Creating Authentic Writing Activities for Multiple Intelligence Learners in the Foreign/Second Language Classroom

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Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to:

- briefly identify and refresh knowledge of Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

- utilize knowledge of Multiple Intelligences Theory to design writing activities for foreign/second language learners.
This project was developed with the following audience in mind:

- young elementary students in FLES, Immersion or English as a Second Language Programs.
- dynamic FL/ESL trained teachers with awareness of implication of diversity in today's classrooms.
Teacher/Student Population Needs

TEACHER...

- needs to scaffold: teacher/peer assistance that allows students to “participate fully at a level that would not be possible without the assistance” (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001).
Teacher/Student Population Needs - con’t

TEACHER...

- must incorporate activities that appeal to all learning styles and multiple intelligences.
- needs to have a “one size DOES NOT fit all” approach to teaching.
Teacher/Student Population Needs - con't

Population may include but is not limited to:

- students with learning disabilities;
- gifted students;
- physically-challenged children;
- students from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
1) Intrapersonal-Introspective Intelligence

- "Self-smart"
- Prefers individual and independent tasks
- Takes responsibility for his own thinking
Optimal Writing Activities

- Make individual grocery lists (may use newspaper ads in English or target language).
- Make lists of friends; favorite animals; favorite foods (own culture and target culture).
- Write letter to pen pal asking for advice: “Help! My parents are making me baby-sit my baby brother!”
2) Interpersonal-Social Intelligence

- “People smart”
- Prefers cooperative tasks
- Gets along with others - gregarious
Optimal Writing Activities

- Conduct class surveys on any age-level appropriate topic.
- Write grade-level summaries of what students learned from surveys.
- Conduct experiments in pairs/groups (What floats? What is magnetic?) and report to the class.
3) Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

- “Logic smart”
- Enjoys challenging tasks
- Likes to categorize, identify patterns, sequences, relationships, etc.
Optimal Writing Activities

- Students write math problems and solve each other’s.
- Create fun story problems that are challenging.
- Write web of ideas prior to writing a story - share with class.
- Make a list of steps for others to follow to solve a puzzle.
4) Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence

- "Word smart"
- Likes to engage in all areas of language: reading, speaking, listening, and writing
- Enjoys verbal games, conducting interviews, brainstorming, peer teaching, etc.
Optimal Writing Activities

- Children make make-believe maps based on a story they read.
- Students create “silly directions” to their maps.
- Children can also direct one another to a “treasure” in the school or the playground.
- Students can be role models/ helpers of spoken or written language for their peers.
5) Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

- “Body smart”
- Learns and retains information better if movement is part of instruction
- Skillful in controlling movement and timing of body motion
Optimal Writing Activities

- Teacher writes age-appropriate “controversial” question on poster—students respond by writing on a piece of paper and attaching their reaction to poster.
- Students use authentic pictures, books, magazines, newspapers to write interesting captions under pictures.
- They stand and read these “headlines” to the class.
6) Visual-Spatial Intelligence

- “Picture smart”
- Can visualize and learn from mental images
- Can understand and gather meaning from visuals around him/her
Optimal Writing Activities

- Use pictures to elicit student writing (describe what you see; how do you think he/she feels?).
- Use target language catalogs to write simple descriptions of pictures.
- Students create their own catalogs in the target language.
7) Musical-Rhythmic Intelligence

- "Music smart"
- Has an affinity to rhythms and responds rather involuntarily with movement
- Creates own "musical experiences" and enjoys them! (constantly tapping on desk or board, humming, chanting, etc.)
Optimal Writing Activities

- Have students re-write a known nursery rhyme or poem.
- Use imagination to turn songs or rhymes into stories.
- Each student keeps a book of rhymes, poems or songs learned in the year for use during L.A. centers.
8) Naturalist Intelligence

- “Nature smart”
- Enjoys observing and ‘digging’ deep into the nature of world around.
- Likes to problem-solve
- Enjoys research projects.
Optimal Writing Activities

- Give anticipation guide to students - what are the signs of spring/fall? How many white trucks do you see? How many blue cars? Do you see any animals? What are they doing? How about people?
- Take students on a “nature watch” on school grounds.
- Students take notes or make sketches to illustrate what they see.
- Write, revise, publish stories later.
Conclusion

- The art of teaching writing in ANY classroom is challenging enough. In the FL/ESL classroom that challenge becomes even greater.
- By delivering instruction and providing learning experiences that honor children’s learning styles and MI, the FL/ESL teacher is ensuring success for ALL students.
- LEANERS LEARN DIFFERENTLY.
- ALL LEARNERS CAN LEARN!
Acknowledgement

"Intelligences are always expressed in the context of specific tasks, domains, or disciplines."  - Howard Gardner, Frames of Mind (1983)
References

- [http://gse.gmu.edu/research/mirs/](http://gse.gmu.edu/research/mirs/)
- [http://google.com/images](http://google.com/images)