To Apply Multiple Intelligences in College Students in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

Multiple Intelligences is an excellent theory to apply in college students majoring in Food and Beverage management through a careful modeling of the same intelligence in teaching these students. Howard Gardner (1943) presented his theory in “Frame of Mind” (1983); he suggested that each one have eight relatively independent mental intelligences, which includes linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, body-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. He opposes the traditional view of intelligence only measured by IQ tests. He defines that individuals have the ability to solve problem and to create products through making use of the MI. So how can we make it useful to college students, especially those majoring in F&B management through using interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences of MI? And how should we give leadership to those students by modeling person-to-person relationship and the use of communication?

INTRODUCTION

Howard Gardner, the professor of Harvard Graduate School of Education, is a famous educator who developed and introduced the theory of multiple intelligences. He suggested that individuals have eight kinds of intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic.

Here I would like to select the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. One research noted that the response of college student’s to increase interpersonal stress in social activity is as high as 71%, and to intrapersonal stress is as high as 89% (Shannon, 1999). Shannon made this survey through those questions, such as, a fight with a boyfriend or girlfriend or trouble with parents, financial difficulties, and outstanding personal achievement. Ruth (2000) mentioned that Gardner said, “Electronic media will become increasingly person-friendly and will adjust to the needs and desires of learners,” which implied that students might ease their stress through the use of the Internet. Gardner (2000) demonstrated that “I don’t want to eliminate the great tutors of the past. I just want to equip them with an up-to-date, well-networked, richly Webbed computer with a versatile operating system.” Brian (2000) stressed that Gardner hoped that all the educators could build a successful and effective lifelong desire for students by using multiple strategies to help them achieve their potential. A recent study of developing interpersonal intelligence (Mel Siberman, 2000), asserts that a smart person should have smart skills, such as understanding people, expressing thoughts, and feeling clearly.

The study entitled “Keep it professional” (Robyn, 2000) asked the question: “Communication skills are more important than ever on the job. But how do I know when I am interpersonal?” The answer was gived by Wilson, Baltimore, “While open and supportive relationships at work can contribute to our job satisfaction and productivity,” we knew already, good relationships help people deal with their jobs. Oliver (2000) mentioned that Chinese traditionally rely on their contacts with people for helping them to accomplish their business. Especially, in these ten years, the service industry is growing tremendously in
Taiwan, which enforces the colleges to open the new department, called “Hospitality Management,” or “F&B Management,” or “Hotel and Restaurant Management.” Those students who graduate from the college with this new major enter the service industry. How can they get involved in this complicated personal society by receiving only a two-year professional technique education? What do their tutors do in making use of the multiple strategies, technical tools, and homework to guide the students in achieving multiple intelligence, especially interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences.

**PHILOSOPHY**

Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences dramatically changes the traditional thinking of intelligence measured by IQ tests only. He defines intelligence as a capability to resolve problems. He mentioned that developing eight intelligences well would help people to achieve their potential. To develop the Linguistic intelligence well will help people to communicate through language. To develop the Musical intelligence well allows a person to create and understand meaning made out of sound. To develop Logical-mathematical intelligence well will enforce people to use abstract relations. Developing Spatial intelligence enables people to perceive visual or spatial information and then transform that information to create spatial images from memory. Kinesthetic intelligence teaches a person to use parts or all of the body to solve problems or create products. To enable individuals to recognize and make distinctions about the feeling of others will help individuals achieve Interpersonal intelligence. To build positive mental model and have an accurate attitude are kinds of Intrapersonal intelligence. And achieving Naturalistic intelligence potential is making people know how to distinguish themselves and to use features of the environment.

The Interpersonal intelligence and Intrapersonal intelligence reveal an individual’s awareness of himself and others. Gwendolyn & Sheryl (1997) declared that teaching by multiple intelligences could have a positive impact on students. People situated in their society know themselves not only by awareness but also by reflection on people relationships. People learn how to get involved with their society continually all their life. The learners who have the intention of achieving their goals and of learning the basic way to get there are to feel comfortable when they are dealing with someone else. After learning to work with others, learners could learn the other things to accomplish the other seven intelligences.

Gardner thought the one who can be judged as an intelligent person has the following traits: (1) potential isolation by brain damage, (2) existence of savants, prodigies, and other exceptional individuals, (3) an identifiable core set of operations, (4) a distinctive developmental history, along with a definite set of “end-state” performance, (5) an evolutionary history and plausibility, (6) support from experimental and psychological tasks, (7) support from psychometric findings, (8) susceptibility to encoding from a symbol system (New Approach to Understanding, 1996). Gardner demonstrates his thought according to Darwin’s theory of evolution as the basis for teaching individual the skills necessary to be effective in the disciplines (The Disciplined Mind, 1999). Also, he thinks each individual has his own talent according to the eight intelligences, and the educators are responsible for developing a perfect stratagem not only for guiding their students but enacting on their students (Frames of Mind, 1983).

A famous project called “School Using Multiple Intelligence Theory (SUMIT)” has been set in Harvard University since January 1997, and this project published a hands-on guidebook to support teachers’ effort to implement multiple intelligences. The purpose of this project is to promote effective implementations of multiple intelligences. This project is based on the teacher who encourages his
students to draw, measure, manipulate materials, collaborate with others, and explain their work to classmates for their learning (www.pz.harvard.edu/sumit/, 2002).

ANALYSIS

As we knew already, Gardner still works on the use of Multiple Intelligences. Recently, he has become involved in carrying out long-term case studies of successful leaders and creators. Also, now he is co-director of Harvard Project Zero. Project Zero is a research group that focuses on the human cognition studies. Both projects mentioned above, SUMIT and Project Zero, are based on the theory of multiple intelligences. He declared that individual’s intelligence should be measured by eight kinds of intelligences. And those intelligences can be developed thoroughly by good tutoring, which means educators have the obligation to figure out what they want to teach and what the students want to be taught. What strategies could give students more positive cognition, and, what skills educators have to develop before they teach. All the educators should understand the theory of multiple intelligences in advance. Gardner not only has come up with his theory to fight the traditional IQ tests but has also applied it both on Project Zero and SUMIT. We are familiar with many psychologists’ theories, educators’ thoughts, and even curriculum designers’ charts, which the originators have not put to the test of of application. But Gardner he puts his theory to practice. I endorse Gardner in this point. Specially, Gardner agrees with those new technologies, which make materials vivid, easy to access, and fun to play with. He said, “Technologies readily address the multiple ways of knowing that human demonstrate.” (Ruth Palombo, 2000). His approach does not follow Darwin’s and Skinner’s theories but accepts the newest techniques, information, and theories, which can help both educators tutoring and learners achieving their capabilities.

APPLICATION

Gardner’s multiple intelligences have been embraced by a lot of educators. Based on his theory, many curricula have been implemented in schools. And the theory really has had a lot of positive impact both on educators and learners.

I have worked for some junior vocational high schools for eight years, and now I am working in Tajen Institute of Technology (TIT) for almost two years. I’ve received honors from the Bureau of Education of Taipei in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and the high school gave me a lot of support, such as Funds for Low Income Students (especially for high accomplishment in Bartendering Skill) and a Funds for High Accomplishment in Department of Food & Beverage Management Students. When I transferred to the TIT, I received the Honor of Special Excellent Teacher of TIT in 2000. Reviewing my past teaching experience and rereading Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, I feel so happy that I have the same idea with Gardner, too. In my 1st-year of teaching in junior vocational high school, those students had an under average academic performance records, and most of them felt hostility toward others, especially their parents and teachers. It was a sad time. I couldn’t imagine what kind of families they came from. Some students’ parents divorced since their childhood or even before they were born, some students’ parents were in jail for many years, others never knew who and where his/her parents were, and still others had one meal a day because he/she could not afford more. For me, it was really awful. I couldn’t teach anything to them except opening their minds for me. I talked with them in their language; I tried to understand them by going to see a movie together, singing Karaoke in KTV, and I also dressed just like them. I also discovered that around 90% of them couldn’t read any English word even Chinese.
That was why they disliked studying. It was really a big problem for me to tell them that to be a good servant or bartender is a wonderful thing in their life. Obviously, they have linguistic obstacle, interpersonal and intrapersonal barriers.

After one semester, I taught them courageously how to do flairing bottles. And I could not imagine what happened between us, but I caught their minds. Most of them had a wonderful bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, and some of them could flair the whole day without their energy flagging. During the time from 1994 to 2000, I led them to participate in many cocktail competitions (including the Asia World Cup of Cocktail Competition in 1997 & 1998 and the Hong Kong Bartender Competition in 1999), they all got the honors that were what they had struggled for and worked hard for. Miraculously, they were beginning to be interested in learning English. They gave me the positive reason that they want to learn English because they really want to be good bartenders, and the first thing for them was to learn English better to be able to differentiate between a lot of different brand names of liquors, liqueurs, wines, beers, juices, and waters. They started to absorb knowledge as fast as they could those basics they should have already learned in the first 17 or 18 years of their lives. They picked up their confidence again, and they never wanted to retreat to their past. In my eyes, they are all smarter now than when I first saw them. I’m so proud of them, not only because of their accomplishments but also because they have learned to trust and love one another. Most of them enrolled in different colleges after they graduated from this senior vocational high school. They had never dreamed they could go to college someday. Till now, we still communicate with one another usually by e-mail or cell phone. Some boys still call me “Mom Tsou,” like those girls call me “mammy”.

For upgrading myself, I transferred my job from high school to college two years ago. I almost use the same model to teach the college students, the only difference is the increase in interpersonal intelligence. I urged one of my students to open a web chat room. Once a day, they can talk to me about anything that they want to by anonymity during our dealing time. Using their own culture vocabulary, affording and sharing my learning experiences, most of the students are really closer to me than to their parents. I share their happiness, worries, pleasures, and pains in their life, whatever. Some of them call me “mental tutor,” disregarding what my major in beverage management not in psychology.

Gardner’s theory is not only a strategy in my case, but also in the Briarcliff School, in Shoreham, New York. Phyllis (1994) declared that Briarcliff Child Study Team belief follows that the traditional IQ tests limit the development of students’ capabilities. The team also pointed out it could limit children development to become adults. The Briarcliff teachers use the child’s spatial and body intelligences for helping each child to get into the difficult area.

Multiple intelligences will help me refine what I have done already. The theory also helps me to see more potential that I can do for my students who have dramatically changed their life by getting on well among people and understanding what they are going to do.

CONCLUSION

Gardner’s theory really challenges the traditional way of thinking in a big way. The Multiple Intelligences state that individuals are born with their own intelligence, which can be achieved well with some guidance. The educators should have broad vision to look at their students. As times changes, the newest information or techniques will equip or help learners save time while making progress. The educators also can make use of the new techniques to renew and reform their teaching information, skills, and criteria.
According to recent research, there are more scholars and experts getting focused on the multiple intelligences, such as Benzel, B. L. (2000) in a book review of The disciplined mind, Dubois, D. D. (2000) in The seven stages of one’s career, and Fuini, L., & Gray, R. A. (2000) in Using debriefing activities to meet the needs of multiple intelligence learners. Some studies interpret the computer and the Web-base as something. That will do a lot of good both for educators and learners, like Osciak, S. Y. & Milheim, W. D. (2001) in Multiple intelligences and the design of Wed-based instruction and Weiss, R. P. (2000) in Howard Gardner talks about technology. Weiss is trying to utilize the principles of Multiple Intelligences and allow instructional designers to develop learning experience. The Web-based instruction is the most flexible types of instruction, which work regardless of where the students are.

Each one is born with special intelligence; we cannot tell which intelligence is more superior to others. All we (educators) can do is keep our eyes on each individual. We should have the sense that someone might be talented in verbal or writing ability but not in forming a mental model of a spatial world. Someone does a good job with attention to the physical components of music but do worse in athletics and swimming. One may not be able to make distinctions among one’s own moods, motivations, and intentions, but may be able to strum on the piano. Gardner claimed that educators could discover the students’ hidden intelligence. For future studies, I would like to do quality research to trace students majoring in F&B management, to compare those students’ career development by cataloging them into two groups (one based on my modeling conducting way, the other on the traditional relationships between educator and students).

REFERENCES