

# Learning Through Many Kinds of Intelligence

by Dee Dickinson

Dr. Howard Gardner, author of *Frames of Mind* and co-director of Project Zero at Harvard University, has created a Theory of Multiple Intelligences. He points out that [school systems](#) often focus on a narrow range of intelligence that involves primarily verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical skills. While knowledge and skills in these areas are essential for surviving and thriving in the world, he suggests that there are at least six other kinds of intelligence that are important to fuller human development and that almost everyone has available to develop. They include, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, naturalist and intrapersonal intelligence.

The strongest skills of many children lie in these six areas, which are frequently undervalued in some traditional [schools](#). The fact is that when children have an opportunity to learn through their strengths, they may become more successful at learning all subjects--including the "basic skills."

Gardner believes that the eight intelligences he has identified are independent, in that they develop at different times and to [different degrees](#) in different individuals. They are, however, closely related, and many teachers and parents are finding that when an individual becomes more proficient in one area, the whole constellation of intelligence may be enhanced.

For this reason, we believe that it is important to encourage children to explore and exercise all of their intelligences. Creating a rich, nurturing, and stimulating environment filled with interesting materials, toys, games, and books lays the foundation for healthier, happier, brighter children! Students who have these kinds of experiences know many ways to learn almost anything!

Following are some characteristics of the different intelligences, along with ways to exercise and develop them:

## Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence



Involves reading, writing, speaking, and conversing in one's own or foreign languages. It may be exercised through reading interesting books, playing word board or card games, listening to recordings, using various kinds of computer technology, and participating in conversation and discussions.

## Logical/Mathematical Intelligence



Involves number and computing skills, recognizing patterns and relationships, timeliness and order, and the ability to solve different kinds of problems through logic. It may be exercised through classifying and sequencing activities, playing number and logic games, and solving various kinds of puzzles.

## Visual/Spatial Intelligence



Involves visual perception of the environment, the ability to create and manipulate mental images, and the orientation of the body in space. It may be developed through experiences in the graphic and plastic arts, sharpening observation skills, solving mazes and other spatial tasks, and exercises in imagery and active imagination.

## Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence



Involves physical coordination and dexterity, using fine and gross motor skills, and expressing oneself or learning through physical activities. It may be exercised by playing with blocks and other construction materials, dancing, playing various active sports and games, participating in plays or make-believe, and using various kinds of manipulatives to solve problems or to learn.

## Musical Intelligence



Involves understanding and expressing oneself through music and rhythmic movements or dance, or composing, playing, or conducting music. It may be exercised by listening to a variety of recordings, engaging in rhythmic games and activities, and singing, dancing, or playing various instruments.

## Interpersonal Intelligence



Involves understanding how to communicate with and understand other people and how to work collaboratively. It may be exercised through cooperative games, group projects and discussions, multicultural books and materials, and dramatic activities or role-playing.

## Intrapersonal Intelligence



Involves understanding one's inner world of emotions and thoughts, and growing in the ability to control them and work with them consciously. It may be exercised through participating in independent projects, reading illuminating books, journal-writing, imaginative activities and games, and finding quiet places for reflection.

## Naturalist Intelligence



Involves understanding the natural world of plants and animals, noticing their characteristics, and categorizing them; it generally involves keen observation and the ability to classify other things as well. It may be exercised by exploring nature, making collections of objects, studying them, and grouping them.