Multiple Intelligences in Second Language Learning

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**Abstract**
Different methods to access a second language have been used. Among them we find the theory of multiple intelligences of Gardner that takes more and more force within the educational community. For that reason it is necessary to analyze and apply it in the classroom in order to see all its possibilities. In this article, these intelligences are analyzed from a point of view focused on language learning in schools.

**Keywords:** Multiple Intelligences, Method, Primary, English, Methodology, Learning

**Título:** Inteligencias Múltiples en el Aprendizaje de un Segundo Idioma.

**Resumen**
Diferentes métodos para acceder a un segundo idioma han de ser usados. Entre ellos nos encontramos con la teoría de las inteligencias múltiples de Gardner que cobra cada vez más fuerza dentro de la comunidad educativa. Por esa razón es necesario su análisis y aplicación en el aula para poder ver todas sus posibilidades. En este artículo se analizan dichas inteligencias desde un punto de vista enfocado al aprendizaje de idiomas.

**Palabras clave:** Inteligencias Múltiples, Método, Primaria, Inglés, Metodología, Aprendizaje.

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**CONTENT**

The teaching of English has been experimenting changes and innovations over the decades, always trying to improve and find a better methodology to teach the foreign language, moving from the grammar translation methods to the current tendencies and approaches. In the past, the students were said to be the receivers of the contents taught at school, as they were considered to be empty objects that needed to be filled up by the teacher, the leader and main figure in the classroom. Nowadays, a new vision of education is present in schools, it is called the learner-centred curriculum in which students play an important role in the teaching-learning process. We as teachers have to bear in mind our students, who have a say as they are part of their education; their needs, capacities, contributions, interests and motivations are taken into account being these the foundations for our didactic programmes.

The current educational laws in Spain are based on the fundamentals of the learner-centred curriculum approach. In other words, the teaching-learning process focused on the student.

As we have mentioned before, the essentials aspects of the LOMCE are shared with the learner-centred curriculum approach. This claims that the students are the centre of the curriculum, consequently, when designing contents, objectives and methodology teachers have to take into account their pupils. The teacher needs to judge the students’ necessities and adjust them to the didactic programme. It is important to know in advance the students’ previous knowledge to set their curricular level as a starting point to develop the contents and objectives of our didactic programme. Then, a continuous assessment should be done in order to evaluate the students’ progress as well as our teaching materials and activities, achievements and possible aspects to improve. Taking into account this continuous evaluation, the planning may be adapted according to the students’ progress.

This states that we have to adapt our teaching programme and strategies to the students, however, we know that there are many kinds of students and ways of learning. This statement is illustrated by Howard Gardner’s research which formulated that there is not only one type of intelligence but different ones. He distinguished eight kinds of intelligences in his multiple intelligences theory. Gardner argues that rather than a single dominating general ability, there are various cognitive abilities, which are the following: Spatial, Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Bodily-kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal and Naturalistic.

**Spatial-visual Intelligence** deals with spatial judgment and the ability to visualize things and space internally.
Linguistic Intelligence has to do with the language. Students with high verbal-linguistic intelligence display a facility with languages and expressing themselves.

Logical-mathematical Intelligence is related to logic, reasoning and analysing problems, mathematical operations and numbers. Those with this intelligence excel in logical or numerical activities.

Bodily-kinaesthetic Intelligence means the control of one's bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skillfully. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence people are generally good at physical activities, performing, building and making things.

Musical Intelligence has to do with sensitivity to sounds, rhythms and music. People with a high musical intelligence are able to sing, play and compose music.

Interpersonal Intelligence is connected to interaction with others and the ability to understand them. Interpersonal intelligence individuals are characterized by sensitivity to others’ moods, feelings and ability to cooperate.

Intrapersonal Intelligence refers to introspective and self-reflective capacities; having a deep understanding of the self.

Finally, Naturalistic Intelligence has to do with nurturing and relating information to one’s natural surroundings. Examples include classifying natural forms such as animal and plant species and the applied knowledge of nature.

This indicates that the different kinds of intelligences affect our teaching since students may have various dominating intelligences and preferences when learning, that is, different learning styles. Traditionally schools have emphasized the development of logical intelligence and linguistic intelligence (mainly reading and writing). Nevertheless, if assuming Gardner’s theory, he argues that students will be better served by a broader vision of education, wherein teachers use different methodologies, exercises and activities to reach all students, not just those who excel at linguistic and logical intelligence. It challenges educators to find ways that will work for their students, including different kinds of materials and activities during the year that cover the multiple intelligences reaching and increasing all student’s needs and motivations. Let’s mention some examples here.

First of all, we have to find out our students’ preferred intelligences. We can do that by giving them some tests, observing them, asking them what activities they like doing. After having identified the predominant types of intelligences, we can think of varied activities to cover all of them. Regarding the teaching of English, as it is a language, students whose highlighting intelligence is the linguistic one find our lessons motivating and learn easily. For the rest of intelligences, we can provide students with activities along the year. For instance, for the interpersonal intelligence, students can do big group activities like debates and role-plays in which problem solving is involved, on the other hand, to cover the intrapersonal intelligence, individual work is preferred. To work on the logical-mathematical intelligence, students can solve logic games and puzzles and number quizzes, for example they can create a secret number code in which every number is a letter and then form messages they have to code and decode.

For the spatial students, maps, grids, visual and manipulative material are preferred, examples would be the use of town maps where they have to complete them according to the descriptions, then giving or receiving directions, etc. To work the musical intelligence, apart from listening and singing songs and chants, so frequent in the ESL lessons, students can complete, modify or invent them. The students who prefer a bodily-kinesthetic way of learning, enjoy these songs and chants as long as they are accompanied by actions and gestures. They also enjoy activities in which they have to move around the classroom or to carry out commands. Finally, to work the naturalistic intelligences, pupils can classify words, do word families and fields, studying and talking about the surroundings, projects about the nature of the area can be developed, etc.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a teacher who bears in mind these different learning styles is a teacher who observes his students and knows they learn differently. His lessons include a vast array of activities designed for different ways of learning. The purpose of schooling should be to take into account every student in order to help them to learn better and reach vocational and avocational goals that are appropriate to their particular spectrum of intelligences. Students who are helped to do so, are believed to feel more engaged and competent and therefore more inclined to serve society in a constructive way.
Bibliografía