

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Level : elementary +

Time: 15-20 mins over 8 lessons

Student process explored: excellence or not in 8 of the many human intelligences.

Language : varied

Age group: teenagers and adults

Preparation : Get three different native speakers to read the first lesson poem below onto cassette. Good if you can get male and female and young and old voices.

Lesson 1 (Language intelligence)

1. Tell the class they are to listen to three voices reading part of an e.e.cummings love poem. Their task is to choose which of the three voices they like best.

may i feel said he
(i'll squeal said she
just once said he)
it's fun said she

(may I touch said he
how much said she
a lot said he)
why not said she

(let's go said he

not too far said she
what's too far said he
where you are said she)

2. Ask the students in fours to tell each other which voice they preferred.
3. Ask the students to write you a paragraph about what they liked or disliked about the exercise. Take in their papers for reading at home.

Rationale : students who like this exercise are likely to be people with good LINGUISTIC intelligence and they are also likely to be people who like the world of sound. The exercise can be annoying to the LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL intelligence - what a wishy-washy task.... who cares about silly poems and silly voices?

Maybe you can get these language-intelligent people to lead the class when you are doing exercises involving stress, intonation, rhythm and word choice.

Lesson 2: (Musical intelligence)

1. Ask the students to leave their desks and stand all over the room.
Tell them they are going to close their eyes and imagine they are a band leader, a choir master or a conductor : out there in front of them is the group of musicians they are leading. Ask them to physically direct the musicians while hearing the music in their own ears.
2. Ask them to close their eyes and do the exercise. Give them around three minutes.
3. Put them in fours to feedback to one another what they heard and what they did mentally during the three minutes.
4. Ask the students who really enjoyed the exercise and heard and felt music to form one group. Ask the people who found the exercise heard and pointless to form a second group. Ask the people in between to form a third group.
Give them three minutes to exchange notes within their groups.
5. Ask them each to write a paragraph to you about how well or not they liked the exercise.

Rationale : This exercise is really enthralling for some students and a complete turn-off for others. It gives you some way of gauging where the well-developed

musical intelligences in the class are sitting. Musical homework, maybe, for them?

Lesson 3: (Logical-mathematical intelligence)

1. Put the students in threes and ask them to work out how many combinations of three fingers they can find on one hand (five fingers, counting the thumb as a finger). Make clear that "combination" means three fingers in any order of counting, eg:

thumb + forefinger + middle finger
is the same combination as:
middle finger + thumb + forefinger

Give them a time limit of 7 minutes.

2. Let people give you any answers they can come up with. Frustrate them by withholding the pat answer (ten combinations). Tell them they can work it out themselves or ask a maths person.

3. Ask them to write you a paragraph describing how they felt doing the exercise.

Rationale: Students who show high logical-mathematical intelligence need exercises like those in MIND MATTERS

Maley and Duff, CUP, [currently, absurdly, out of print] and CHALLENGE TO THINK, Berer et al, OUP.

Acknowledgement : we learnt this activity from Herbert Puchta but do not remember who he said he got it from.

Lesson 4 (Spatial intelligence)

1. Give the students the three figures below and ask them to check that they understand the instructions (eg IDENTICAL and ROTATION)

2. Ask them to work in pairs and take 10 minutes to carry out the instructions.

3. Ask them to write a paragraph on how baffling or enjoyable they found the exercise.

Figures 1 + 2 + 3. (taken from FRAMES OF MIND, Howard Gardner, Palladin. 1983)

Rationale : You can give spatially intelligent people beautiful grammar practice activities like grammar dominoes and grammar draughts (checkers) (GRAMMAR GAMES , Rinvolucris, CUP) or grammar reversi (MORE GRAMMAR

We suspect, though that language teachers have yet to devise a decent, broad battery of exercises that appeal to the spatial intelligences.

Lesson 5 (Bodily Kinaesthetic Intelligence)

1. Give the students the Marc Marceau reading below and ask them, as homework, to prepare to accurately mime it. Ask them to add their own ending.
2. In the next lesson put them in groups of 6 and have each student produce his/ her mime.
3. They write a paragraph describing their reaction to the activity.

Marc Marceau reading

Our Hero Bip hauls his suitcase onto the platform, climbs board the train, locates a seat, and then, with considerable strain, heaves his heavy suitcase onto the overhead rack. As the train gathers speed, Bip is tossed about on his seat- his precariously rested suitcase falls out of the overhead rack. Bip manages to catch it and then carefully replaces it on the shelf. The ticket collector appears: Bip goes through his pockets with increasing frustration, turns them inside out, as all the while the train continues to toss him about. He become frantic- he goes through all the pockets of his

suitcase..... [Please finish the story in mime, your way]

Rationale: Students in secondary school classes (and some adult ones too) desperately need to express themselves through movement. You will lift and motivate your kinaesthetically bright students if you give them body exercises like listening to a story and acting out the protagonist's movements, like bodily representing grammar ideas (see the movement section in MORE GRAMMAR GAMES, Davis and Rinvoluceri, CUP) , or like doing three different walks before writing a letter from the viewpoint of one of the walkers (see LETTERS, Burbidge et al, OUP).

Lesson 6 (Intra-personal intelligence)

1. Ask your students to think about a problem they have in their personal lives. Tell them to shut their eyes and bring the problem to mind. Ask them to see the problem, to hear sounds connected with it and to fully feel the

emotions connected with it.

Ask them to talk to themselves in English about how they might solve the problem. This inner talking is done in complete silence for around 3 minutes.

2. Give the students this questionnaire to be handed back to you when they have finished:

1. How easy was it to be with yourself when you had your eyes shut just now ?
2. How many solutions to your problem did you find?
3. Do find that you do a lot of language learning work in your head, talking to yourself or others. What sort of language work do you do?
4. When do you think in English ?
5. Have you ever dreamed in English?
6. How much did you enjoy trying to find solutions to your problem without reference to the people round you?
7. How much are you a loner?
8. Do you give yourself a good time when you are alone with yourself in your own head?

(This questionnaire is designed to please people who are very intra-personally intelligent- if you are more intelligent in other ways you may find the questions pretty goofy.)

Rationale: Maybe some of the more introverted, intra-personally intelligent people in your group dread the instruction : " now work in pairs....". One such person when asked to explain something in class said : " Of course I understand this... do you want me to teach it to the others ...? ".

In the context of such people you will find Chris Sion's TALKING TO YOURSELF IN ENGLISH (Desert Island Books) a useful sourcebook.

Lesson 7 Inter-personal intelligence

1. Ask the students to pair off. Ask one person from each pair to go outside for a moment.

2. Ask the people left in the room to have a conversation with their partners about anything they want (except about the nature of this exercise!) and to try to speak at the same tempo as the partner- so if their partner is a fast speaker they speak fast and if she is a slow speaker they speak slow.

3. The people outside come back in and the conversations

take place for about 4 minutes.

4. Let the people in the know explain the exercise to the others.

5. Ask each student to write about whether they think they are "people people" or not. Do they enjoy thinking with another person, studying with another person, deciding things with another person. Collect in their papers.

Rationale: students with high inter-personal intelligence need to be set joint homework, homework they can do on the phone. They will usually love the humanistic exercises that have come from Maley and Duff and Pilgrims authors over the past 20 years. They are likely to yawn over impersonal exercises like the gap fills in Murphy.

Lesson 8 (Metaphoric intelligence)

1. Put these proverbial sayings up on the board :

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

A stitch in time saves nine

People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones

To put new wine in old bottles

Necessity is the mother of invention

2. Ask the students to work in pairs and to reverse each of the proverbs above eg:

Invention is the mother of necessity

Ask them to decide, with their partner, what the new, reversed sayings may mean, if anything.

3. Ask them to write a paragraph about what sense they saw in the exercise.

Acknowledgement : John Morgan, author of THE Q BOOK, taught us the proverb reversing exercise.

Rationale: In his book FRAMES OF MIND Howard Gardner posits the first seven intelligences worked on above. The first five are widely recognised, though thinkers like Piaget elevated the logical-mathematical one into THE

intelligence.

Gardner's book introduced the intra and inter personal intelligences to us and they make a lot of intuitive sense to us as three practitioners with a cumulative half century of teaching experience.

The odd thing about Gardner's book is that it posits seven intelligences- maybe seven is a magic number! To show the absurdity of this confined position we have added the metaphoric intelligence as number 8, and this with a view to stimulating you to add several more.

The main use we have found for the theory of multiple intelligences has been to help us increase the variety of exercise types we offer our students. It makes patent sense to approach the student through areas where his or her strongest intelligences can be brought into play. The theory has also helped us to think much more broadly about our students talents and apparent blank areas.

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