

Resource 11: Extract from *Intelligence Reframed* (1999)

(From: Intelligence Reframed (1999) by Howard Gardner, pp 150-151)

... there is one form of education that is antagonistic in spirit to MI – the uniform school. The essence of uniform schooling is the belief that every individual should be treated in the same way: study the same subjects in the same way and be assessed in the same way. At first, this seems fair: no-one has special advantages. And yet, a moment's thought reveals the essential inequity in the uniform school. The uniform school is based on the assumption that all individuals are the same and therefore, that uniform schooling reaches all individuals equally and equitably... Most important, we...have different kinds of minds. Indeed...no two people have exactly the same kind of minds, since we each assemble our intelligences in unique configurations.

As educators, we face a stark choice: ignore these differences or acknowledge them...those who ignore the differences are not being fair – and are typically focussing only on the language-logic mind....To the extent that the student and the teacher share that focus, the student will do well and consider herself smart. But if the student has a fundamentally different kind of mind, she is likely to feel stupid – at least while attending that school

What is the alternative? The crucial ingredient is the commitment to knowing the minds – the persons – of individual students. This means learning about each student's background, strengths, interests,...not to stereotype or to preordain but rather to ensure that educational decisions are made on the basis of an up to date profile of the student.

The theory of multiple intelligences can be helpful because... it is a good initial organiser.

If one wants to know students well, it is helpful to have a set of categories by which one can describe their strengths and weaknesses.