Using Multiple Intelligence Theory in K-2 Geography

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Whether one teaches kindergarten or college, a common challenge is “teaching” students. Teachers have understood for years—centuries, I would argue—that how the mind learns can vary greatly from student to student. Simply stated, students learn and process information differently one from another. What seasoned teachers have known intuitively, psychologist Howard Gardner articulated as the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Gardner’s insight is that all humans possess a range of intelligence far beyond what is measured by an IQ test or any other paper-and-pencil assessment. Gardner posits “eight intelligences,” or ways of knowing and processing, that each human possesses. In any given individual, some of these intelligences are more prominent than others. Gardner also states that we start to realize and gravitate towards our intellectual strengths at an early age. Intelligence, thus redefined, is multifaceted, dynamic, and highly correlated with individual desire and perception.

It is in the field of education that Multiple Intelligence Theory has had its most profound and sweeping influence. Gardner’s theory has been applied in language arts, music, and social studies. In the latter, strategies have been applied to historical study particularly for middle and secondary students. This article provides examples of how the theory can be used to present information concerning geographical concepts to K-2 students. A brief synopsis of each intelligence is provided, followed by practical exercises students can use to better understand the physical and social worlds around them.

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence
Students who are musically inclined pay particular attention to tone, beat, and rhythm. They are attuned to the patterns and relationships found in music. These students think in and respond to patterns, pitches and variations in sounds, including the human voice. They excel in picking up a melody or musical line and remembering it. Musical/Rhythmic students are astute and discriminating listeners.

Young students who enjoy music and are keen at memorizing patterns and words can memorize the oceans and the continents through song:

“Row, Row, Row the Oceans”
(Sung to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”)
Row, row, row your boat
Through the oceans blue
Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic, Indian,
Flounders in your shoe!

“We’re Off to See the Continents!”
(Sung to the tune of “We’re Off to See the Wizard”)
We’re off to see the continents,
The continents from outer space
We hear there’re seven, not ten or eleven
With every one in its place:
There’s Africa, Antarctica,
And North and South America;
There’s Europe, and Australia,
And Asia . . .
(But we never count Malaysia!)
We’re off to see the continents,
The continents from outer space.

Intrapersonal Intelligence
Intrapersonal intelligence is premised on a keen awareness and understanding of self. At any age, these students are very much aware of their likes and dislikes, their strengths and weaknesses. They are goal setting, self-starting, and focused. They are reflective and, thus, are often perceived as aloof or shy. By nature, Intrapersonal students feel most comfortable working alone.

Have students label and then color their own Compass Rose. This is a simple yet foundational independent activity that introduces young learners to the concept of cardinal directions. An activity on the Internet to enhance the understanding of geography for the Interpersonal learner is called “Reading a Jolly Map.” This activity can be used in conjunction with the Compass Rose to support the concept of cardinal directions.

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
Verbal/Linguistic students learn through reading, writing, and telling stories. These students are able readers and have a rich vocabulary. They listen, speak, and write effectively. They enjoy creating original works of writing and forms of communication. Verbal/Linguistic students learn best through reading, hearing, and seeing words.

As Verbal/Linguistic learners like to read (or be read to), provide verbal activities as part of any lesson. I have found two lessons that work particularly well for Verbal/Linguistic learners. First, have students independently read (or depending upon ability level, read with assistance) “Willy and the Four Directions,” by the Florida Geographic Alliance. This is a simple yet marvelous story about direction. A second way to reach the Verbal/Linguistic learner is through a series of lessons premised on Me On the Map by Joan Sweeney. This is one of the best, most comprehensive lessons using Verbal/Linguistic skills to support geographical concepts.

Visual/Spatial Intelligence
This intelligence concerns mental imaging and the ability to examine images...
for meaning, comparison, and contrast. Students strong in this intelligence often think in images, are visually creative, and enjoy drawing, building, and reading maps and charts. They have an acute sense of both space and place. They are able to decode maps, graphs, tables, and diagrams. Visual/Spatial learners need to see images and concepts to better understand course content.

Visual/Spatial learners excel at understanding patterns and relationships in their physical world. To address this intelligence, ask students questions such as “Why are many gas stations located near freeways?” “Why is there a fire station nearby?” “Why are trash dumps located far from town?” “Why are mills often located close to railroad tracks?” “Why are some houses located close to the ocean?” These questions, and others, provide the Visual/Spatial learner with opportunities to connect visual experience with social and cultural information.

A teacher can expand this exercise by showing on a map the distances and relationships between two points locally (school to hospital; city center to surrounding areas) or nationally (city to city; state to state; city to nearest ocean or river). Ask students how these spatial distances relate to time, convenience, money, mode of transportation, weather, natural resources, etc.

**Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence**

This intelligence relates to the processing of knowledge through bodily sensations. Students who are Bodily/Kinetically inclined think and understand through movement, touch, physical sensation, and manipulation. They learn best by hands-on direct involvement. Bodily/Kinesthetic students enjoy sports, dancing, using body language, and manipulating objects and environments.

A great lesson that gets students out of their seats and literally out of the building is called “Finding Captain Hook’s Treasure.” This lesson reinforces cardinal direction yet does so through physical manipulation and physical exploration. Another lesson that provides students with the physical reinforcement of knowledge is called “Learning a New Environment.” It is a fun, practical way for kindergarten students to learn the physical features of their school. This lesson acquaints young learners with their physical environment, thus reducing the anxiety often present during the first days of school.

**Logical/Mathematical Intelligence**

Reasoning and deduction are the foundations of this intelligence. Students who possess Logical/Mathematical intelligence are numerically inclined and understand material through and by the use of numbers. They make numerical and logical/rational connections between things and events. They also think in conceptual and theoretical pattern sequences, where every action has a logical and relative reaction.Logical/Mathematical students excel in word problems, riddles, “what if” speculations, and classification skills.

A simple lesson that couples math skills with geography is called the “How Far Do You Live From...?” Create a grid on a sheet of plastic used for overhead projectors, then place it over a local map. Each quadrant (or square) on the grid can represent one mile (the scale can be actual or fictitious). Point out certain features on the map, say a prominent building or land feature. Then ask students to calculate how far it is from that feature to their school. You can expand this lesson by asking students to locate several “distances” on the map, then add the total distance from several points. This lesson is flexible and can include addition, subtraction, and even multiplication. It is an easy way to link math and geography lessons.

A more sophisticated and detailed lesson asks students to graph the changes in temperature over a series of days and from multiple physical points. This is a marvelous lesson that ties in weather (temperature) and mathematical skills (charting and graphing). Although garnering enough thermometers for every student may be a constraint, this lesson is perfectly suited for the mathematically intelligent student.
Conclusion
What has been provided is an admittedly cursory and limited snapshot of how Multiple Intelligence Theory can be coupled with the understanding of select geographical concepts and skills within K-2 classrooms. Though lessons premised on Multiple Intelligence Theory are often more detailed and time consuming (in terms of student activity and teacher preparation), they provide students with multiple ways in which to understand and apply knowledge. And if the goal of good teaching is to reach every student, such lessons provide a practical and meaningful way in which to do so.

Notes
2. Patricia Gens, et al. “The Effects of Integrating a Multiple Intelligence Based Language Art Curriculum on Reading Comprehension of First and Second Grade Teachers” (Educational Document Reproduction Number 420 840; 1998).
5. Inspired by Erin Harder, “Remembering Continents and Oceans: Songs to Sing” (www.teachers.net/lessons/posts/188.html).
6. A diagram of a Compass Rose can be found at www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/printouts/compassrose.shtml.
8. Robin Hepworth, “All Around the Globe—Using Cardinal Directions” (fga.freac.fsu.edu/1995/direction.html). “Willy and the Four Directions” is a part of this larger lesson on cardinal directions. The lesson is geared for fourth grade, so some adaptation may be needed. The story does not come with an accompanying pictorial reference map, so teachers will have to create their own Geotown County Fair map.
10. A supplement to this activity can be found at www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/education/desk/k4neighbor.html.
15. Access this lesson at the Utah Education Network (www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview.cgi?LPid=1244).

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Passport To Learning
Teaching Social Studies To ESL Students

Bárbara C. Cruz, Joyce W. Nutta, Jason O’Brien, Carine M. Feyten and Jane M. Govoni

More and more teachers face the challenge of teaching social studies to students whose native language is not English. The authors of this book have designed it specially to help social studies teachers do so successfully. The first part of the book enables teachers to understand the process of acquiring a second language and how to deal with students engaged in that process. The second identifies good topics for social studies classes that include ESL students, and offers detailed, ready-to-use lesson plans.

This book is a must for social studies teachers whose classes include ESL students.

Item 030101 Price: $22; $14 for NCSS members
The theory of multiple intelligences proposes the differentiation of human intelligence into specific modalities of intelligence, rather than defining intelligence as a single, general ability. The theory has been criticized by mainstream psychology for its lack of empirical evidence, and its dependence on subjective judgement. According to the theory, an intelligence ‘modality’ must fulfill eight criteria: potential for brain isolation by brain damage, place in evolutionary history. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Using MI Theory When Teaching. Preparing Intelligence-Based Lessons. With the growing focus on globalization, teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) has grown in popularity by leaps and bounds, especially so during the last two decades. English has become the lingua franca of world trade, commerce, science, technology and industry. Multiple intelligences theory can be integrated into the teaching of ESL by preparing specific intelligence-based lessons for the language taught. For example, if you are introducing the time, for musical rhythmic intelligence learners use a song or musical clip related to the theme like ‘Rock Around the Clock’ by Bill Haley and the Comets, an oldie but goodie that still works well. When Howard Gardner introduced his multiple intelligences theory 35 years ago, it was a revolutionary idea that challenged long-cherished beliefs. At the time, psychologists were interested in general intelligence, a person’s ability to solve problems and apply logical reasoning across a wide range of disciplines. Popularized in part by the IQ test, which was originally developed in the early 1900s to assess a child’s ability to understand, reason, and make judgments, the idea of general intelligence helped explain why some students seemed to excel at many subjects. Gardner found the concept USING MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES IN THE CLASSROOM Accepting Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences has several implications for teachers in terms of classroom instruction. The theory states that all seven intelligences are needed to productively function in society. Educators, therefore, should think of all intelligences as equally important. For example, the teacher can suggest that an especially musically intelligent child learn about the revolutionary war by making up a song about what happened. TOWARDS A MORE AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT As the education system has stressed the importance of developing mathematical and linguistic intelligences, it often bases student success only on the measured skills in those two intelligences. SaveSave multiple intelligences and geography For Later. 0 ratings0% found this document useful (0 votes). 189 views2 pages. multiple intelligences and geography. Uploaded by. api-298174816. Task: Objective: Using Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences and the social studies content standards of the state of South Dakota, you will demonstrate your ability to differentiate for a variety of learning styles. 1. You will create 3 activities. Each of the three activities will hit a different learning style. Use the link. Visual-Spatial Bodily-kinesthetic Musical Interpersonal Intrapersonal Linguistic Logical Mathematical Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences 2. For your 3 activities, you will pick geography standards from the link. You can use any grade level k-8.