

## **MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND CLASSROOM GUIDANCE**

**Cara Breen\***

**Student, M.Ed. Program in School Counseling, Rivier College**



**M**ost school counselors will tell you that classroom guidance is one of the most efficient ways to deliver important knowledge and skills to students. According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), school counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school spend 25-45% of their time delivering classroom guidance. Classroom guidance is a key component in the delivery system of the ASCA National Model (2005, as cited in Akos, Cockman, & Strickland, 2007). The guidance curriculum is a developmental, systematic approach that allows all students to receive structured lessons that are specifically designed to help them achieve academic, career, and personal goals (ASCA, 2005).






Classroom guidance allows school counselors and students to interact a variety of positive and productive ways. This time can be used to inform students of school-wide opportunities, distribute information about educational resources and postsecondary opportunities, or address student needs. With the wide range of issues existing for today's students, classroom guidance is a great place to start teaching students how to handle these problems appropriately. The guidance curriculum usually includes, but is not limited to bullying and violence prevention, social development, positive body image, diversity, and academic achievement (Akos, et al., 2007).




One of the main questions in the current literature on classroom guidance revolves around how to arm school counselors with the skills necessary to facilitate classroom guidance. Counselors assume all responsibility for developing, organizing, and leading classroom guidance lessons (Bringman & Min, 2008). Because school counselors do not necessarily have a teaching background, there is much to be learned regarding effective instructional strategies and behavior management techniques. Students learn differently and at varying rates. School counselors need to proactively plan lessons that meet the students' varying levels of readiness, interest, and learning needs (Akos, et al., 2007). Differentiating instruction and applying one's knowledge of the multiple intelligences will help all school counselors reach their students, regardless of teaching experience.

Differentiating instruction means using teaching strategies and learning tools that help all students learn. This involves knowing how each student in the class operates, including his or her learning style, interests, challenges, strengths, and weaknesses. The theory of multiple intelligences (MI), introduced by Howard Gardner in his 1983 work, *Frames of Mind*, maintains that each individual has a different intelligence profile (Blomberg, 2009). Gardner's perception of human potential goes beyond the traditional IQ test and his theory challenges educators to judge student intelligence by their ability to acquire and use knowledge in natural settings (Stanford, 2003). Using MI in classrooms has become quite common in schools around the country. Teachers, counselors, and even students are becoming aware of how many types of intelligence there really are. To inspire thinking and learning in all students, school counselors and educators should understand the principles of MI but also encourage students to explore their own intelligence to better understand themselves.



The eight intelligences include (a) verbal/linguistic (b) logical/mathematical (c) visual/spatial (d) bodily/kinesthetic (e) naturalistic (f) musical (g) interpersonal and (h) intrapersonal (Stanford, 2003). There are numerous strategies and activities geared toward all MI, some of which are detailed in the chart below.

Multiple Intelligences	Classroom Applications
 Verbal/Linguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths: reading, writing, discussion, story telling</li> <li>• Activities: reading books, giving presentations, debates, and journal-writing</li> </ul>
 Logical/Mathematical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths: problem-solving, reasoning, patterns, math, logic</li> <li>• Activities: experiments, using manipulatives, creating graphs or charts, research</li> </ul>
 Bodily/Kinesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths: athletics, dancing, crafts, acting, using tools</li> <li>• Activities: role-play, drama, building props (shadow boxes, mobiles), review games,</li> </ul>
 Visual/Spatial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths: maps, mazes, puzzles, visualization</li> <li>• Activities: Lego building, videos, slideshows, illustrating a book, creating posters (timelines, concept-map), PowerPoint</li> </ul>
 Musical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths: picking up sounds, remembering rhythm and melody</li> <li>• Activities: create a song for the unit material, use well-known songs as memory tools</li> </ul>

 <p>Interpersonal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths: leading, organizing, communicating with others, resolving conflicts</li> <li>• Activities: group work, mock-interviews, community service, peer-mentor</li> </ul>
 <p>Intrapersonal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths: identifying strengths and weaknesses, goal-setting, understanding self</li> <li>• Activities: choice projects, reflection/journal writing, personal portfolios, self-driven research on content</li> </ul>
 <p>Naturalistic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths: making distinctions, understanding nature, exploring, order</li> <li>• Activities: organize thoughts using natural cycles, community service, making connections between content and the environment, nature walks</li> </ul>

School counselors can use MI to inform their practice in the classroom and other settings. Gardner’s theory could effectively be applied to career counseling in addition to classroom guidance (Shearer & Luzzo, 2009). Students should know that they all have some degree of competence in each of the intelligences. Even though students are ultimately responsible for how much they exercise each of the intelligences, school counselors can help students explore their own intelligence by planning appropriate lessons. Here are some questions to ask when planning a classroom lesson that will reach the MI:

- Have you provided the learners with opportunities to speak, listen, read and write?
- Have you included numbers, calculations and/or activities requiring critical thinking?
- Have you included pictures, graphs and/or art?
- Have you included activities involving movement?
- Have you included music and/or rhythms?
- Have you included pair work and/or group work?
- Have you provided the learners with private learning time and/or time for reflection?
- Have you included categorization tasks and/or arranging exercises?
- Have you helped the learners consider the topic or theme of today’s lesson in relation to a larger context?

This video, “Key Learning Community: Multiple Intelligences”, is about a school in Indianapolis, Indiana that is dedicated to developing MI in their students. Their principal, who created the school in 1984, hopes to find new ways of assessing students that goes beyond standard testing. <http://www.edutopia.org/key-learning-community-multiple-intelligences-video>

Part of what we will strive to teach students is that each one of us is different—we have different values, goals, talents, and we have different ways of thinking about the world. Through a well thought out classroom guidance curriculum that includes the multiple intelligences, school counselors can give students the tools that they need for success.

## References

- Akos, P., Cockman, C., & Strickland, C. (2007). Differentiating classroom guidance. *Professional School Counseling, 10* (5), 455-463. Retrieved October 10, 2011, from ProQuest Education Journals.
- Blomberg, D. (2009). Multiple intelligences, judgment, and realization of value. *Ethics and Education, 4* (2), 163-175. Retrieved October 10, 2011, from EBSCOhost.
- Bringman, N., Min, S. (2008). Middle school counselors' competence in conducting developmental classroom lessons: Is teaching experience necessary? *Professional School Counseling, 11*(6), 380-386. Retrieved October 10, 2011, from EBSCOhost.
- Shearer, C., & Luzzo, D. (2009). Exploring the application of multiple intelligences theory to career counseling. *The Career Development Quarterly, 58*(1), 3-13. Retrieved October 10, 2011, from ProQuest Psychology Journals.
- Stanford, P. (2003). Multiple intelligence for every classroom. *Intervention in School & Clinic, 39* (2), 80-85. Retrieved October 10, 2011, from EBSCOhost.

---

\* **CARA BREEN** is in her fifth year of teaching English at Nashua High School North. She received her B.A. in English from Saint Michael's College in Colchester, VT, and is currently working on her M.Ed. in School Counseling at Rivier College. She hopes to continue her work in public schools, helping young people grow and succeed in learning and in life.