

# Can you explain the theory of multiples intelligences? How can it be applied to the English class?

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## Abstract

This practical case is related to the Valencian Community public examinations of teaching, into the English language speciality. This activity requires the explanation of the multiples intelligences theory and a practical case where specify how them could be applied in a foreign language classroom. The context in which this practical case will be developed in a 6th year classroom of a Primary School located in a village of the province of Valencia.

**Keywords:** Practical case, multiples intelligences, foreign language, English

**Título:** Caso práctico inteligencias múltiples.

## Resumen

Este caso práctico está relacionado con las oposiciones de Magisterio dentro de la especialidad de Lengua Extranjera, Inglés, en el ámbito de la Comunidad Valenciana. Para su desarrollo se solicita que se aborde el tema de las inteligencias múltiples y que se desarrolle una actividad para una clase del área de Inglés en la que estas inteligencias estén presentes. Este caso práctico se centrará en un grupo de sexto de primaria de veintitrés alumnos, de un colegio situado en un pueblo de la provincia de Valencia.

**Palabras clave:** Supuesto práctico, inteligencias múltiples, lengua extranjera, inglés.

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This topic deals with the differences between the ways students learn. It is considered that every student is different and has different ways of learning. It is an essential point which deals with the diversity that we can find in every classroom as it is established in the Organic Law 8/2013 December 9<sup>th</sup> LOMCE concretely in Article 17.1. It will be difficult to find a homogeneous class. Inside of each class there are pupils that are good in determinate subjects but they find difficulties in others.

Moreover, every student has a different personality, which makes each one unique. For this reason it is important to develop the skills that best fit for every student's personality. This topic also deals with the importance of the motivation. The Organic Law 8/2013 9<sup>th</sup> December LOMCE, in the Article 1, talks about the importance of the motivation during the learning process. It is well known that if students are not motivated they will not learn.

Students need to be motivated and interested in what they are doing. Due to this fact, teachers should present activities according to students' interests, likes and motivations. If we get students being motivated in the classroom it will be easier to achieve the final goal of the Primary Education in the foreign language area: the communicative competence.

This topic can be related to different legal framework that will be mentioned next:

The Royal Decree 126/2014 28<sup>th</sup> February, in the Article 7, sets the emotional skills and the basic competences in, at least, one foreign language. Also, in Article 9, it talks about fast and slow students.

Following, the concept of multiples intelligences will be defined.

The theory of the multiples intelligences, was developed by Howard Gardner, who specified the different intelligences that each person develops.

According to this theory, "we are all able to know the world through language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical thinking, the use of the body to solve problems or to make things, an understanding of other individuals, and an understanding of ourselves. Where individuals differ is in the strength of these intelligences - the so-called profile of intelligences -and in the ways in which such intelligences are invoked and combined to carry out different tasks, solve diverse problems, and progress in various domains."

He explains that the educational system assumes that every student can learn using the same materials and following the same methodology and evaluation criteria.

According to Gardner, there are eight different kinds of intelligences, for this reason, we can find people that develop some intelligences more than others. There are students that can have problems with mathematics but at the same time they have abilities in other skills such as artistic or interpersonal skills.

He assures that every person has different ways of learning depending on the ability to develop. In a classroom we can find an important diversity and in this sense, teachers should find the intelligence that best fits to every student to motivate and make them develop the different intelligences.

According to Gardner: "a contrasting set of assumptions is more likely to be educationally effective. Students learn in ways that are identifiably distinctive. The broad spectrum of students - and perhaps the society as a whole - would be better served if disciplines could be presented in a numbers of ways and learning could be assessed through a variety of means." The learning styles are as follows:

- 1 - Linguistic/oral intelligence:** It means the ability to learn languages and to use spoken and written language.
- 2 - Mathematical/logical intelligence:** It deals with the capacity to analyze and solve problems logically. Students with this kind of intelligence are able to carry out complicated mathematical operations. They can easily do math in their heads, are good at strategic games, look for rational explanations, wonder how things go.
- 3 - Body/kinesthetic intelligence:** This intelligence is concerned with the potential of using the whole body to solve problems. Here, student use mental abilities to coordinate movements.
- 4 - Artistic intelligence:** Involves the capacity to appreciate and distinguish rhythms, melodies and different musical structures. Moreover, these students are able to recognize and compose musical pitches.
- 5 - Intrapersonal intelligence:** This capacity allows understanding the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. Moreover, these students have more capabilities to make relationships and show empathy for others.
- 6 - Interpersonal intelligence:** The interpersonal intelligence makes students to understand themselves better, understanding one's own interests and goals. They are the most independent of the learners.
- 7 - Naturalist intelligence:** Through this intelligence, students understand the nature and the environment. They can recognize and categorize animals, plants and other objects in nature. Furthermore, the students that develop this intelligence show a special respect towards the animals and the conservation of the environment.
- 8 - Visual/spatial intelligence:** This is the ability to perceive and interpret visual stimuli. It is how the mind processes what it sees. Although not very recognized, spatial intelligence is very important in the arts and in everyday life.

Next, we are going to focus on the development of an activity to work the different intelligences. This activity will be developed in the area of English. The context of the class is a school located in a village. This class has 23 students in year 6 in a class with a good predisposition towards the English language.

Students will have to explain how is a day in their lives. To develop this activity, the teacher will explain them the different intelligences one by one and how they can be developed.

Students will choose which intelligence better fits with them and how they prefer to do it according to their preferences.

I will propose them different options to develop this activity according to the eight multiples intelligences.

They can choose between:

1. Explain your day orally to the whole class. Ex. the student goes to the blackboard and explains how her/his day is orally to his/her classmates. This activity is related with the linguistic intelligence.
2. Write your day sequencing every part of the day with a determinate time. Ex. the students explains in detail what time he/she wakes up, what time have breakfast etc. This activity is related with the mathematical intelligence.
3. Explain how your day is by means of mimicry. Ex. the student explains the day without saying any word, only using the body. This activity is related with the kinesthetic intelligence.

4. Make a song to explain how your day is. Here the student has to make a song and sing how is his/her day using the music. This kind of activity deals with the artistic intelligence.

5. Explain how do you feel during the day. The pupil explains what does he/she feel according with each activity of the day. This activity fits with the intrapersonal intelligence.

6. Describe other classmate's day. In this case the student explains how is the day of other person. This activity is joined with the interpersonal intelligence.

7. Explain what would you do to improve the environment in your day at day. Here the pupil explains the different things he/she would do in order to recycle or contaminate less. This activity is focused on the naturalist intelligence.

8. Explain your day with different draws or diagrams. In this activity the student explains visually how is her/his day at day. This activity deals with the visual/spatial intelligence.

Through the development of this activity we can get relevant information about what kind of intelligence is more appropriated for every student.

As a conclusion, it is important to remark the importance of the development of the different intelligences in order to improve students' motivation during the learning process. If students do what they really enjoy they will have a positive attitude towards the foreign language. It does not mean that they will have to work only their specific intelligences but to give more importance to that intelligence where they feel more comfortable.

I would like to mention a quote of the philosopher Pestalozzi who said: "intelligence comes through our hands and children learn through singing, playing, writing asking and making".

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