

Kristine Best

Reflection 1

ESPY 640

“An intelligence is defined as a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture.”

This definition shows how in comparison to both articles, Waterhouse fails to encompass all the levels on which the Multiple Intelligences theory examines intelligence.

Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences shows aspects of cognitive and developmental psychology, anthropology, and sociology to explain the human intellect. Gardner claims that the capacity of individuals to advance knowledge reflects the priorities and opportunities that society presents in a cultural domain. Intelligence is seen as a flexible, culturally dependent construct and it reflects a social constructivist perspective.

From reading these two articles I really was curious as to how the MI theory related to the classroom setting. It seems like there are many ways to incorporate MI theory into the curriculum. There is no set method to incorporate the theory but some teachers can set up learning centers with resources and materials that promote the involvement of the different intelligences. I believe that collaborative learning can allow students to discover and explore their interpersonal intelligence. Also project-based learning can also be integrated into lesson with Multiple Intelligences; where teachers can help structure activities and lesson that are geared to cultivate the nine intelligences.

For teachers I think it is really important for them to carefully select activities that not only teach about the intelligences but also mix with the subject matter of the lesson at the time. The MI theory should be used as a tool to enhance what is being taught.

Gardner has indicated some general implications in his MI theory which includes individualizing education, and approaching topics through multiple entry points. “Waterhouse’s (2006) assertion that educational applications of MI theory are harmful is without merit. This claim is offered without evidence and by ignoring considerable counterevidence. With colleagues, Kornhaber studied 41 schools that had used MI inspired practices for several years. She documents numerous ways-quantitative as well as qualitative- in which these schools and their students have benefited.”(Gardner & Moran 229) These authors feel that it is up to educators to decide whether ideas derived from, inferred from or catalyzed from the MI theory are useful to them and their students.

I personally think that one very important aspect of student-centered lessons is allowing students to make choices and be independent. Teachers should encourage their students to work on their weaker intelligences and challenge their stronger intelligences.

“An MI approach demands a change of minds among researchers and educators.” (Gardner 228) It requires an interdisciplinary perspective, cultural sensitivity, and an interactionist-dynamic research methodology. “ The first two reasons support Gardner’s decision to incorporate anthropological studies and case materials from a variety of cultures in devising and revising his theory.” (Gardner 228) The advantage of this approach is that it discusses and explains the wide variety of intelligent performances amongst people depending on their level of training, context, culture and willingness.

In Gardner's article I learned that the MI theory really zooms in on the fact that the interaction among these intelligences is vital for understanding how people's minds work. Intelligence profiles describe the strength of intelligences related to each other.

From the readings I have found also that there are many benefits of Multiple Intelligences and also they can be practiced in the classroom. As a teacher and learner you can realize that there are many ways to be smart. I think if teachers can have their students display their work to the school community to celebrate all forms of intelligence. By displaying students work it can give students a sense of self confidence and worth in which students can use to build on their strengths and work to improve their weaknesses. Also by using different multiple intelligence activities in the classroom this can help students to develop better life skills and problem solving skills that they can use in real life situations.

I think that the article raises many questions that should all be considered moving forward into our teaching careers. Teacher should welcome these controversial theories. Everyone will have different perspectives which help us as humans to be analytical. I think it is so important for us as future teachers to question what we are learning and to try to benefit from the theories that arise. With any theory or practice I feel that it is important to research the pros and cons before implementing it into the classroom right away. I think this article has shown that teachers must research in order to make their own judgements on what will be the most effective practices for their individual students and class.

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Reflection 2

Multicultural education including race, culture, social class, and ethnicity are important parts of our society and schools should provide everyone with opportunities to experience and learn more about different cultures and benefit from others. I think it is important to give all students a chance to ask about other cultures. Diversity in the classroom is great to enhance students learning. Once students start learning about why certain people do certain things, children start to become more accepting of these differences. Both articles bring up many different points about how multicultural education can have effects on educational achievement. I truly believe that we as future teachers have the power to change these statistics that say that black students are lagging. I also believe that in order to do this, teachers must design lessons that show value and interest in the world outside the classroom. When students can relate to the lessons and having meaningful experiences they will be interested and learn. When students relate lessons to their own lives, students become more willing to invest time into learning. So I feel as though it is our jobs as teachers to help our students feel as comfortable as possible and help them understand how important their education is to their futures.

Based on these two articles, the educational achievement gap between students among different races and rich and poor students persists. I believe that schools need to pay more attention to strategies and programs that close this achievement gap. There are many factors that

contribute to this gap in America. A few factors that I feel that are important for teachers to reflect on are: student mobility rates, making students feel welcomed, and raising expectations.

Student mobility impact students education in any case no matter what the students background it definitely effects them socially and academically. No one enjoys moving around often and getting used to a new neighborhood and a new school. Especially when you are young it can be extremely stressful for students to create bonds and because of this students academic achievement is greatly effected. As I said in one of my response posts to Tammy, I believe teachers need to do what they can and be well aware of student mobility rates and realize that these students may need extra attention and support. I think teachers need to take some responsibility towards making sure students get the most out of their education no matter where they are coming from. I do believe it can sometimes be very hard for teachers to adjust their lessons and teaching for students who may be behind but these students need that extra support. Teachers need to also look at what these students that are moving constantly are going through. Students experience low achievement levels due to different curriculums and they also have a hard time gaining good peer relationships. Students have a hard time getting comfortable in their environment and their surroundings because once they get comfortable they move again. Tracking students progress is extremely tough as well because it is incomplete. I think some ways schools and teachers can assist these students would be to provide information to parents about how their child is negatively being effected by this mobility. States can also implement district and state wide standardized curriculums which will help students who do move often stay on track with the same content. Lastly the states need to develop some sort of tracking system so that students progress can be recorded and tracked.

Another factor that is important for teachers and schools to reflect on is how warm and welcoming the school and classroom is. As I mentioned in one of my postings, school should be a safe and welcoming place where students feel comfortable. I think that another way that teachers and schools can close this gap is by providing students with an environment that promotes learning but also a sense of excitement. Schools need to make children excited about education and achievement. When schools and classrooms set the bar high, it gives students an expectation and goal to achieve. Students sometimes need that motivation because they might not be getting it from their home or social setting. Raising the bar and expectations for the students as well as for ourselves as teachers, makes everyone grow. I truly believe that teacher expectation raise their students achievement. I can relate this to my own life as well because being a basketball player, in order to achieve and grow I have to set pretty high expectations for myself and so do my trainers and coaches. I compare basketball to the classroom as well, the teacher to the coach and the students to the players. If the teacher and coach set high expectations, the students and players will rise to meet these expectations as long as they are received the proper motivation. I believe that teachers should make a habit of expecting a little more each day from their students and convey these expectations with gentleness, confidence and patience.

So the question I ask myself after this weeks assignment is, "What can teachers do to improve their students success and achievement no matter what the circumstances are?" My answer would be to support students and set high expectations and believe that any student can do something if they are motivated properly.

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ESPY 640

Reflection 3

I want to focus my Reflection on Traditional versus Progressive Education. John Dewey was working towards sanctioning a plan which would convey important subject matter through an experiential learning process. Many disagree with Dewey and say that progressive education destroys the accountability of the teacher. This “child-centered” strategy some feel, relieves teachers from their duties of getting through the subject and making sure the content is instilled into the child.

I still feel that many elements of traditional education are useful in the reality of today’s classrooms. Dewey believes that problem solving and active learning are the keys to development. Teachers need to set limits for the effectiveness of experience. There needs to be a connection between education and experience. Some experiences in the classroom might not be educative but can still help students grow and learn. I believe that it is the quality of experiences that help children and people grow the most. Dewey (1938) talks about how important experience in education is. Teachers not only have to be cognizant of what backgrounds their students could be coming from but also provide them with meaningful experiences that will enhance their learning.

In order to implement new standards, teachers are required and expected to bring in outside information which will help students relate and see how the material correlates with their

own lives. When students are able to look back on their own experiences or own interests, students are able to thinking more critically and build on their prior knowledge.

When reflecting on special education, I feel that the common core standards are not appropriate. When students are behind by grade levels, it seems almost impossible to expect them to understand concepts and perform at their grade level when they do not have the skills or maturity level that is necessary. I think special education should have their own common core standards. Special education seems to be overlooked and it is very upsetting and frustrating for teachers.

In schools nowadays states need to figure out a way to help the diverse populations meet the same standards that all are expected to meet. Teachers are unsure of how much progress they can expect from special education students and how fast.

“There is no discipline in the world so severe as the discipline of experience subjected to the tests of intelligent development and direction. Hence the only ground I can see for even a temporary reaction against the standards, aims, and methods of the newer education is the failure of educators who professedly adopt them to be faithful to them in practice.” (Dewey 190) This road to a new education system is not easy to follow. Dewey also mentions that we have to look at what education really is in order to be successful in preparing and teaching our students. I think it is important for teachers to teach to be successful life skills in class while teaching students new strategies and ways to learn new concepts. By incorporating both real life applications and other tasks that will allow students to have meaningful experiences, will build on their old skills and develop new ones. Students need to get an education not by just learning



concepts but learning life skills and how to interact with others and be understanding of others and themselves.

Lecture and instruction take precedence over “risky” strategies such as discovery learning and experiential activities. Not until the progressive education movement brought new tactics to light did teachers find an alternative to the classic model.

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Reflection 4

Sir Robinson’s video on Changing Educational Paradigms touches on many different parts of the educational system that are very debatable. Sir Robinson touches on where schools and education are and where they are heading and where they should be heading. Are they heading in the right direction? Yes and no. Sir Robinson discusses many intriguing points that address the lack of focus on students interest in learn as well as students ability to think outside the box and use their imagination to become more knowledgable. We definitely live in a constantly changing world which can sometimes be very difficult to adapt to and make changes. Robinson’s lecture is somewhat a wake up call for the education systems of the United States. Our country needs to start looking ahead and start thinking about the future of these students.

As the population continues to grow, education is becoming very important for the future workers. Teachers and schools need to be doing the right things to prepare these young students to become thinkers with many skills and talents. Many educational systems have not focused on

meeting the needs of all students who have very different talents. Robinson mentions that there has been some success with working with students on different subject areas but many students get lost because of a lack of interest and engagement. Is this the educational system's fault, teachers' fault or students' fault? At this point, who knows! It seems to me like it is a combination of many factors. When looking at the whole educational system, Sir Robinson brings up many good points which seem to connect to the problems that many teachers would like to find solutions to. The changing world seems to be requiring different thinking, skills and talents. I think this starts with how the students are taught, how engaged students can be in school and what they are learning. As educators, I think we as future teachers need to do our best to take risks and push to see change so that students can be benefited from these educational experiences.

Sir Robinson mentions how the educational system is making strides to integrate different subjects areas into each other. This will help students be all-around thinkers. Sir Robinson's lecture discussed the divergent thinker and their capacity to be creative. Robinson shows that there are many different ways that people can answer questions. Everyone is unique and has different ways of expressing their creativity. Educators should motivate their students to express their creativity without hesitation. Educators should also offer opportunities to students by using authentic assessments and having students work on projects in groups so that students will be challenged to think critically with their peers and learn from their peers' feedback. Also, I think giving students a choice of different assessments is a great way of having them display their creativity and interpretation of the different topics they will cover throughout the year. This holds expectations high for students to think critically but it also helps students develop a sense of ownership for their work. Sir Robinson keys in on the fact that we all have the capacity to

learn but how do we want to go about educating our students, conforming to old ways or taking risks with new ones. That's where the topic of conformity comes about. I agree with Robinson when he states that we are entering into conformity. Educators aren't too happy with all the changes that are and have been occurring in the educational system. Therefore it is almost like we are stuck in the past and we are okay with how things are going. We are stuck in the industrial times and it seems like we manufacture students by age and have them conform to the grade level curriculum they are in. By conforming, we are hindering our students learning and just focusing on the standard curriculum and teaching to the test. Where is the learning? There seems like there is more stress involved in conformity than there is progress.

Sir Robinson brings up so many great points and problems with our educational system but he also offers great information on ways that change can maybe benefit our future students and change students learning experiences. There should always be high expectations set and accountability but I believe educators can take risks and challenge their students while still holding their students accountable. Providing opportunities for students that are challenging will help them think deeper and motivate them to learn and take in each learning experience. Embracing our divergent thinkers and examining their creative think patterns will only benefit them in their future. This country has come very far in education but there needs to be some sort change so that our future will be successful.