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Can We Gauge Smartness?

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Smartness Depends on Nine Variables

One's smartness depends on at least nine variables. These nine variables are also called multiple intelligences, developed by Dr. Gardner in 1983.

This theory of multiple intelligences suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, which ordinarily is based on the intelligence quotient test is really limited. Dr. Gardner, therefore proposes nine types of intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential. He feels that everyone of us is endowed with these smartnesses and depending on the availability of opportunities and ambiance, we tend to grow one or the other smartness in a more prominent way than the rest. It is also widely accepted by Educational Psychologists throughout the world.

Although each one of us have all the nine, no two individuals have them in the same exact amounts – almost like our fingerprints. Let us deal with each of these intelligences in greater detail.

Multiple Intelligences

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These intelligences are:

1. Linguistic intelligence (word smart)
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence (number smart)
3. Musical intelligence (music smart)
4. Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence (body smart)
5. Spatial intelligence (picture smart)
6. Interpersonal intelligence (people smart)
7. Intrapersonal intelligence (self smart)
8. Naturalist intelligence (nature smart)
9. Existential Intelligence (wonder smart)

Change Our Teaching Style to Suit the Learner's Smartness

It is necessary to modify our teaching style depending on the smartness(es) each learner is endowed with. It means our teaching styles have to change in order to adapt to the needs of the students.

A particular student who is word smart may not understand the lesson fully well if it is done in a different way. It may not be possible for the teacher to adopt all the intelligences all the time in the class but then (s)he can identify their needs and strengthen their learning modalities and talents.

To Develop Suitable Curriculum

It is possible to co-develop curriculum and effect modifications that allow children to learn concepts through a variety of strategies. Learning through a variety of unique experiences allows children to better understand themselves as lifelong learners, and to see how others acquire knowledge and apply their skills. Teaching and learning through the multiple intelligences fosters self-esteem, for students obtain a better understanding of their own unique talents and abilities as well as those possessed by their peers.

Various Types of Smartness

1) Word smart people have the capacity to use language-one's mother tongue as well as other tongues-to express what is on one's mind and to understand other people. Poets, writers, orators, speakers, lawyers etc. are word smart. Word smart people enjoy writing, debating, creating audio tapes, presenting radio dramas etc. Some of the great people such as William Shakespeare, Earnst Hemingway, HW Longfellow, Robert Frost, Mark Twain, J K Rowling etc. fall under the category.

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2) Number smart people understand the underlying principles of some kind of a causal system, the way a scientist or a logician does; or can manipulate numbers, quantities, and operations, the way a mathematician does. These people love organizing facts, using deductive reasoning skills and abstract symbols, computing, analyzing data etc. Sir Isaac Newton, Galileo, Albert Einstein, Pythagoras, Euclid, Kepler, Pascal etc. were number smart people.

3) Being music smart is having the capacity to think in music, to be able to hear patterns, recognize them, and perhaps manipulate them. People who have strong musical intelligence don't just remember music easily - they can't get it out of their minds. Music smart people excel in singing, composing, finding song titles, using musical vocabulary etc. Mozart, Beethoven, Carole King, John Williams, Carlos Santana etc. are music smart people.

4) Body smart people have the capacity to use their whole body or parts of the body- hands, fingers, arms etc. to solve a problem, make something, or put on some kind of production. They create dance sequence, perform a skit, build a model, perform a martial art etc. The most evident examples are people in athletics or the performing arts, particularly when dancing or acting. Some of the better known body smart people are: Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, Charlie Chaplin and Harry Houdini.

5) Picture smart people have the ability to represent the spatial world internally in their mind, e.g. the way a sailor or airplane pilot navigates the large spatial world, or the way a chess player or sculptor represents a more circumscribed spatial world. These people do well in the arts or sciences. These people are more likely to become painters or sculptors or architects. They also do well in anatomy or topology. Some of the more famous picture smart people are Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Picasso, Van Gogh, Steven Spielberg etc.

6) People smart means understanding other people. It's an ability handy with a teacher, clinician, salesperson, or a politician. These people give feedback, empathise, teaching, learning, acting, conducting interviews etc. Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King are among the famous people smart personalities.

7) Being self smart means having an understanding of oneself, of knowing who one is, what one can do, what one wants to do, how one reacts to things, which things to avoid, and which things to gravitate toward.

They tend to know what they can and can't do. They keep a diary, evaluate one's work, use metarecognition techniques, use higher order reasoning skills etc. Neil

Armstrong, Helen Keller, Colombus, Joan of Arc, Cleopatra and Sir Edmond Hillary are some of the well known self smart people.

8) Nature smart people have the ability to discriminate among living things as well as sensitivity to other features of natural world. Such people are good at categorizing species, collecting natural objects, making celestial observations, finding environmental concerns etc. Some nature smart people are: Galileo, Rachael, Goodall, John Muir etc.

9) Wonder smart people are individuals who exhibit the proclivity to pose and ponder questions about life, death, and ultimate realities. They ask questions such as: why they are here on earth, what life might be on another planet, do ghosts exist etc. Some of the famous men who can be called wonder smart are: Einstein, Plato, Socrates, Emerson, Aristotle etc.

Strong Implications for Better Learning and Better Teaching

The theory of multiple intelligences has strong implications for adult learning and development for the adults find themselves in jobs that do not make optimal use of their most highly developed intelligences, e.g. a highly body smart individual might be stuck in a linguistic or logical desk-job. It is therefore necessary that the proper intelligence is clearly identified so that the learning can be effective. Depending on how smart one is, the relevant skill can be administered.

Resources

Armstrong, Thomas.(1999). 7 Kinds of Smart: Identifying and Developing Your Many Intelligences. New York: Plume

Gardner, Howard.(2000). Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century. New York: Basic

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