Learning Styles & Multiple Intelligences in College Teaching

Michael Pekarofski, Assistant Professor

Assisted by Patrizia Barroero, Adjunct Professor
“Multiple Intelligences” is the term used to describe Howard Gardner’s redefinition of what it means to be intelligent. Rather than having one standard way to assess and demonstrate intelligence, Gardner posits nine different forms.
IQ vs. Multiple Intelligences

Traditional IQ Tests: Measures IQ in terms of Verbal/Linguistic & Logical/Mathematical aptitude

Multiple Intelligences:
- Bodily/Kinesthetic
- Existential
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal
- Logical-Mathematical
- Musical
- Naturalistic
- Verbal/Linguistic
- Visual/Spatial
Recognizing and knowing about students’ Multiple Intelligences opens up many possibilities and allows us to reach and effectively teach a wider variety of students. This translates into a greater level of student success.
“Multiple Intelligences celebrates the uniqueness and diversity of all students. Gardner suggests the need for a broader view of the human mind and of human learning than what currently exists. Multiple Intelligences holds that every student is smart not just in one or two ways but in many. Gardner believes instructors must attempt to reach all students and develop their diverse intelligences. Moreover, instructors need to teach in a variety of ways which provide varied learning experiences for students” (McClellan & Conti, 2008).
How do Multiple Intelligences & Learning Styles connect to one another?

“In adult learning, individuals should be able to understand and articulate their learning preferences, which are specified by their intelligences” (McClellan & Conti, 2008).
The term “Learning Styles” refers to the various ways individuals process, understand and make sense of information.
Learning Styles:

Visual Learners – learn best using images, pictures, etc.
Aural Learners – learn best through sound & music
Verbal Learners – learn best through spoken & written discourse
Physical Learners – learn best through physical movement, hands-on activities
Logical Learners – learn best through logic & mathematics
Social Learners – learn best in groups, social situations
Solitary Learners – Learn best through isolated study
Traditional Schooling vs. Pedagogy which Incorporates Different Learning Styles:

“Traditional schooling used (and continues to use) mainly linguistic and logical teaching methods. It also uses a limited range of learning and teaching techniques. Many schools still rely on classroom and book-based teaching, much repetition, and pressured exams for reinforcement and review. A result is that we often label those who use these learning styles and techniques as ‘bright.’ Those who use less favored learning styles often find themselves in lower classes, with various not-so-complimentary labels and sometimes lower quality teaching. This can create positive and negative spirals that reinforce the belief that one is ‘smart’ or ‘dumb.’”

Lamar University Website:
<http://dept.lamar.edu/cde/nursing_site/link_docs/strategies/Overview%20of%20Learning%20Styles.pdf>
How can we alter our teaching approach to accommodate various learning styles & multiple intelligences?
Language Learning Activity: Basic Italian Vocabulary

-featuring Patrizia Barroero
Developed by Professor Michael Pekarofski
Conducted by Michael Pekarofski & Patrizia Barroero

Background: Despite the fact that students have different learning styles and various intelligences, much of college teaching still employs very traditional, teacher-centered approaches which favor logical, verbal and solitary learning and often disadvantages or ignores other learning styles. How can we make our teaching more effective by implementing activities which make use of other learning styles and give students opportunities to use other their dominant learning styles or a mix of learning styles and multiple intelligences?
**Objective:** Students (adjunct professors from various disciplines) will see how material usually presented in a traditional teacher-centered mode can be rethought and re-envisioned. Participants will experience learning in an activity which emphasizes social (cooperative), logical, visual, aural, and physical learning that is student-centered and involves the construction of, rather than the dissemination, of knowledge.

**Delivery of Lesson:** This activity will take the form of a grocery shopping experience, one which mirrors the real-life experience of having to buy basic food items in a new target language. This student-centered activity will make use of various learning styles, cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, (smart phone) technology and realia (food props).
Description:
This activity will take approximately 5 minutes. To save time, 3 volunteers will be chosen ahead of time. Students will be asked to work in a group. They will receive one envelope with 3 pictures of food items: apple, pear, pineapple, milk etc. The group will also be given a copy of a page from an Italian-English picture dictionary, and a cell phone with a an Italian-English translation application (for pronunciation). Adjunct Professor (native Italian speaker) Patrizia Barroero will pose as the storekeeper. Using a picture dictionary and cell phone app., each group will need to figure out how to pronounce each item and request it from the shopkeeper. Once students ask for the item correctly, they will receive the item from the shopkeeper. When students have gotten all three items, vocabulary and pronunciation will reviewed for reinforcement.
Materials: A PowerPoint slide will be used to give an overview of activity for participants (and rest of audience). Students will receive envelopes with pictures of food items, handout (from picture dictionary) and smartphone with Italian-English pronunciation app. Various food items and shopping bags will be used as well.
Sour cream is relatively unknown in Italy, and if you ask for it you may get some strange looks.
Italy doesn't have as many types of cheese as France, but it still offers a rich selection—and not just mozzarella and parmesano, Italy's leading exports.

In the far northwest of Italy, in the Aosta valley, one specialty is fontina, a tasty soft cheese.

In addition there are such cheeses as the blue-mold cheese gorgonzola, various grades of pecorino (made from sheep's milk), the taleggio, which is especially common in Lombardy, and the grano padano, a hard cheese that is similar to parmesan.

The real parmigiano reggiano comes from the regions of Parma, Modena, Mantua, and Bologna, and it contains milk only from free-ranging animals fed exclusively on green feed. It is generally aged at least 18 months; the vecchio is aged up to 24 months, and the stravecchio, up to 36 months.
Vocabulary Review:
Click on the speaker icon to hear correct pronunciation in Italian.
MELA
ANANAS
FRAGOLA
FORMAGGIO
LATTE
This type of learning activity can be adapted to various disciplines and learning situations. How could you adapt it to your classes?
More importantly, such an activity can also be used as an alternative means of assessment. How might this benefit the student who is not a strong verbal learner and/or test taker?
References


See McClellan & Conti for a quick and concise Multiple Intelligences Inventory you can use in class with your students.
Learning Styles & Multiple Intelligences in College Teaching

Michael Pekarofski, Assistant Professor
pekarofski@essex.edu

Assisted by Patrizia Barroero,
Adjunct Professor