

Class 14
Assessment

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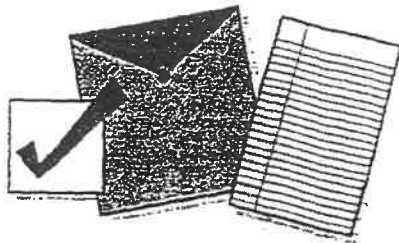
What does performance assessment evaluate?

What are some of the components of performance assessment?

Identify eight intelligences.

What is your strongest intelligence?

What is flow?



Performance Assessment

BY SAMUEL J. MEISELS, ED.D.

Most standardized tests are not designed to evaluate the individualized growth and development taking place in your classroom. But there are assessment tools that do!

Many early childhood educators are uncomfortable with the idea of testing the young children they work with. This is because the assessment tools they know were designed primarily for older elementary-school students. Children taking these tests are assessed on isolated skills in ways that are unfamiliar to them, and the test results often do not reflect children's personal experiences or knowledge.

In recent years, however, a new approach to assessment has been gaining acceptance among early childhood and primary grade teachers. Known as "performance" or "authentic" assessment, these new tools have many benefits that standardized tests do not. For example:

- They systematically document what children know and can do based on activities they engage in on

a daily basis in their classrooms. Standardized test items, in contrast, barely approximate actual classroom tasks. In addition, performance assessment evaluates thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and interpretation of facts and ideas — skills which standardized tests generally avoid.

- They are flexible enough to allow teachers to evaluate each child's progress using information obtained from ongoing classroom interactions with materials and peers.

In other words, they permit an individualized approach to assessing abilities and performance.

- They are a means for improving instruction, allowing teachers to plan a comprehensive, developmentally oriented curriculum based on their knowledge of each child.

- They provide valuable, in-depth information for parents, administrators, and other policy makers.

- They put responsibility for monitoring what children are learning — and what teachers are teaching — in the hands of teachers, where it belongs.

COMPONENTS OF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

A comprehensive performance assessment system should contain some

variation of the following components:

■ Developmental Checklists

Checklists covering domains such as language and literacy, mathematical thinking, and physical development are designed to reflect developmentally appropriate practices. Teachers use checklists throughout the year to create profiles of children's individualized progress in developing skills, acquiring knowledge, and mastering important behaviors.

- **Portfolios** These purposeful collections of children's work illustrate their efforts, progress, and achievements over time. Teachers and children can compile the collections together from work completed in the classroom. As they talk together about the child's interests and progress, they develop new activities for the child to focus on.

- **Summary Report** A summary report consists of a brief narrative summary of each child's classroom performance. It is based on teacher observations and records that are kept as part of the system. In completing this summary, teachers should carefully review the checklists and portfolios and then make overall judgments in order to report to parents, administrators, and others about each child's activities and progress.

The three basic components of performance assessment — developmental checklists, portfolios, and summary reports — are all necessary. Without ongoing checklists, teachers

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could not keep track of children's progress toward widely accepted curriculum goals. Without portfolios, differences in the quality of one child's work over time might be hidden, and children's ability to take an active role in evaluating their own work ignored. Without summary reports, easily understandable information for parents, teachers, and school administrators would be unavailable. Together, the three components constitute a dynamic, authentic performance system.

ADVOCATING FOR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Whenever you gather with other professionals, parents, your supervisor, principal, or members of your school board, use the opportunity to promote the use of some kind of performance assessment in early childhood classrooms. Copy and distribute the "Benefits of Performance Assessment" (see box below). Also, remember that whether you use an available system of performance or authentic assess-

ment, or develop a tool of your own, the actual examples of children's work that you have on file, as well as ongoing observations of their individual growth and development, are the strongest possible advocates for performance assessment. Use them to show the depth and breadth of information they contain about each child. No other approach has so much to say about what the child brings to the learning situation, and what the learning situation brings to the child!

BENEFITS OF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

A system of developmental checklists, portfolios of children's work, and summary reports, when used together, can help you to:

- Recognize that children can express what they know and can do in many different ways.
- Evaluate progress as well as performance.
- Evaluate the "whole child."
- Involve children in the process of assessing their own growth.
- Establish a framework for observing children that is consistent with principles of child development.
- Contribute to meaningful curriculum planning and the design of developmentally appropriate educational interventions.
- Give parents specific, direct, and understandable information about their child.
- Collaborate with other teachers, thus enhancing your own professional skills.

NURTURING KIDS' Seven Ways of Being Smart

How to develop
your students'
multiple
intelligences

Kristen Nelson

KRISTEN NELSON is a sixth-grade teacher at Ambuel Elementary in the Capistrano unified school district in Orange County, California. She is also a mentor teacher and consultant on multiple intelligences in the classroom.

Throughout my teaching career I've been perplexed and fascinated by students who perform poorly in math and language activities, and appear unmotivated—yet thrive outside of the classroom. I'd see these “under-achievers” in the streets after school, their faces lit with laughter and enthusiasm for whatever they were doing. They were engaged, expert, joyful—why couldn't I bring this out of them in class? Dr. Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory nudged me toward the answer: I could reach many of these turned-off kids if I discovered their special ways of being smart.

You're probably familiar with Gardner's theory, but here's a refresher of his basic premise: Individuals don't have one fixed intelligence, but at least seven distinct ones that can be developed over time—linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical-rhythmic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. See the box (“The Seven Intelligences”) and the clip-and-save chart [in this article] for more details about these seven kinds of smarts.

HOW MY TEACHING CHANGED

Gardner's theory is a dream come true for teachers—because it means intelligences can be nurtured. And with that in mind, I reinvented my curriculum and the way I taught it so that it met the needs of a wider range of learning styles—which, as educator Thomas Armstrong says, are “the intelligences put to work.”

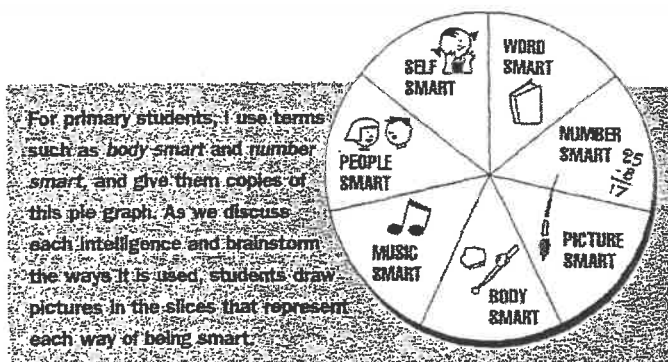
The strategies you can use to put the Multiple Intelligences Theory into play in your own classroom are limitless. To add to your thinking, here are two approaches that have had a big impact on my students' achievement: one is a focused unit that introduces kids to the concept of diverse strengths; the other is an open-ended exploration of the seven intelligences through classroom flow areas, which are similar to learning centers.

7 Smarts: An 8-Day Unit

Think a kindergartner will have trouble grasping the theory of Harvard psychologist Gardner? Think again. As a mentor teacher on multiple intelligences, I work with children throughout grades K–6, and even the youngest students naturally take to the idea that there are multiple ways of being intelligent.

I begin the unit by asking students what being smart

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means to them, and then list their replies on the board. Since their answers usually revolve around reading, writing, and math, we discuss the importance of these subjects in school success.

Next, I ask them to brainstorm other ways a person can be smart, conveying the idea that humans have proven time and again that although having strong math and language skills is important, it is not the only predictor of success in life. With grades 3 to 6, I discuss famous people who performed poorly in school but were smart in other ways. Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso—who both disliked

school rules and dropped out to study under experts—are two good examples to use. With younger students, we talk about the fact that not everyone likes school all of the time.

As we continue our discussion, I give kids lots of examples of skills, activities, and professions that make use of each intelligence area.

EXAMINING STRENGTHS

After the introductory lesson, I focus on a different intelligence area for each of the next seven days. For example, on a spatial intelligence day with fourth graders, I might have students draw

floor plans of the Spanish mission we are studying and have them practice picturing numbers in their minds as we do oral calculations math. On body-kinesthetic day, I role-play a scene from a novel we're reading, and learn a new sport. Each day, I also devote 45 minutes to exploring the famous people, book characters, and historical figures who are good role models in that intelligence.

By now, students are not only familiar with the different ways they're smart, but they are now ready and fully very willing to use their intelligences in daily work.

NURTURING KIDS ALL YEAR

After the opening unit, I integrate Multiple Intelligences Theory into my lesson plans for the rest of the year, adapting activities to meet various learning styles. For example, a child who is strong in spatial intelligence and is a visual learner can strengthen her reading and writing skills by drawing a picture before writing about a book she's reading. See the chart *Out Your Students' Strengths for*

The Seven Intelligences

As you explore these seven intelligences with your students, keep in mind that Gardner's theory should not be used as another way to pigeonhole students as "spatial," "musical," and so forth. Students need to perceive themselves as having a combination of these intelligences, capable of growth in all areas.

Bodily-Kinesthetic: involves using the body to solve problems, create products, and convey ideas and emotions.

Interpersonal-Social: refers to the ability to work effectively with others; to understand them; and to notice their goals, motivations, and intentions.

Intrapersonal-Introspective: involves the ability to be deeply aware of inner feelings, intentions, and goals.

Logical-Mathematical: involves the ability to reason deductively or inductively and to recognize and manipulate abstract patterns and relationships.

Musical-Rhythmic: includes sensitivity to pitch, timbre, and rhythm of sounds, and responsiveness to music.

Verbal-Linguistic: involves ease with reading and writing skills, and sensitivity to the nuances, order, and rhythm of words.

Visual-Spatial: involves the ability to create visual-spatial representations of the world and to transfer those representations mentally or concretely—to think in pictures.

Adapted from "Seven Ways of Knowing" by David Lazear, *If Minds Matter: A Forward to the Future*, Vol. II. (ORU/Skylight Publishing)

more ideas on how to build on your kids' multiple intelligences.

Flow Areas Foster Intelligence

Using multiple intelligences in your teaching has to go beyond detecting strengths in students and flexing just those intellectual muscles. You need to give students the opportunity to explore all seven domains. Setting up flow areas—which are centers organized around the seven intelligences—will help you accomplish this.

The concept of *flow* was developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Ph.D., professor of human development at the University of Chicago, who describes flow as a state of complete absorption in something, to the point where one loses track of time. Csikszentmihalyi first observed flow when studying artists; he then looked for and found it in dancers, athletes, scientists, musicians, and talented people in many other fields.

In the classroom, flow areas provide students with the space, materials, time, and challenging activities that spark deep involvement while strengthening children's intelligences.

GO WITH THE FLOW

The very nature of flow areas is flexible, and they can be designed in numerous ways. Sometimes you'll want to set up flow areas for four to six weeks, and at other times just for a week or two. How you guide students to use them will vary, too. You'll want children to work in them solo, with partners, and in small groups; you can have children use them only when they're finished with their class work, or you can rotate students through the areas on a regular schedule. Try to block out a period of at least 30 minutes for kids, so they have a chance to get lost in their endeavor.

You can set up flow areas as centers independent of what students

are studying, or you can link them to your curriculum.

21 FLOW-AREA IDEAS
Verbal-Linguistic

1. Set up a language lab with a cassette player, cassettes, earphones, and talking books. Invite students to tape themselves reading a story or poem they've written, to share with others.
2. Establish a writing center with a computer, writing supplies, and examples of different types of writing. A fourth grader I taught used this area to write letters to local land developers to discuss her environmental concerns.
3. Organize a tutoring station where older children volunteer to help younger students with reading and writing. One sixth grader who lacked confidence in his reading gained more self-assurance when he helped a first grader learn to read.



Draw Out Your Students' Strengths

Intelligence Area:	Is Strong In:	Likes to:	Learns Best Through:	Famous Examples:	Common Misbehaviors:
Verbal/Linguistic	Reading, writing, telling stories, memorizing dates, thinking in words	Read, write, tell stories, talk, memorize, do word puzzles	Reading, hearing, and seeing words, speaking, writing, discussions	J.S. Eliot, Maya Angelou, Abraham Lincoln	Passing notes, reading during lessons
Logical/Mathematical	Math, reasoning, logic, problem-solving, patterns	Solve problems, question, reason, work with numbers, experiment, use computers	Working with patterns and relationships, classifying, abstract thinking	Albert Einstein, John Dewey, Susanne Langer	Working on math or bundling things during lessons
Visual/Spatial	Reading, maps, charts, drawing, puzzles, imagining things, visualization	Design, draw, build, create, daydream, look at pictures	Working with pictures and colors, visualizing, drawing	Pablo Picasso, Frank Lloyd Wright, Georgia O'Keeffe, Bobby Fischer	Doodling, drawing, daydreaming
Bodily/Kinesthetic	Athletics, dancing, acting, crafts, using tools	Play sports, dance, move around, touch and talk, use body language	Touching, moving, processing knowledge through bodily sensations	Charlie Chaplin, Michael Jordan, Martha Graham	Fidgeting, wandering around the room
Musical/Rhythmic	Singing, picking up sounds, remembering melodies, rhythms	Sing, hum, play an instrument, listen to music	Rhythm, melody, singing, listening to music and melodies	Leonard Bernstein, Mozart, Ella Fitzgerald	Tapping pencil or feet
Interpersonal/Social	Understanding people, leading, organizing, communicating, resolving conflicts	Have friends, talk to people, join groups	Sharing, comparing, relating, interviewing, cooperating	Mahandas Gandhi, Ronald Reagan, Mother Teresa	Talking, passing notes
Intrapersonal/Introspective	Understanding self, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals	Work alone, reflect, pursue interests	Working alone, self-paced projects, reflecting	Eleanor Roosevelt, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Merton	Conflicting with others

How to Enhance Your Teaching Smarts

✓ **Invite guest speakers.** Show students the relevance of each intelligence by inviting parents and community members as guest speakers—their professions can highlight specific intelligences. For example, a local architect described to my students how he designed a building they pass every day on their way to school—the kids were fascinated.

✓ **Create a video.** Have your students plan and execute a video to inform parents or other classes about the many ways of being smart.

✓ **Encourage individual projects.** Have students choose an intelligence area in which they would like to complete a one- to two-week project.

✓ **Honor overlooked intelligences.** Remember to recognize students that excel in bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences.

✓ **Assess your own intelligences.** Think about

how your strengths and weaknesses in the seven intelligences influence your teaching. Look at your lesson plans. Beside each activity, write the initials of the intelligences exercised—you will be able to see your dominant intelligence areas as well as the areas you need to enhance. Share your strengths and weaknesses with students.

✓ **Stretch yourself.** Instead of accepting the belief that you don't excel in certain areas, attend workshops and read books that can help strengthen these skills.

✓ **Team teach.** Use fellow teachers who have different intelligence strengths to plan lessons and activities. Rotating students can allow you to teach to your strengths and loves, while providing students with different styles of teaching and learning.

✓ **Update your professional portfolio.** Set your sights on having a portfolio that contains examples of lessons that use each intelligence area.

Math-Logic

4. Make a math lab with manipulatives, calculators, objects to measure and graph, and so on. My younger students love to use the area to classify pattern blocks, buttons, and coins. One older student calculated the expenses of an upcoming family trip and planned an itinerary.

5. Put together a science lab with simple hands-on experiments and science books. A flower-dissection lab—which I set up when we're learning about plant reproduction—is a favorite of my students.

6. Create a logic-challenge center. For example, I invited my fifth graders to develop a mystery-based board game. When I challenged my sixth graders to design a way to teach a blind person geometric shapes, they collected yardsticks and made giant squares, triangles, and parallelograms on the playground.

Spatial

7. Enrich an art area with paints, pencils, different types of paper, clay, and various objects students can use as models for still-life drawings. Display

examples of famous artists' work for students to study. My students loved it when I brought in a large shell and invited them to do a painting of it in the style of Georgia O'Keeffe.

8. Stock a visual media center with a video camera, VCR, and videotapes. Invite groups of students to make a short classroom documentary. My students chose topics of concern to them, like getting along with parents.

9. Fill an architecture center with pencils, rulers, and large sheets of paper. Invite students to draw the floor plan of anything. A fourth grader planned, designed, and built a futuristic mission for space exploration.

Bodily-Kinesthetic

10. Put together a hands-on center with materials such as clay, blocks, and craft materials. While studying Michelangelo's sculpting style, my students decided to make chess sets out of clay.

11. Enrich a drama center with play books and ideas for student performances or puppet theater. One student wrote his own version of a

Greek tragedy, selected his cast, and performed it for other classes.

12. Create an open space for creative movement (mini-trampoline, juggling equipment, drama area, and so on). Or set up an outside flow area that can be monitored by a parent volunteer. I've seen students use this area to learn how to juggle (which increases eye-hand coordination) and teach jazz and country dances to their peers.

Musical

13. Set up a music lab with cassettes, earphones, and various tapes to compare and contrast. For example, students can compare Mozart's "Symphony No. 39" with Garth Brooks's "The Thunder Rolls" and the Beatles' "Paperback Writer."

14. Display lyrics for students to analyze. Fill a listening lab with sound-related items such as a stethoscope, walkie-talkies, and a conch shell.

15. Invite students to compose their own songs and write the lyrics. A fourth grader composed a song for the violin that represented the tone

and feeling of the book *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls.

Interpersonal

16. Create a flow area with a round table—to encourage group discussions. You can write curriculum-based discussion ideas on cards and place them in the center, or let students choose their own topics.

17. Establish a debate center where students form teams and choose a subject to debate. Give kids ten minutes to prepare for the debate. Rain-forest preservation versus local economic needs, and whether or not kids should be allowed to ride in-line skates to school are two topics that sparked heated discussions among students.

18. Give students an index card stating a common school-related prob-

lem. Challenge them to work together to come up with solutions. A group of second graders discussed how to resolve arguments that developed in their handball games. They wrote rules to share with other students.

Intrapersonal

19. Create a selection of self-esteem activities. For example, ask students to list ten of their strengths or have them write out specific ways they are a good friend to others.

Encourage journal writing.

20. Invite kids to draw a picture that describes a mood or feeling. I've found this really helps older students to become aware of their fluctuating moods and to reflect on how their moods affect their daily lives.

21. Design study nooks for individual

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work. Use beanbag chairs to make them cozy spaces. A third grader who had difficulty controlling his anger used this nook often as a cooling-off location.

Personalized Learning

The biggest impact that the Multiple Intelligences Theory has had in my classroom is that it has helped me create an individualized learning environment. I no longer expect students to think exactly alike in order to be *right*. I am more comfortable with my students' individualistic thinking—and my own. In personalizing each student's education experience, I find that an increasing percentage of students discover their own strengths, put more effort into improving their weaker areas, and feel better about themselves.

Eight Ways of Being Smart

Intelligence Area	Is strong in:	Likes to:	Learns best through:	Famous examples:
Verbal-Linguistic	reading, writing, telling stories, memorizing dates, thinking in words	read, write, tell stories, talk, memorize, work at puzzles	reading, hearing and seeing words, speaking, writing, discussing and debating	T. S. Eliot, Maya Angelou, Virginia Woolf, Abraham Lincoln
Math-Logic	math, reasoning, logic, problem-solving, patterns	solve problems, question, work with numbers, experiment	working with patterns and relationships, classifying, categorizing, working with the abstract	Albert Einstein, John Dewey, Susanne Langer
Spatial	reading, maps, charts, drawing, mazes, puzzles, imaging things, visualization	design, draw, build, create, daydream, look at pictures	working with pictures and colors, visualizing, using the mind's eye, drawing	Pablo Picasso, Frank Lloyd Wright, Georgia O'Keeffe, Bobby Fischer
Bodily-Kinesthetic	athletics, dancing, acting, crafts, using tools	move around, touch and talk, body language	touching, moving, processing knowledge through bodily sensations	Charlie Chaplin, Martina Navratilova, Magic Johnson
Musical	singing, picking up sounds, remembering melodies, rhythms	sing, hum, play an instrument, listen to music	rhythm, melody, singing, listening to music and melodies	Leonard Bernstein, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ella Fitzgerald
Interpersonal	understanding people, leading, organizing, communicating, resolving conflicts, selling	have friends, talk to people, join groups	sharing, comparing, relating, interviewing, cooperating	Mohandas Gandhi, Ronald Reagan, Mother Theresa
Intrapersonal	understanding self, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals	work alone, reflect, pursue interests	working alone, doing self-paced projects, having space, reflecting	Eleanor Roosevelt, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Merton
Naturalist	understanding nature, making distinctions, identifying flora and fauna	be involved with nature, make distinctions	working in nature, exploring living things, learning about plants and natural events	John Muir, Charles Darwin, Luther Burbank

What Type of Learner Are You?

**Many times our own childhood plays a role in the way we teach.
We need an awareness of our own learning styles to learn more
about ourselves as teachers.**

1. When I was a child, my favorite activities and hobbies outside of school were:

2. My favorite subject(s) in school was:

3. My favorite teacher was . . . because:

4. As a child, I always felt I was intelligent in the following ways:

5. As a child, I didn't feel intelligent in the following areas:

6. School would have been better for me if . . .

7. I decided to teach because of the following reasons: