

**Tikrit University**

**Collage of Education for Humanities**

**English Department**



**Adult Education**

**Second Year**

**Multiple Intelligences**

**Asst.Lect. Marwah Sh. Yaqoob**

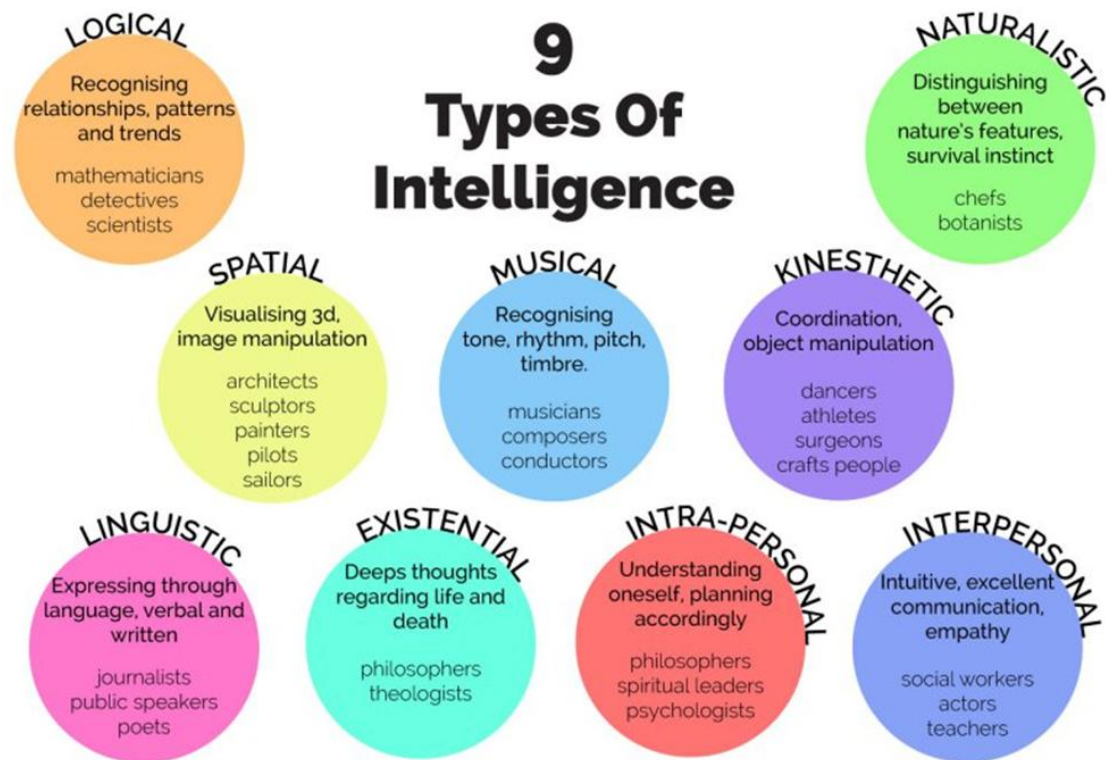
**2025-2026**

# Multiple Intelligences

## Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Many of us are familiar with three broad categories in which people learn: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning. Beyond these three categories, many theories and approaches toward human learning potential have been established. Among them is the theory of *Multiple Intelligences* developed by **Howard Gardner** an American psychologist and cognitive professor at Harvard University. His work, introduced in *Frames of Mind* (1983), has significantly impacted education by encouraging diverse teaching methods to meet different learning styles, emphasizing creativity and practical skills.

*The theory of multiple intelligences (MI)* broadens the traditional view of intelligence as solely composed of verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical abilities. MI theory maintains that all humans possess at least eight different intelligences that represent a variety of ways to learn and demonstrate understanding. This overview outlines the basic tenets of MI theory and describes how it has been applied in teaching English as a second language (ESL) to adults. This theory argues against the idea of a single, fixed intelligence measurable by tests, focusing instead on the ability to create valuable products or solve problems.



**Intelligence** has traditionally been defined in terms of intelligence quotient (IQ), which measures a narrow range of verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical abilities. Howard Gardner (1993) argues that humans possess a number of distinct intelligences that manifest themselves in different skills and abilities. All human beings apply these intelligences to solve problems, invent processes, and create things. Intelligence, according to MI theory, is being able to apply one or more of the intelligences in ways that are valued by a community or culture.

### **Gardner's Multiple Intelligences**

1. **Verbal-linguistic intelligence** : The ability to use language effectively both orally and in writing
2. **Logical-mathematical intelligence** :The ability to use numbers effectively and reason well.

3. **Spatial-visual intelligence:** The ability to recognize form, space, color, line, and shape and to graphically represent visual and spatial ideas
4. **Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence:** The ability to use the body to express ideas and feelings and to solve problems.
5. **Musical intelligences:** The ability to recognize and produce rhythm, pitch, and melody.
6. **Interpersonal intelligence:** The ability to understand another person's feelings, motivations, and intentions and to respond effectively.
7. **Intrapersonal:** The ability to know about and understand oneself and recognize one's similarities to and differences from others
8. **Naturalist intelligence:** The ability to recognize and classify plants, minerals, and animals.
9. **Existential intelligence** (sensitivity and capacity to tackle deep questions about human existence such as, “What is the meaning of life? Why do we die? How did we get here?”)

Gardner (2013) asserts that regardless of which subject you teach—“the arts, the sciences, history, or math”—you should present learning materials in multiple ways. Gardner goes on to point out that anything you are deeply familiar with “you can describe and convey ... in several ways. We teachers discover that sometimes our own mastery of a topic is tenuous, when a student asks us to convey the knowledge in another way and we are stumped.” Thus, conveying information in multiple ways not only helps students learn the material, it also helps educators increase and reinforce our mastery of the content.

Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory can be used for curriculum development, planning instruction, selection of course activities, and related assessment strategies. Gardner points out that everyone has strengths and weaknesses in various intelligences, which is why educators should decide how best to present course material given the

subject-matter and individual class of students. Indeed, instruction designed to help students learn material in multiple ways can trigger their confidence to develop areas in which they are not as strong. In the end, students' learning is enhanced when instruction includes a range of meaningful and appropriate methods, activities, and assessments.

Teachers who use MI theory to inform their curriculum development find that they gain a deeper understanding of students' learning preferences and a greater appreciation of their strengths. Students are likely to become more engaged in learning as they use learning modes that match their intelligence strengths. In addition, students' regular reflection on their learning broadens their definitions of effective and acceptable teaching and learning practices. Students' increased engagement and success in learning stimulates teachers to raise their expectations, initiating a powerful expectation-response cycle that can lead to greater achievement levels for all.

## **Multiple Intelligences and Adult Education**

Adult education and multiple intelligences are strongly linked because adult learners differ widely in backgrounds, experiences, and ways of learning. Multiple Intelligences theory supports adult education by recognizing that learning is not limited to linguistic or logical abilities but includes social, reflective, practical, and experiential strengths. This aligns well with the principles of andragogy, which emphasize self-direction, relevance, and problem-centered learning.

When adult education incorporates multiple intelligences, instruction becomes more flexible and inclusive. Learners can engage with content through discussion, collaboration, hands-on tasks, reflection, and real-life problem solving, which increases motivation and persistence. Rather than labeling learners, multiple intelligences serve as a design framework that broadens instructional approaches and

assessment methods. As a result, adult education becomes more effective, meaningful, and responsive to the realities of adult learners' lives and goals.