

We rarely stop to analyse what we mean by “intelligence” but as soon as we do it becomes clear that it involves a multi-faceted rather than a single aspect of our thinking or behaviour. We all know people who are

intelligence, and Logical-Mathematical intelligence. You are a language teacher. You were very likely valued for your above average Linguistic intelligence, your love of books, of talking, of listening, your ability to use words effectively. Your Logical-Mathematical intelligence may be lower. You may have received negative messages such as ‘You’re no good at maths’ or ‘You’ll never be any good at science’. Perhaps you have internalised these and you may still repeat them now about yourself.

Multiple intelligences

In the first of two articles, Jim Wingate investigates the seven intelligences and enables you to discover your own intelligence profile. Adapting the questionnaire for use with your students will help you to identify their intelligences and learning styles.

immensely capable in one sphere of intellectual life but are quite inadequate in other areas. This article will reveal in what ways this is true of yourself and your learners.

Mental ability is clearly multi-dimensional; in fact seven separate ‘intelligences’ have been identified:

Linguistic
Logical - Mathematical
Spatial (Visual)
Musical
Bodily - Kinesthetic
Interpersonal
Intrapersonal

We will look at each in detail in this article and you will find which intelligences are your strengths and which are your weaknesses. In my next article we will find practical applications of your understanding of your own intelligences to make your own teaching style more effective for all your learners. But first let’s look at what is normally valued by education systems.

What is valued and tested?

Only two of the seven intelligences are consistently valued and tested by national education systems: Linguistic

But what about your other intelligences which are seldom tested or valued?

Determining your strengths and weaknesses

Complete the questionnaire opposite, simply putting a tick ✓ next to sentences which are true about you. Then add up the numbers of ticks for each intelligence.

Look back at the patterning of your ticks. Does a clear profile of your intelligences emerge? What are your strengths and what are your weaknesses?

Now look at the strengths in your intelligence in terms of your learning. Do they describe the ways you learn best?

What about those characteristics in terms of your teaching? Do you feel most comfortable with those strategies in your classroom? Does this imply that you neglect other aspects of intelligence that will be the strengths of many of your learners?

Now look at those intelligences where you ticked the fewest characteristics. Are they in fact your weaknesses? It may be that you have been using your strengths in the other intelligences to compensate for these weaknesses. If so, that’s a very good strategy.



Questionnaire

Linguistic Intelligence

- I can hear words in my head before I read, speak, or write them down.
- I learn more from listening to the radio or a spoken-word cassette than from television or films.
- I enjoy word games like Scrabble
- I enjoy entertaining myself or others with tongue twisters, nonsense rhymes, or puns.
- Other people sometimes have to ask me to explain the meaning of the words I use in my writing and speaking.
- English, social studies, and history were easier for me in school than maths and science.
- My conversation includes frequent references to things that I've read or heard.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

- I can double or triple a cooking recipe or carpentry measurement in my head.
- I beat my friends in chess, checkers, Go, or other strategy games.
- I wonder a lot about how certain things work.
- I believe that most things have a rational explanation.
- I sometimes think in clear, abstract, wordless, imageless concepts.
- I like finding logical flaws in things that people say and do at home and work.
- I feel more comfortable when something has been measured, categorised, analysed, or quantified in some way.

Spatial Intelligence

- I often see clear visual images when I close my eyes.
- I like recording events with a camera or camcorder.
- I enjoy solving jigsaw puzzles, mazes, or other visual puzzles.
- I have vivid dreams at night.
- I can generally find my way around unfamiliar territory.
- Geometry was easier for me than algebra at school.
- I can comfortably imagine how something might appear if it were looked down upon from directly above, in a bird's eye view.

Musical Intelligence

- I can tell when a musical note is off-key.
- I frequently listen to musical selections on radio, records, cassettes, or compact discs.
- I play a musical instrument.
- I catch myself sometimes walking down the street with a television jingle or other tune running through my mind.

- I know the tunes to many different songs or musical pieces.
- If I hear a tune once or twice, I am usually able to sing it back fairly accurately.
- I often make tapping sounds or sing little melodies while working, studying or learning something new.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

- I play at least one sport or physical activity regularly.
- I find it difficult to sit still for long.
- I like working with my hands.
- My best ideas often come to me when I'm out for a walk, a jog, or doing some physical activity.
- I frequently use hand gestures or other forms of body language when conversing.
- I enjoy dare-devil amusement rides, or similar thrilling physical experiences.
- I need to practise a new skill by doing it rather than simply reading about it or seeing a video that describes it.

Interpersonal Intelligence

- I'm considered someone that people come to for advice.
- I prefer group sports to solo sports.
- When I've got a problem, I'm more likely to seek out another person for help than attempt to work it out on my own.
- I prefer social pastimes like bridge to individual recreations such as video games.
- I enjoy the challenge of teaching another person, or groups of people, what I know how to do.
- I consider myself a leader (or others have called me that).
- I feel comfortable in a crowd.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

- I regularly spend time alone to meditate, or think about important life questions.
- I have attended counselling sessions or personal growth seminars to learn more about myself.
- I have unique thoughts about things that others don't seem to understand.
- I consider myself to be strong-willed or fiercely independent.
- I have a special hobby or interest that I keep pretty much to myself.
- I have some important goals for my life that I think about on a regular basis.
- I keep a personal diary or journal to record the events of my inner life.




Multiple intelligences

Seven kinds of learning styles

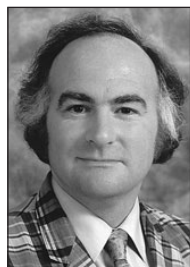
Let's now consider the intelligences in terms of the ways we learn, both in and out of the classroom, and the best way to help learners learn more effectively.

You may like to adapt the questionnaire to use in some form with your learners to help them to find their intelligence profiles for themselves. By reminding yourself of their strengths and weaknesses as well as your own, you can reach a greater degree of appreciation of the teaching and learning processes going on in your classroom.

As you consider the table below you will find suggestions for teaching methods that may not come naturally to you, but will be important to help your learners to learn.

In the next article we shall consider how these insights can inform your teaching. 

A learner who is:	Thinks:	Loves:	Needs:
Linguistic	in words	reading, writing, telling stories, playing word games	books, tapes, writing implements, paper, diaries, dialogue, discussion, debate, stories
Logical-Mathematical	by reasoning	experimenting, questioning, figuring out logical puzzles, calculating	things to explore and think about, science materials, manipulatives, trips to planetarium, science museums
Spatial	in images and pictures	designing, drawing, visualizing, doodling	art, Lego, video, movies, slides, imagination games, mazes, puzzles, illustrated books, trips to art galleries, museums
Bodily-Kinesthetic	through bodily awareness	dancing, running, building, touching, gesturing	role play, drama, movement, things to build, sports and physical games tactile experiences, hands-on learning
Musical	via rhythms and melodies	singing, whistling, humming, tapping feet and hands, listening	sing-along time, concerts, music, musical instruments
Interpersonal	by bouncing ideas off other people	leading, organising, relating, manipulating, meditating, partying	friends, group games, community events, clubs, mentors/ apprenticeships
Intrapersonal	deeply inside themselves	setting goals, meditating, dreaming being quiet, planning	secret places, time alone, self-paced projects, choices



Jim Wingate trains teachers in six countries every year, for Pilgrims and the British Council. He has written 30 practical books for teachers and is particularly interested in collecting ideas that work well in the classroom.