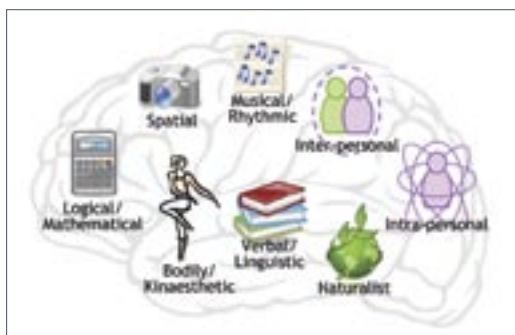


# SUPER MODELS

In a series of articles examining learning models, **Dr Mike Clayton** looks at Gardner's Multiple Intelligences – so many ways to succeed



**“How intelligent are you?” We like to measure things, so this is a question we’d love to ask our fellows. Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner has done more than anybody to challenge the ‘single measure’ approach and introduce a more comprehensive understanding of intelligence.**

Gardner proposed that we each have a range of intelligences, which we deploy in varying strengths. Our talents derive from combinations of these intelligences. He has worked hard to define ‘intelligence’ and set criteria for which capacities to consider as intelligences. Predictably, each of these has attracted much debate. Gardner himself has settled on eight intelligences – others propose more.

**Verbal/linguistic** Our ability to read, write and communicate using language; it is used by authors, journalists, orators, debaters and people who speak several languages.

**Logical/mathematical** Shown by systematic thinkers who value reason and are good at calculation; people well suited to science and engineering, the law and accountancy and economics.

**Spatial** Makes us highly aware of spatial relationships, shape, colour and form; strong in artists, architects, navigators and cartographers.

**Musical** Do you listen to, make or compose music? Sensitive to tone and rhythm, the term ‘virtuoso’ applies to people such as singers, performers and composers.

**Bodily/kinaesthetic** Manifests itself in two ways, both linked to a precise awareness of movement and control of our bodies. Some people excel at balance and co-ordination, using their whole body with grace and power – sports people, actors and dancers. Others exercise control but through the precise use of their hands or feet, excelling in areas like sculpture, surgery or craft.

**Interpersonal** Helps us socialise and collaborate, giving an understanding of people and helping

put them at their ease. It accounts for making small-talk, listening intently and leading naturally. Teachers, therapists, nurses and good salespeople excel interpersonally.

**Intrapersonal** The ability to reflect and introspect, and to manage our own feelings and behaviour.

**Naturalist** An affinity for the natural world, understanding how it works and often having an uncanny knack for memorising hundreds of names. If they can, naturalists collect – rocks, insects, photos, anything. Gardeners, pet-owners, environmentalists and scientists exercise this intelligence.

Gardner’s work has a polarising effect. Some love it; it fits with their world view, making intelligence more egalitarian and recognising that there is more to learning and knowledge than literacy and numeracy. Others challenge its lack of empirical support from either well-validated testing processes or neurology.

However, many educators find plenty of support in the educational results they attain, using it to guide their teaching. For us as trainers, this offers a powerful model of learning styles that can be applied to every area of our practice. As Gardner notes<sup>1</sup>: “*These intelligences are fictions – at most, useful fictions – for discussing processes and abilities that (like all of life) are continuous with one another.*” ■

## References

1. Gardner H *Frames of Mind: Theory of Multiple Intelligences* Fontana Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1993
2. Gardner H *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* Basic Books 1999
3. Smith M K ‘Howard Gardner and Multiple Intelligences’ *Encyclopaedia of Informal Education* [www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm) 2002, 2008

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