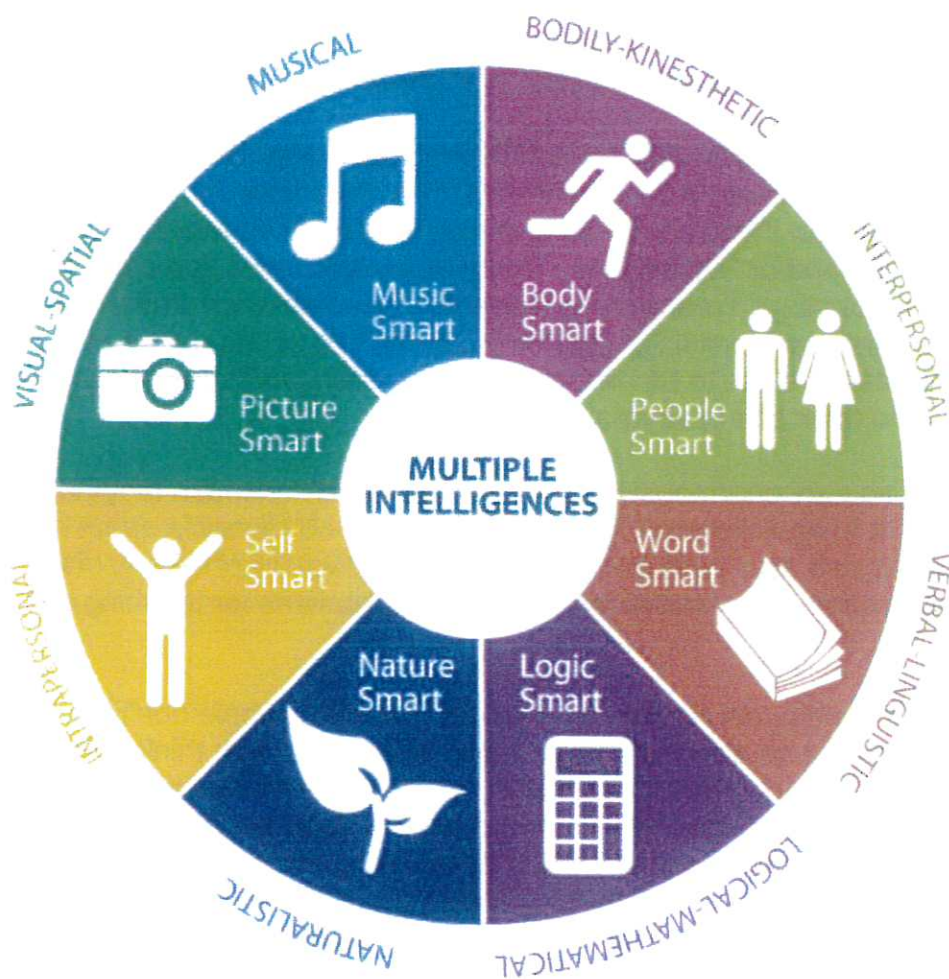


In the late 1970s/early 80s, Howard Gardner developed the idea of multiple intelligences. At that time, most people believed that intelligence was a single thing and could be measured by means of the IQ test. Gardner however, studied many different sources of data and came up with a different conclusion - that all human beings have a number of relatively independent intelligences. He originally came up with 7 signs of intelligence – namely Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Linguistic and Musical, but about 15 years ago, he added Naturalistic – the capacity to make consequential distinctions in the world of nature. Together these 8 intelligences comprise his Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory.



Any individual will have a combination of these eight intelligences, with some coming more naturally to them than others.

What are the implications of MI?

There are two principal scientific implications of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences:

1) The intelligences constitute the human intellectual toolkit. Human beings possess the capacity to develop several intelligences. At any one moment, a human being will have a unique profile, because of both genetic (heritability) and experiential factors.

2) Each human being has a distinct intellectual profile, even identical twins because although their genetic constitution is the same, they have different experiences.

The psychological purpose of MI is to give an account of how the mind and the brain are organized; the educational purpose is to think about how education might be different

There are two chief educational implications of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences:

1) Individuation (also termed personalization) – each human being has their own unique configuration of intelligences and we should take this into account when teaching, mentoring or nurturing. As much as possible, we should teach individuals in ways that they can learn. And we should assess them in a way that allows them to show what they have understood and to apply their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.

2) Pluralization – Ideas, concepts, theories, skills should be taught in several different ways. Whatever subject you are teaching, the main ideas should be presented in multiple ways. If you can present the art works of Michelangelo, the laws of supply and demand or Pythagorus' Theory in several ways, you achieve two important goals. First of all, you reach more students, because some students learn best from reading, some from building something, some from acting out a story etc. Second, you show what it is like to be an expert. ie. to understand something fully, you should be able to think of it in several ways.

Schools and countries vary enormously in terms of how much attention they pay to intelligences other than linguistic and logical-mathematical. MI theory is about how the mind is organized and how it develops. It is NOT an educational theory, but it has been used by educators in many countries due to its implications for teaching and learning.

Gardner hasn't developed a test for MI. He believes that most people don't really know their own strengths and also that rather than 'saying' what you think your intelligences are in a test, it is a far more reliable indicator when you demonstrate your intelligence. eg. assess spatial intelligence by witnessing how quickly a person can navigate around an unfamiliar place, rather than relying on them saying that they are good with maps. It's a far more objective (rather than subjective) method. Equally, if, as well as rating yourself, you also ask other people to rate you, a more comprehensive (and therefore reliable) profile of your intelligences is gained.

As far as Forest School is concerned, the **naturalistic intelligence** would seem the most relevant of the eight. Naturalistic intelligence is the ability to make consequential distinctions in the world of nature. eg. between one plant and another, or distinguishing between cloud formations. It involves noticing subtle details.

However, by using pluralization, ALL the different intelligences can be incorporated into Forest School. Some examples follow:-

Test **visual-spatial intelligence** by seeing whether a person can learn quickly to navigate around an unfamiliar territory.