Learning styles has become a buzz word at all levels of education over the past decade or two. Research on this individualized approach to learning has both supported and rejected Learning Styles as a meaningful approach to teaching both children and adults. Promoters of this perspective believe that learners process information and knowledge more efficiently if given the opportunity to use their preferred methods of learning within the educational environment.

Howard Gardner, a professor at Harvard University, hypothesizes that people are capable of eight unique ways of information processing. Information processing is the person’s preferred intellectual approach to assimilating facts, information, and knowledge.

Gardner suggests that individuals should be encouraged to apply their preferred intelligences in learning. Learners who have an understanding of their own particular learning styles can reflect on how to utilize their learning strengths and cultivate their less dominant ones. A key point in multiple intelligence theory is that most people can develop all eight of the intelligences to a relatively competent level of mastery.

"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, and an understanding of ourselves and of others. Where individuals differ is in the strength of these intelligences: the so-called profile of intelligences - and in the way such intelligences are invoked and combined to carry out different tasks, solve diverse problems, and progress in various domains," - Howard Gardner, 1991.

The eight intelligences in Gardner's model are all considered to be cognitive capacities. They include:

Linguistic-Verbal Intelligence.
Logical - Mathematical Intelligence.
Spatial - Visual Intelligence.
Bodily - Kinaesthetic Intelligence.
Musical Intelligence.
Intrapersonal Intelligence.
Interpersonal Intelligence.
Naturalistic Intelligence.

A wonderful overview of Gardner's taxonomy can be viewed at Gardner's Project Zero site, situated at Harvard University. Another overview of Gardner's eight Intelligences by one of his strongest supporters, Thomas Armstrong. Armstrong has published several books and guidelines for teachers of all grade levels, particularly elementary and secondary school to help incorporate the Multiple Intelligences into existing curriculum. More interesting suggestions for applying the eight intelligences are featured on this site, presented by Jane Carlson-Pickering. A very interesting assortment of articles and links can be viewed at Exploring Multiple Intelligences developed by Clifford Morris, who illustrated the relationship of Multiple Intelligences with the locus of control and the intellectual - affective continuum.

Quickly assess your eight Multiple Intelligences using this handy workbook. Once you discover the strength of your various intelligences, turn to the Strategy pages to figure out the best choices for studying, problem solving, researching, learning, developing and reflecting for you. As well, learn key time management, study planning and other tips for getting the most from your education and study.

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