PERSONALIZED ASSESSMENT: KEYTO LEARNER'S SUCCESS

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"Fair isn't everybody getting the same thing…..

Fair is everybody getting what they need in order to be successful"

INTRODUCTION

There is more to assessment than seeing if the requirements for achievinga qualification have been met. Assessments areused by teachers on an ongoing basis to help their students achieve to thebest of their abilities and is a very important part of the learning process. Assessments help teachers to:

- Improve classroom practice

- Contribute to the personalized learning agenda, where learners areempowered to take an active part in their own learning

- Develop the confidence of learners to undertake peer and self-assessment.

Assessment by teachers, whether formative or summative, is one of these developments that is considered to offer significant potential for improving pupils' learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Harlen, 2007). Teachers who integrate assessment into their teaching do so in order to identify where their pupils are in their learning and the steps they need to take for improvement and progress. This is a persuasive rationale for change but the fact remains that changes in assessment practice have been notoriously difficult to sustain. Change in assessment must begin with some form of innovation, which might be quite different from existing practices in any particular situation. But what do we understand innovation in assessment to be? In education the newness identified in innovative contexts is more likely to be 'situated' or context dependent. The assessment process may not be new in itself but may be new to the teachers and schools concerned. In the present paper researcher shares an

innovative way of assessing the learners catering to their multiple intelligence propounded by Dr. Howard Gardner.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES THEORY

The theory of multiple intelligences is a theory of intelligence that differentiates it into specific modalities, rather than seeing intelligence as dominated by a single general ability, often called a "g factor." Howard Gardner has identified nine distinct intelligences. According to Gardner, students possess all nine intelligences. Where students differ is in the strength of these intelligences. Gardner claims that these differences challenge an educational system that assumes everyone can learn the same subject matter in the same way and that a uniform measure can be used to test student learning. Our educational system is heavily biased toward linguistic modes of instruction and assessment and, to a somewhat lesser extent, toward logical-mathematical modalities as well. Not all learners possess equally strong linguistic intelligence. This intelligence may be more challenging for some learners and, therefore, writing may be more difficult for them. In this paper, Ihave incorporate Gardner's 8 multiple intelligences to design differentiated assessments.

Figure below describes the 8 multiple intelligences given by Dr. Howard Gardner:
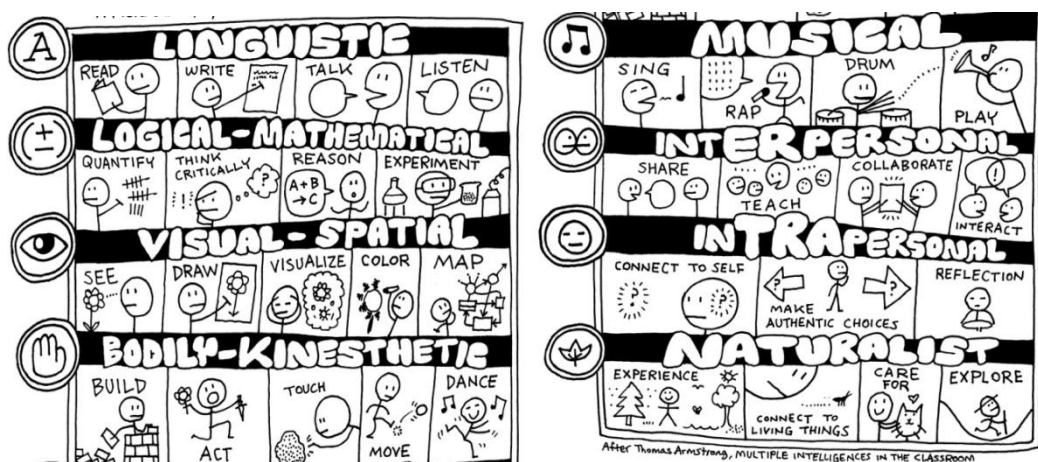
At all levels of education, teachers are exploring more effective methods of assessment which encourage their students to demonstrate understanding through multiple intelligences. For example elementary students compose and perform songs about grammar concepts. Middle school students create multimedia presentations combining animations, compositions, and writing to accommodate interdisciplinary units. The ultimate goal of multiple intelligences theory is to increase student understanding of subject matter. Classroom activities often activate more than one of the multiple intelligences. Few examples, of classroom activities are as follows:

- ✓ Writing a report or essay—activates linguistic intelligence

- ✓ Composing a song—promotes musical and linguistic intelligences

- ✓ Group discussion—activates linguistic and interpersonal intelligences

- ✓ Journal writing—enhances intrapersonal and linguistic intelligences

- ✓ Making a video—stimulates logical-mathematical, musical, linguistic, interpersonal, and spatial intelligences

- ✓ Choreography—integrates musical, linguistic, and interpersonal intelligences

- ✓ Composing a song—serves musical and linguistic intelligences

- ✓ Communicating with experts online—engages linguistic and interpersonal intelligences

- ✓ Making graphs—activates logical-mathematical and spatial intelligences

- ✓ Putting on a play—enhances musical, linguistic, interpersonal, and spatial intelligences

- ✓ Designing posters—integrates linguistic and spatial intelligences

- ✓ Constructing timelines—promotes logical-mathematical and spatial intelligences

- ✓ Hands-on experimentation—nurtures kinesthetic and logical-mathematical intelligences. (Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2004a, pp. 4-6)

All the above mentioned activities need to be assessed using tools like a rubric or rating scale. Teachers need to share the objectives of the lesson and the tools with the students before assessing them so as to improve performance level.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES BASED ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Before we discuss the process used in designing assessments based on multiple intelligences we need to understand why to use assessments using multiple intelligences. We need to use assessments based on multiple intelligences to reduce the learning gap. The term*learning gap* is often used to refer to the gap between a student's actual achievement and his or her potential for achievement. An integrated process of assessment and instruction can help*every* student reach his or her potential and, as a consequence, helps to close the achievement gap between different groups of students.

Research confirms that gaps in student achievement can be narrowed and overall improvement in achievement attained if:

- ✓ The responsibility for making these changes is shared by all partners in the education system – students, parents,6 educators, and community partners (Campbell, Comper, & Winton, 2007; Kober, 2001; Mortimore&Whitty, 1997; Willms, 2006);

✓ There has been a sustained and deliberate focus on individual students' strengths and needs, assessment for learning, and precision in instruction through evidence-informed interventions (Fullan, 2007).

Steps of the multiple intelligences based assessment process is:

1. **Knowing your Learner:** Education is moving away from a model based on the transmission of information in one direction – from teacher to student – and towards a reciprocal model that ensures students are listened to, valued, respected for who they are, and recognized as partners in their education. Greater student involvement in their own learning and learning choices leads to greater student engagement and improved achievement. Knowing your learnersis the starting point for effective planning of assessment and instruction. The following steps are part of the process of getting to know all the students in the class:

   ✓ Gathering information about the learners;

   ✓ Engaging students and other stakeholders during the course of information gathering;

   ✓ Processing and synthesizing information in order to develop an understanding of each student's strengths, learning style(s), dominant intelligence profile, preferences, needs, interests, and readiness to learn;

   ✓ Selecting and/or developing, and implementing, appropriate and productive combinations of assessment and instructional strategies, activities, groupings, and resources to address the diverse needs of the students in the class.

2. Two highly effective tools that can assist teachers in getting to know their students and in planning effective instruction and assessment are the *class profile*and the *individual student profile*. These tools are discussed in detail in the following sections.

   ✓ The **class profile** provides a snapshot of the strengths and needs, interests, and readiness of the students in the class. It is a resource for planning that conveys a great deal of critical information at a glance, serving as an inventory of accumulated data.

   ✓ The class profile can be developed at the beginning of the school year, semester, or termby collecting data using multiple intelligences inventory and later analyzing the scores to identify the dominant intelligence of the learners. Teacher then calculates the dominant intelligence profile of the class. A class profile can be updated as the school year, semester, or term progresses.

- ✓ **The class profile assists in:** sorting, categorizing, and summarizing classroom data; detecting patterns of similarities and differences among the students which helps guide the planning of assessment and instruction.

- ✓ **Developing a Student Profile:** The individual student profile provides detailed information about the student to guide the selection of assessment tools, instructional strategies, and, where appropriate, individualized supports that are best suited to that student's learning style, dominant intelligences, preferences, strengths, needs, interests, and readiness. A student profile provides the detail teachers need in order to devise assessment and instruction that take into account the student's particular needs while capitalizing on his or her particular strengths.

- ✓ One of the key pieces of information detailed in the individual student profile is the student's *current instructional level* in the area (or areas) that present challenges for the student. Essentially, the student profile facilitates the "gap analysis" that needs to be performed in order to determine where the student's abilities are relative to the age-appropriate stage of development in particular areas of learning. On the basis of this analysis, instruction can be provided that directly targets the critical skills that the student needs to develop. Assessments based on students dominant intelligence will help reduce the learning gap.

3. **Providing Accommodations to Help Meet Student Needs**

   - ✓ The information gathered for the student profile will provide educators with more in-depth information about individual students' dominant intelligence and readiness levels of learning. All the information helps in devising Instructional Strategies, Monitoring Progress, and Determining Next Steps.

   - ✓ A review of all the information gathered serves as the basis for a "gap analysis" to determine where the student's achievement is relative to the expectations of the curriculum for a particular grade or course. Instruction and assessments are designed accordingly, to target directly the critical skills that the student needs and to provide any additional supports and/or challenges that are appropriate for the student.

   - ✓ Assessment strategies based on multiple intelligences will be designed by the teacher for every learner depending upon their dominant intelligence profile. Activities like role play, debates, essay writing, poem making, power point presentations, field trips, models,etc will be designed depending upon the type of intelligence.

PREREQUISITE FOR PERSONALIZED ASSESSMENT

To promote effective assessment, teachers need to:

- ✓ Explain the learning aims to learners and check their understanding
- ✓ Demonstrate the standards learners are required to achieve and helpthem recognize when they have achieved that standard
- ✓ Give effective feedback on assessment decisions, so that learnersknow how to improve
- ✓ Demonstrate high expectations and make it obvious to learners thatthey believe that they can improve on their past performance
- ✓ Provide regular opportunities for teachers and learners to reflect onthe last performance and review learners' progress
- ✓ Develop learners' self-assessment skills, so that they can recognize what aspects of their own work need to improve.

MERITS OF PERSONALIZED ASSESSMENT

- ✓ **Close achievement gaps:** Students perform better in assessments catering to their dominant intelligence. For example a student with visual intelligence will not be able to give his / her level best in written exam but when asked to make a poster will be able to express information effectively. Thus, personalized assessment helps in bridging the gap between achievements of students in class.
- ✓ **Build confidence in students:** One of the main reasons that struggling students continue struggle is that they lose confidence in themselves and their intellectual capabilities. Personalizedassessments can help students gain self-confidence as learners, because assessments are tailored to their specific intelligences and they perform better thus achieve good results.
- ✓ **Greater engagement for teachers and students:** Implementation of personalized assessment approach to education has been shown to be a more engaging experience for both teachers and students. Instead of teachers designing a question paper they are involved in developing challenging personalized assessments for each child. Personalized assessments provide opportunities for students to interact with the content through activity based assessment strategies.
- ✓ **Overcomes Rote Memorization:** Traditional examination system involves students to memorize the content and vomit everything on a paper, sometimes even without understanding. On the other hand personalized assessment requires students to present

the information gained through different modes like role play, poster etc. In this case they have to understand the concept then they can perform better in the assessments.

LIMITATIONS OF PERSONALIZED ASSESSMENTS

- ✓ **Extra preparation:** Individualized assessment often requires a great deal of preparation up front. If the school isn't using an intelligent adaptive learning system that collects student data to achieve personalized learning outcomes, teachers will need to thoroughly research the academic history of each student and the ways he or she learns best. In addition, time and resources may have to be put into staff training and development as educators change their approach to teaching.

- ✓ **Restructuring the classroom:** Implementation of this new approach to education may require a great deal of classroom restructuring. Classroom structures may need to be adjusted to accommodate individualized assessments – in other words, instead of the traditional rows of desks facing the blackboard, classroom seating arrangements may need to be more flexible, classrooms must be technologically equipped and the most important trained teachers.

CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS

- ✓ **Teachers need to adjust to a new paradigm:**Teachers have a fear with the developing changes in the education scenario will they be able to survive in the new classroom? The answer is yes, but for this teachers need to do following:

  - Have a positive attitude as change is not going to happen overnight it will take time. So teachers need to be patience and strong to deal with new challenges.

  - Continuously update your knowledge

  - Upgrade your skillsby participating workshops, seminars and professional development courses

- ✓ Another important challenge for teachers is **strength of students** in a class. Strength is a big hindrance in implementing personalized assessments in classrooms as it is difficult for the teachers to plan for each child and monitor the progress. But every problem has a solution and for this teacher may start with personalized assessments for difficult concepts so that students achieve better results. After using for many times it will become a habit for both teachers and students.

- ✓ **Time management** is another challenge, as teachers need to complete the syllabus with personalized assessment. Personalized assessment also requires personalized learning and for both teachers need to do of prior preparations. It is a notion that

personalized assessment needs lot of time, yes it requires initially but once teachers master the skill it is easy. Compared to traditional assessment it saves lot of time with respect to checking of papers and designing question papers. Assessment is activity based where students perform the tasks and teacher immediately observes and given scores. with little experience time management is effectively possible.

CONCLUSION

Gardner felt that there was more to people than how well they could read or perform math skills.

 "Gardner's multiple intelligence theory says that instead of one kind of general intelligence, there are at least eight different kinds, which include verbal intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, body movement intelligence, intelligence to understand oneself, and the intelligence to understand others and naturalistic intelligence" (Plotnik, 2002, p.). The students whose intelligence falls in the linguistic domain do not mind to write papers, and write them very well. On the other hand students that are more kinesthetic do not perform well on assignments that are centered on writing. Gardner (1995) then went on to say even though assessment should be "intelligent fair," eight different paper and pencil tests are not the answer to assessing students using MI Theory. A child who has high kinesthetic intelligence would not benefit well from a paper and pencil test with some questions related to bodily activities. .

It is observed that students are unmotivated to do assignments that are not of interest to them. Students either don't do the work or try to get by with as little as possible. This results in a number of negative things. First and foremost, the student will suffer academically. When students either don't complete assignments, or do so poorly, this results in lowered scores, thus affecting their overall grade point average. Another negative is that the student sometimes displays poor conduct when they are not interested or motivated to do daily assignments. This in turn could distract other students who normally would have good behavior. Thus, teachers must plan assessments based on individual need of the students so as to help them perform better in their class.

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