

Incorporating Multiple Intelligences through Technology and Art to Create Lifelong Readers *By Katherine Howard and Kruti Suba*

“Tell me and I will forget; Show me and I will remember; involve me and I will understand.”
~Confucius

As ESL educators, we not only strive to teach our students the English language but we also want them to enjoy and eventually learn the nuances of English which will help them develop a love for the language. In our classes we use many different strategies to involve our students and make them active learners. However, we have also noticed that most often our students tend to use very little or no English at all outside the classroom. In this article we will discuss how integrating technology and art in the reading classroom to develop in our students a love for reading and thus encourage them to continue to use the English language outside the classroom.

Just as different teachers have different teaching styles, our students have different learning styles. Howard Gardner (1983) describes eight types of different learning styles in which people learn. He calls them of Multiple Intelligences or smarts: self-smart (intrapersonal), people-smart (interpersonal), picture smart (spatial), number-smart (logical), music smart (musical), nature smart (naturalist), word-smart (linguistic) and body-smart (kinesthetic).

While Gardner’s theory can be used across grades and subject matter, it is especially useful in ESL teaching. The intelligences lend themselves to a vast variety of activities/ strategies we can use in our reading lessons, integrated with technology and art. The goal is to give students glimpse of the text they are reading through a snippet of the experiences of the characters, or from the setting and have a chance to play with the plot.

At the beginning of each class year have students take a learning inventory (samples of which are easily found online) to find out their learning style. The inventory will give you an idea of the various intelligences in your classroom and the data you collect through the inventory should be used a useful tool during lesson planning.

So how can we incorporate the intelligences into our reading classes? There are three ways to bring the multiple intelligences into the reading classroom. The first way is **Variety**. Plan activities that use all eight intelligences to involve the whole class. All students participate in the planned activities thus giving each student a chance to enjoy the reading process. The second is **Choice**. Students take control of their own learning and choose among the activities assigned. For example, students choose which way they want to present a book report based on their learning style and interests. Lastly, the teacher can use multiple intelligence based activities as a **Bridge**. Using this technique, a lesson is catered to one intelligence with short activities intertwined to incorporate other intelligences. For example, if you have a large number of linguistic learners in your classroom you teach using strategies that cater to the linguistic learners, but then maybe have a short activity using a song to get the musical learners involved as well.

So let’s involve our students. Let’s bring the unfamiliar and the curriculum into their hands for them to play with and learn from. And let’s set them on the path of becoming life-long readers.

The first step is to get them to love reading. Incorporating picture books into your lessons can benefit all types of learners. Many times picture books could be seen as simply a linguistic method due to new vocabulary, and great for spatial learners with word to picture association. But they also get interpersonal learners to discuss and bring for previous knowledge. They get intrapersonal learners to talk about mood and emotion. They get the musical learner involved with literary devices. Kinesthetic and naturalist learners get to explore the unknown. And with two types: fiction and non-fiction, logical and naturalist learners can associate reality with make-believe.

Some of the books discussed during our Annual Conference presentation included: Barbara Kerly's "One Day One World;" David Smith's "If the World Were a Village;" Margret Ruis's "My Librarian the Camel;" Lynne Cherry's "The Great Kapok Tree;" Jon Scieszka's "The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs;" Ruth Krass' "The Carrot Seed;" and Jeanette Winter's "Nasreen's Secret School."

Once we have the books we want to use in our lessons, let's plan active lessons. Let's get them working hands-on with art and technology to bring those books and concepts to life. Let's scrapbook about ourselves using graphic organizers. Let's collage information to graph it. Let's research and survey differences between countries. Let's do choral readings to get the book to come to life. Let's make WANTED posters to show understanding of how angry an animal can be with a woodcutter. Let's write newspaper article from different perspectives of the characters. Let's predict outcomes using Voki, an online avatar creator where students can record their voice. Let's make peace clouds to promote education to all. And let's take responsibility for our own learning and recognize what materials work for us. Let's get the kids involved. Let's work with hands-on using art and technology! Let's bring the multiple intelligences into the classroom so kids can take control of their own learning. And let's provide them with fun and exciting lessons based around an amazing picture book to do it.

References

Tang, F. (2008). "Multiple Intelligences Workshop." New York University.

Suggested resources:

For more lessons visit: <http://quidocetdiscit.com>.

Beare, Kenneth. "Multiple Intelligences in the ESL Classroom." About. http://esl.about.com/od/teachingenglish/a/1_multiple.htm

CEYA. "A Closer Look at Each Intelligence." <http://www.uwplatt.edu/ceya/97projects/woodworth/w6.html>

Connell, Diane. "Clip and Save Checklist: Learning Activities That Connect With Multiple Intelligences." Scholastic. <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/clip-save-checklist-learning-activities-connect-multiple-intelligences>

Greenheart Education. "The Naturalist Intelligence." <http://www.greenhearted.org/naturalist-intelligence.html>

Laughlin, Janet. "Multiple Intelligences: Helping Students Reach Their Highest Potential." Powerpoint Presentation. September 19, 2008.

McLaughlin, Lou. "Eight Ideas for the Eight Multiple Intelligences" TESOL Connection <http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesolc/issues/2013-11-01/3.html>
"Learning Strategies using Multiple Intelligences." Service Canada. 11/30/2011.
http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/pieces.jsp?category_id=326#verbal

Katherine Howard is a K-8 ESL at Wyckoff Public Schools in Wyckoff, NJ. She also teaches at Bergen Community College in Paramus, NJ in the evenings. She graduated from NYU with a masters in TESOL in 2008. <kathoward12@yahoo.com>

Kruti Suba graduated from NYU with a masters in TESOL in 2008. She has since then worked as an ESL instructor at a college in Queens and Head of Language Programs at a private organization in India. She designs curriculum for independent reading and creative writing programs for children and adults. <kps258@nyu.edu>