

Foreword

I have always insisted that there is no optimal way to introduce multiple intelligences (MI) theory into the school. Indeed, hundreds of educators have put forth their own ideas and approaches, and the growing field of “applied MI” has been enriched by this luxuriant, open-ended process.

Nonetheless, having looked at various applications, I have concluded that one frequent application of MI theory is not well-founded. This is the approach that says, in effect: Kids have several intelligences and we have to find as many opportunities to use the intelligences as we can. And so we will have youngsters sing, dance, draw, work with others, work alone, as much as possible, without special reference to the goals or the curriculum of the school.

Now, to be sure, I have nothing against the arts—indeed, I have devoted much of my scholarly life to understanding their particular genius. Nor do I have any objection to cooperative learning, or solitary learning, for that matter. However, I insist that any activity to which significant amounts of school time is devoted needs to fit into carefully articulated and well-defended educational goals.

And so, as a rough rule of thumb, I ask two questions of an MI school: (1) Are there standards of excellence for the development of particular intelligences? For example, if the development of musical intelligence is a goal, are there reliable standards for what constitutes an excellent musical performance or a sophisticated musical understanding? (2) Are the multiple intelligences mobilized so that students can effectively master basic literacies, develop skills of thinking and problem solving, and come to understand the important ideas that have occurred within and across the several disciplines?

Integrating Curricula With Multiple Intelligences takes seriously the task of putting multiple intelligences to use within the broader missions of schools for today and, equally important, the missions of schools for tomorrow. Rather than developing intelligences simply for their own sake, Robin Fogarty and Judy Stoehr give ample examples of how to approach authentic curricular goals and assessment needs within an MI framework. They are sensitive to the constraints that operate on teachers even as they are open to ways in which teachers can refashion their classes and curricula to reach more children, and to do so in more effective ways. This book should help teachers to enliven and enrich their classrooms; in addition, the book should stimulate teachers to forge new connections across concepts and curricula, as well as new links among students and colleagues.

—Howard Gardner