parents.

Understanding multiple intelligences goes beyond multi-sensory teaching – don't misunderstand me – I am an advocate of this style of teaching as all learners benefit from it. However, most of our teaching today focuses on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence, ignoring the other talents and factors that make up the individual. Society, policies and achievement scales dictate that learners should become articulate, logical individuals – we pay homage to those who have these abilities.

Not only do the multiple intelligences give new pathways for learning they also provide valuable positive messages that we can celebrate with learners and those who teach, support and parent them. Praising a learner that repeatedly fails to stay on task or grasp an oral instruction is unworthy of the educational practitioner and recognised by the learner as being superficial. However, promoting the existence of intellectual potential through gaining an understanding of

which domain is most developed in the learner the teacher is able to give positive feedback that can be substantiated. Evidence of how this demonstrates itself and a model of how this can be utilised to create a more effective pathway for learning provides not only reassurance of what is possible but also a motivational message to the learner by citing what they can do rather than what they can't.

Dyslexia Awareness UK is able to provide workshops and lectures to help teachers and learning support teams understand the dyslexia learner, the difficulties they experience and methods of overcoming their difficulties that will motivate and build their self esteem.

Contact Vicki McNicol to discuss and arrange a workshop that meets your needs in terms of content, suitable length of delivery, time and date.

Tel: 0789 989 0979 or
E-mail: vicki@dyslexia-awareness-uk.com

How parents can recognise the innate abilities in their child and steer them in a direction that values their talents.

How do you conclude how intelligent your child is? Most parents rely upon the evidence of how well their child performs at school. With a dyslexic child this can be very disappointing and frustrating. How many times do you think to yourself 'I know he/she can do better', 'if only he/she would listen/pay attention'. It can be very confusing especially when you have seen for yourself how quickly and effortlessly your child is able to do certain things at home. Have you noticed how it is almost always those things that they are desperately interested in?
In my experience I have seen with my own children how, when really captivated by something, they have shown tremendous tenacity to achieve something despite their inherent difficulties caused by dyslexia. Yet the things that I felt important for them to achieve (which held no interest or relevance to them) despite no end of coaxing escaped their capacity to conquer it.
However, albeit unwittingly, I was determined to ensure that each of my children understood and appreciated their innate abilities and how this was a valuable resource to them and the world they lived in.
This newsletter promotes and encourages fostering a deeper understanding of multiple intelligence. I believe, as parents, that gaining insight into the way your child overcomes any barriers they encounter to achieve the things they want to do or learn about a subject they want to know about is key to enabling them to learn and access the curriculum.
Effective learning can be achieved using the pathways that the child has developed through an interest in a particular activity/subject.
For example, irrespective of whether your child is learning letter sound links, the history of World War 2 or the law of supply and demand in economics if it

is presented through their primary intelligence they will pick it up more easily than through any other route. The key is knowing which of the intelligences is their primary route! Observing your child will provide the answer.

For example if your child has a fascination with words, enjoys learning new words, what they mean and is able to effortlessly use it in context this is a measure of their linguistic intelligence.

If your child is number smart, enjoys puzzles and enjoys constructing or deconstructing things to find out how they work this is a measure of their logical-mathematical intelligence.

If your child is able to mentally model how something goes together, instinctively know that something will fit inside something else this is a measure of their spatial intelligence.

If your child has a keen enjoyment of music, constantly listening to music or singing this is a measure of their musical intelligence.

If your child reacts to unfamiliar experiences either joyfully or fearfully this is a measure of their Intrapersonal intelligence.

If your child is well co-ordinated, enjoys playing sports this is a measure of their bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence.

If your child thrives on having lots of friends, enjoys being in the company of others this is a measure of their Interpersonal intelligence.

If your child loves animals, enjoys being outside and takes an active interest in the natural world this is a measure of their Naturalist intelligence.

If your child enjoys looking at pictures or shows a natural ability for drawing/painting this is a measure of their Pictorial intelligence.

If your child can instinctively pick up on how others are feeling or an atmosphere or tries to placate, protect or smooth the way for others this is a measure of their Spiritual intelligence.

This is not an exhaustive list of factors that can give you clues to your child's primary intelligence. However, it may help you understand that it is not always the academic performance of children that point the way to how intelligent they actually are. It might just be those things they do seemingly naturally, apparently effortlessly or sometimes even irritatingly that can provide the clues as to how best to enable them.