



This document is an article that was previously published in **On the Beam**, a journal of New Horizons for Learning, an international nonprofit learning community.

New Horizons for Learning *On The Beam* Vol. IX No. 2 Winter, 1989 p. 7 :167

## Multiplying Intelligence in the Classroom by Bruce Campbell

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences developed by Dr. Howard Gardner, cochair of Project Zero at Harvard University, gained national attention through his book *Frames of Mind*. Since then there has been growing interest in practical applications to education.

Intrigued with the theory, I have developed a program to teach to the seven intelligences in my third grade classroom of 27 students. The plan to engage the various intelligences involves the use of learning centers and a thematic, interdisciplinary approach.

Seven centers were developed, each dedicated to one of Gardner's seven intelligences. The classroom was physically restructured to accommodate the centers, signs designate the different areas and I began a whole new kind of lesson planning, one that approaches the teaching of any topic in seven different ways. After three months, lesson planning is admittedly still a challenge. However, I think my own seven intelligences are beginning to awaken to the challenge. It has become increasingly more natural and less arduous to plan the content of each center for each day. The names of the seven centers vary from Gardner's terminology to appeal to young students.

A portion of each school day, approximately 2 -1/2 hours, is devoted to the students working in the centers. The students move in groups of three or four through all seven centers spending about twenty minutes at each one. For example, while studying a unit on Planet Earth, the seven centers provided activities to help the students learn about the structure of the earth.

- In the **building center**, the students actually constructed a three layer replica of the earth with three colors of clay to represent the core, the mantle and the crust. They sliced their clay earths in half for a cross-section view.
- In the **math center**, each group worked with geometric concepts of concentric circles, radius, diameter, etc.
- At the **reading center**, the students read a story called "The Magic School Bus" that depicted a group of school children exploring the inside of the earth.
- The **music center** provided a listening/spelling activity. The students listened to music while studying spelling words such as earth, crust, mantle and core.
- The **art center** involved cutting out concentric circles of different sizes and colors, pasting and labeling them to identify the different zones.
- The **working together** (interpersonal) **center** had a cooperative learning activity where the students had to read a fact sheet on the earth and jointly answer questions.
- The **personal work** (intrapersonal) **center** involved a fantasy writing activity on the subject: "Things you would take with you on a journey to the center of the earth".

At the end of the 2 -1/2 hours spent at the center, I can say with certainty that every one of my 27 students knew the structure of the earth, and perhaps even more importantly, had learned artistically, mathematically, musically, linguistically, kinesthetically, interpersonally and independently. I have noticed that my role as a teacher dramatically shifts as the students work at their multiple centers. My role becomes that of a facilitator of learning.

The students enjoy the learning centers. What I think they probably enjoy the most is the myriad of opportunities each has to succeed at learning. I enjoy watching their success.

**This is a list of the Centers as they were structured at the time this article was written:**

Gardner's Identified Intelligence	Center Name
Kinesthetic Intelligence	Building Center
Visual-Spatial Intelligence	Art Center
Mathematical-Logical Intelligence	Math Center
Musical Intelligence	Music Center
Linguistic Intelligence	Reading Center
Interpersonal Intelligence	Working Together Center
Intrapersonal Intelligence	Personal Work Center

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## About the Author

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