



## Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory and students' preferences of activities in an EFL classroom

Anna Parr-Modrzejewska (University of Łódź)

A classroom is a diverse environment. Many researches have found that language teaching is more effective when the means of its delivery are made more responsive to students' needs, characters and expectations. One of the most interesting individual differences is the intelligence factor. There are two main views on intelligence. One view on the topic states that there is no general intelligence but a set of specific intelligences and different people possess all of them only some are predominant. In 1983 Howard Gardner proposed a theory that divides intelligence into seven types: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/special, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical. In the light of this theory it is reasonable to expect that students will be more willing to participate actively and enjoy these activities which address their predominant intelligences. This paper is a summary of a study on the correlation between the different types of intelligence and the preference of tasks designed to develop each of these intelligences individually. The type of intelligence was determined by means of a questionnaire developed by Alistair Smith (1996). Students were asked to fill in the questionnaire before the lesson where all activities were structured specifically to address particular intelligences one at a time. After the lesson students' preferences were established by means of a questionnaire (prepared specially for the study) in which students were to mark the activities from the one they liked best to the one they disliked. The results showed a significant negative correlation between the predominant intelligence and the preferred type of exercise. The explanation of this conversion may be that students prefer tasks that are more difficult and demand greater effort. It is thus advisable that the curriculum should be altered to comprise all sorts of activities developing each type of intelligence.

### References:

- Binet, A., & Simon, T. 1973. The development of intelligence in children. New York. Arno Press
- Brown, K. 2000. Creative Thinking About a New Modern Languages Pedagogy. In: S. Green (ed.), New Perspectives on Teaching and Learning Modern Languages. Clevedon: Cromwell Press Ltd. 183-194
- Ellis, R. 2000. Second Language Acquisition. Oxford. Oxford University Press
- Entwistle, N. 1988. Motivational factors in students' approaches to learning. In: R.R. Schmeck (Ed.), Learning strategies and learning styles. New York: Plenum. 21-51
- Gardner, H. 1983. Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. New York: Basic Books,
- Gardner, H. 1999. *Intelligence reframed: multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York: Basic Books.

- Horn, J. L. 1985. Remodeling old models of intelligence. In: *Handbook of Intelligence. Theories, Measurements, and Applications*, ed. B. B. Wolman. New York: Wiley. 267-300
- Lightbown P., and Nina Spada, 2003, How languages are learned. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 49-69
- Pachler, N and K. Field. 1999. Learner Independence. In: N. Pachler (ed.), *Teaching Modern Foreign Languages at Advanced Level*. London. Routledge. 60-75
- Pachler, N and K. Field. 2001. *Learning to Teach Modern Foreign Languages in the Secondary School. A companion to School Experience*. London. RoutledgeFalmer
- Scott-Baumann, A., A. Bloomfield and L. Roughton. 1997. *Becoming a Secondary School Teacher*. London. Hodder and Stoughton Educational
- Skehan, Peter. 1989. *Individual differences in second-language learning*. London. Edward Arnold
- Slavin, R.E. 2002. *Educational Psychology: Theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon (Learner-centered Psychological Principles: Cognitive and Metacognitive Factors Slavin R.E., *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice*, 2002, Allyn and Bacon / Longman Publishers, Boston
- Smith, A. 1996. Accelerated Learning in the Classroom. In: Chambers, M., Gillian Baxter and Andy Borthwick. *Liberating Learning. A guide to enhancing staff development in schools*. Bristol. TLO Limited. 2001. 64-65
- Spearman, C. 1923. *The nature of 'intelligence' and the principles of cognition*. London. Macmillan
- Swarbrick, A. 2001. *Teaching Modern Languages*. New York: Routledge. 69-87
- Witkin, H., Moore, C., Goodenough, D. and Cox, P. 1977 Field-dependent and field-independent cognitive styles and their educational implications. *Review of Educational Research* 47.1. 1-64