# A Multiple Intelligences Road To An ELT Classroom

## Michael Berman

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# *Introduction*

The idea for the title was taken from *A Multiple Intelligences Road To A Quality Classroom* – a book by Sally Berman (no relation) published by IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing Inc., 1995. Sally Berman is a retired high school chemistry teacher. Although some of the materials from that book can be adapted for use in English Language Teaching and it is well worth reading, it was not written with ELT in mind.

Anyone who has read the work of Howard Gardner, the educational psychologist, cannot fail to recognise the relevance of Multiple Intelligences Theory to all forms of teaching, and this book is the first to apply it to English Language Teaching. MI Theory provides a much more comprehensive definition of intelligence than the traditional Binet model upon which IQ tests are based and recognises that intelligence is something that can be developed rather than something fixed.

The opening chapter provides an outline of this theory and is followed by chapters on how to cater for each of the eight intelligence types in the ELT classroom. The intention in each case is to illustrate how the theory can be applied in practice. The conclusion presents an alternative teaching model which incorporates MI Theory and other Accelerated Learning techniques such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Educational Kinesiology and Suggestopedia. There is also an appendix which deals with how to cater for young learners.

Our own strengths and weaknesses are, not surprisingly, reflected in our teaching styles. This is why it is so important for us as teachers to be aware of our individual intelligence profiles so we can make adaptations in class to ensure we reach everyone in the group. I hope as you read through this book my own weaknesses will not become too apparent to you!

**Michael Berman** is a freelance teacher and writer. Publications include the *Build Your Vocabulary* series for LTP, *A Multiple Intelligences Road To An ELT Classroom* and *The Power of Metaphor* for Crown House Publishing. *Activating ELT Through Multiple Intelligences*, an electronic publication, is available online at www.netlearnpublications.com and *Once Upon A Story* from Wida Software. *Working with Wisdom Tales* (Flying Witch Publications) is due to be published in January 2003. Michael has been involved in TESOL for thirty years and has given presentations at conferences in Austria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Turkey, and the Ukraine. You can visit Michael's website at www.thestoryteller.org.uk for further information and samples of his work.

# Unit 1: Learning Styles And Intelligence Types

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (or NLP) is a set of guiding principles, attitudes and techniques that enable you to change or eliminate behaviour patterns. It describes the dynamic between the mind and language and how their interplay "programmes" our behaviour.

It began in the 1970s with John Grinder and Richard Bandler who explored how to model excellence by closely observing three highly successful therapists at work. The process they used was "modelling" – relying not only on what the three thought they were doing, but on the patterns of language and behaviour they actually used. The two researchers then tried out these same patterns themselves and developed strategies to pass them on to others.

One useful idea from NLP is that we take in information chiefly through the eye, ear and movement, and that we each have our own preferred learning style. As communicators we need to work to the varied strengths of our audience and as teachers we need to work to the varied strengths of our students, rather than get stuck in our own preferred style and impose this on others. The aim is not to put people into categories, which is to limit potential, but to teach multi-modally and reach everyone in the group.

"When we process information internally, we can do it visually, auditorily, kinesthetically, olfactorily or gustatorily. As you read the word 'circus', you may know what it means by seeing images of circus rings, elephants or trapeze artists; by hearing carnival music; by feeling excited; or by smelling and tasting popcorn or cotton candy. It is possible to access the meaning of a word in any one, or any combination, of the five sensory channels." (From *Trance Formations* by John Grinder & Richard Bandler, 1981.)

By identifying a person's preferred learning style and mirroring it, it then becomes possible to influence that person without his or her being aware of the process. In the hands of unscrupulous practitioners, the technique can be used to exploit people and is open to misuse. For this reason, it is not my intention to sell NLP to anyone. However, the awareness of learning styles clearly has important implications for us as teachers. Whether we follow the PPP model (presentation, controlled practice, production), the ARC model (authentic use, restricted use, clarification) developed by Jim Scrivener, the OHE model (Observation/Hypothesis/Experiment) recommended by Michael Lewis or the ESA Model (Engage/Study/Activate) proposed by Jeremy Harmer is of secondary importance. Unless we cater for the learning styles of the students we teach, none of these models will succeed in reaching everyone in the group.
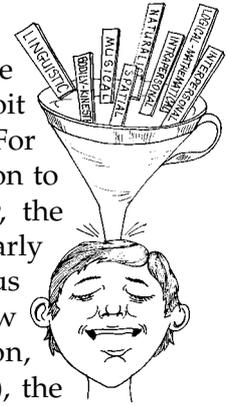
So how to identify learning styles and how to cater for them? Grinder and Bandler propose identifying learning styles from eye movements or "eye accessing cues". This may be appropriate in a one-to-one relationship with a client in therapy but impractical in the class-room.

An alternative approach is to pay attention to the kind of language the students use – verbal and non-verbal. For example, the sort of person who says "I see what you mean" is more than likely to be predominantly visual. The type of person who remarks "I hear what you're saying to me" is probably an auditory learner. The kind of person who uses expressions such as "what you said really grabs me" could well be a kinesthetic learner. Auditory learners also tend to talk over you and kinesthetic learners will be restless and constantly fidgeting.

Another way of identifying the learning styles of your students is by giving them a questionnaire to complete, and one designed for this purpose is presented below. Some suggestions as to how to cater for the learning styles are included in the analysis that follows the questions.

# What Kind Of Learner Are You?

1. **How can other people best interpret your emotions?**
   a. through your facial expressions
   b. from the quality of your voice
   c. through your general body language

2. **How do you manage to keep up with current events?**
   a. by reading the newspaper thoroughly when you have the time
   b. by listening to the radio or watching the TV news
   c. by quickly reading the paper or spending just a few minutes watching the TV news

3. **What sort of driver (or passenger) are you?**
   a. you frequently check the rear view mirror and watch the road carefully
   b. you turn on the radio as soon as you get into the car
   c. you can't get comfortable in the seat and continually shift position

4. **How do you prefer to conduct business?**
   a. by having face-to-face meetings or writing letters
   b. over the phone because it saves time
   c. by talking while you are walking, jogging or doing something else physical

5. **How do you react when you're angry?**
   a. by clamming up and giving others the silent treatment
   b. by quickly letting others know when you're angry
   c. by clenching your fists, grasping something tightly or storming off

6. **How would you describe the way you dress?**
   a. a neat and tidy dresser
   b. a sensible dresser
   c. a comfortable dresser

7. **What do you think the best way is to discipline a child?**
   a. to isolate the child by separating him/her from the group
   b. to reason with the child and discuss the situation
   c. to use acceptable forms of corporal punishment

8. **How do you behave at meetings?**
   a. you come prepared with notes and displays
   b. you enjoy discussing issues and hearing other points of view
   c. you would rather be somewhere else and so spend your time doodling

9. **What do you like doing in your free time?**
   a. watching TV or going to the cinema
   b. listening to the radio, going to a concert or playing a musical instrument
   c. engaging in a physical activity of some kind

10. **What do you consider to be the best way of rewarding students?**
    a. writing positive comments on their work
    b. giving oral praise to the student
    c. a pat on the back, a hug, or some other appropriate physical action

## What Your Score Means

**If most of your answers are A,** then your modality strength is visual. In other words, you learn through seeing things and you like everything to be written down on paper. In a classroom, having notes and the use of visual aids will help you.

**If most of your answers are B,** your modality strength is auditory. In other words, you learn through listening. In a classroom you will want to hear the new language, and listening to music could well be helpful.

**If most of your answers are C,** your modality strength is kinesthetic. In other words, you learn on the move or through movement. Sitting passively in a classroom is unlikely to appeal to you but you'll probably respond well to the use of games and role-play.

(taken from *? R U* by Michael Berman, 1995)

## What is MENSA and who is eligible to become a member?

MENSA is an exclusive club for people with a high IQ or Intelligence Quotient. IQ tests were developed by Binet early this century and were frequently used to assess the potential of children in schools until quite recently. Tests of this type, however, have now fallen into disrepute. All they test is linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence, and this traditional definition of intelligence is now regarded as too narrow. The educational psychologist largely responsible for this change of attitude is Howard Gardner, the creator of the *Multiple Intelligences Theory*.

Gardner has identified eight intelligence types so far and our intelligence profiles consist of combinations of the different types: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal – the way we relate to others, intrapersonal – our ability to self-evaluate, and naturalist – our talent for classifying and categorising.

What are the implications of this theory for teachers? It is clear that unless we teach multi-modally and cater for all the intelligence types in each of our lessons, we will fail to reach all the learners in the group, whichever approach to teaching we adopt. It is also apparent that if we impose learning styles on our students, they will prove to be ineffective. Learners with highly developed spatial intelligence, for example, will respond to the use of diagrams to record new vocabulary whereas this technique may have little or no impact on the rest of us.

Does the fact that we each have a unique profile mean that we should plan individual lessons for everyone in the class to take this into account? Clearly this would be impractical and so the solution lies in including material designed to appeal to each of the seven types in every lesson we give.

# Unit 5: How To Cater For Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

Students who enjoy science subjects and working with computers are likely to have a high degree of logical-mathematical intelligence. These people are problem-solvers, capable of both deductive and inductive reasoning. They appreciate precision and like organising information by sequencing and prioritising it.

The OHE Model presented by Michael Lewis in *The Lexical Approach* – observe, hypothesis and experiment – is ideally suited to catering for logical-mathematical intelligence. The activity presented below is designed for Elementary students to elicit and provide practice in the use of the articles. It takes the form of a picture composition.

Take a piece of paper and draw a square on it. Put a triangle on top to make a roof and then add a chimney with smoke coming out. Now draw a rectangle to make a front door for your house, two squares to make windows downstairs and two squares for windows upstairs. Add a tree on each side of the house to make a garden, a man holding a flower with a smile on his face and a large cat sitting next to him. Finally draw a circle to make a sun and a couple of clouds.

Colour the leaves on the trees green and the trunks of the trees brown. Colour the flower the man is holding red and the cat black. Colour the sun yellow and the clouds grey or white.

Why is the indefinite article used to describe the shapes and figures to be drawn and the definite article to describe the colours?

Work in pairs and take it in turns to give your partner a picture to draw and to colour. Use the example above as a model.

Crosswords are popular with problem-solvers and the *Phrasal Verb Grids* presented below will enable learners to make use of their talents in this field. The grids are topic-based as categorising the phrasal verbs in this way can make them easier to learn. This also makes it easier to relate the activities to the topics that appear in the course book being used. The aim is for the learners to match the numbers with the letters to find the phrasal verbs with the meanings given in the grid. In each case, either a number or a letter is given to provide an additional clue. Once these answers have been checked, the students are then given the opportunity to use them in context by fitting them into the gaps in the sentences.

## Politics

**Match the numbers with the letters to find the phrasal verbs with the meanings given in the grids.**

| 1 step | | 2 pull | | 3 stand |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 4 bring | | 5 call | |
| 6 turn | | 7 cross | | 8 rule |
| | 9 put | | 10 get | |
| A on | | B across | | C off |
| | D down | | E up | |
| F for | | G over | | H out |
| | I back | | J through | |

| to resign | 3 | |
|---|---|---|
| to convey | | B |
| to delay | 9 | |
| to increase (in intensity) | | E |
| to survive | 2 | |
| to discount | | H |
| to restore | 4 | |
| to attack | | A |
| to defect | 7 | |
| to demand | | F |

## Answers

3 - D
10 - B
9 - C
1 - E
2 - J
8 - H
4 - I
6 - A
7 - G
5 - F

**Now use each of the phrasal verbs once only to complete the following sentences:**

1.  There has been a lot of pressure on the Prime Minister to ... in favour of someone younger.

2.  Do you think the Prime Minister will manage to ... despite all the recent difficulties? Personally, I strongly doubt it.

3.  When the former Cabinet Minister ... to the other side, she was shunned by all her old colleagues.

4.  The Prime Minister will probably ... calling a General Election until the last possible minute in the hope that the Government's popularity might have improved by then.

5.  If there is no decisive majority, the possibility of a second Election cannot be ... .

6.  The problem with this Government is their failure to ... their message ... to the voters.

7.  The Leader of the Opposition ... the disloyal members of the Shadow Cabinet by demoting them in a reshuffle.

8.  The resignation of the Minister of Transport was ... once his involvement in the scandal became known.

9.  There in no point in ... capital punishment as there is no evidence to suggest it would act as a deterrent to would-be criminals.

10. The Opposition campaign against the Government is being ... in an attempt to force an early Election.

## Answers

1.  stand down
2.  pull through
3.  crossed over
4.  put off
5.  ruled out
6.  get across
7.  turned on
8.  called for
9.  bringing back
10. stepped up

# Unit 7: How to Cater For Spatial Intelligence

Students with a high degree of spatial intelligence tend to think in pictures, are comfortable with maps, charts and diagrams, enjoy drawing and/or doodling, and are likely to make use of coloured markers. Visual problem-solving devices such as spider diagrams, memory maps, and the use of peripherals placed at or higher than eye-level will have a significant impact on such learners.

Guided visualisation can also be used to good effect to cater for spatial intelligence in the classroom. Contrary to what you might expect, there is nothing new about the use of guided visualisation, guided fantasies, creative visualisation or "inner journeying" as it sometimes called. In fact, the technique can be traced back thousands of years to shamanic practices in pagan times.
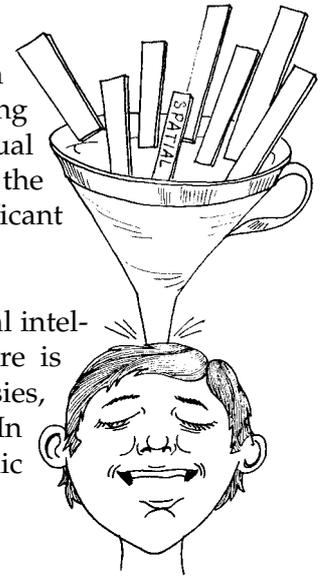
In tribal societies, when people had physical, emotional or spiritual problems, they would turn to the Shaman or Medicine Man/Woman. (S)He would then journey into what Carlos Castaneda calls "non-ordinary reality" to find solutions to the people's problems. The altered state of consciousness was accessed through drumming, fasting, dancing or by taking psychoactive drugs. More recently the same technique has been employed in psychotherapy by practitioners of psychosynthesis and in Neuro-Linguistic Programming, and it is now being introduced into the classroom for the first time.

The words "hypnosis" and "trance" have negative connotations for some people. However, "hypnosis" is only a word to describe the tools you can use to systematically take someone into an altered state of consciousness. People enter altered states all the time. A good example of this would be daydreaming, something we all do at one time or another and something which is perfectly natural. In fact, not being able to daydream is much more likely to be a cause for concern. Another instance of being in an altered state of consciousness is the time we spend sleeping – on average eight hours a night, one third of our lives. Nobody can be hypnotised without their consent and nobody can be made to do something which conflicts with their values and beliefs.
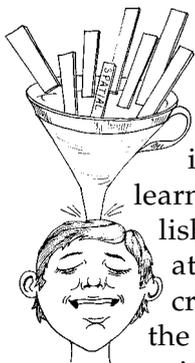
So what is guided visualisation? Basically, it involves creating pictures in your mind while following a script. Although the form of the "journey" is controlled by the script, the content remains unpredictable. It is a means of moving what Carlos Castaneda (the anthropologist who became a sorcerer after being apprenticed to Don Juan in Mexico) calls "the assemblage point" and of entering a state of non-ordinary reality.

Why use guided visualisation in the classroom? Firstly, to introduce variety. The wider the choice of activities used, the more likely we are to hold the students' attention and the more likely we are to provide memorable experiences for the learners. Another good reason for using the technique is that it allows the students to express their creativity and uniqueness. Moreover, to keep the brain in a wide-open, unfocused state and to facilitate learning, there must be relaxation and deflection of conscious attention to tasks other than the real goal. Guided visualisation is clearly a means of achieving this.

Psychological research indicates that people become less inhibited in trance-like states, under hypnosis for example. The state induced in the case of guided visualisation is an extremely light trance but the effect is the same on the learners, and the language they produce seems to flow more freely than usual. Another advantage of inducing a trance state is that stimuli can bypass our critical evaluation system and move directly into long-term memory storage.

Are there any dangers involved in using guided visualisation in the classroom and how can they be avoided? Although the majority of people have no difficulty in visualising, a small percentage will find it a problem. However, even these people can describe what they feel, hear, taste or smell on their journeys. It may also be argued that this is the kind of activity that learners either love or hate and it is consequently risky to use in the classroom. This probably depends to a large extent on the atmosphere the teacher succeeds in creating and how the activity is introduced and presented. Our students deserve to be treated with respect, the same respect we would expect from them. They are entitled to explanations as to why we choose to use certain techniques, the reasoning behind the choices we make. Another possible danger is that visualisations can unearth personal issues which cannot be dealt with in the classroom is not the place to deal with. However, the likelihood of this happening is very limited as the visualisations are controlled and directed towards particular aims.

People are most receptive to right-brain insights when the body is relaxed and the mind free from internal chatter. Moreover, brain research confirms that as stress increases, the ability to learn decreases ,so establishing the right kind of atmosphere is clearly crucial. It is suggested that the scripts are read with musical accompaniment to help produce conditions conducive to optimum learning. You can make use of the Baroque music that Dr Lozanov (a Bulgarian psychotherapist in the 1970s) recommends for the Passive Concert in the Suggestopedic cycle. This includes *Concerti Grossi, op.* 6, No. 4, 10, 11, 12 by Corelli and *Five Concerti for Flute and Chamber Orchestra* (G Major, F Major, G Minor, C Major) by Vivaldi. The beat per second paces the brain into a slower frequency alpha range of seven to eleven cycles per second.

As a lead-in to each visualisation, you might like to brainstorm the topic to find out how much the students already know – what they know about the Loch Ness Monster, for example. A certain amount of pre-teaching of new vocabulary might be necessary to ensure the success of the activity. This clearly depends on the level of the class. An alternative to conventional pre-teaching could be to use the first stage of the Suggestopedic cycle. This would entail preparing the classroom before the students arrive – with visuals related to the topic on the walls, music associated with the theme playing on the cassette recorder to greet the class, and realia placed on the floor or on a table in the middle of the room. When the students enter the classroom, they can pick up the realia and start talking about it together.

As outer images tend to overwhelm inner imagery, most people find it easier to visualise when sensory stimulation is reduced. That is why closing the eyes or wearing a blindfold is recommended. However, it is perfectly possible to learn to image with the eyes open if the participants feel more comfortable that way. It is also advisable not to cross your legs or fold your arms while visualising so as to remain open to the process.

It should be pointed out that not everyone will be willing to share their experiences with the group, especially if they are relatively new arrivals. If this turns out to be the case, there is clearly no point in forcing them to do so. As a follow-up to the visualisation, the

students can be invited to produce a piece of creative writing based on their experiences. Those members of the group who were reluctant to share their journeys with their classmates will probably feel more at ease when it comes to writing about them and in this way they will still have the opportunity to take part in the process.

Other forms of follow-up work could include drawing, painting, dancing, or singing. Galyean points out that "expressing and communicating are ways of imprinting the information in our memories. It helps to follow imagery work with a verbal and/or nonverbal mode of expressing what we've experienced". Eric Jensen, in his book **Brain Based Learning and Teaching** (1995), makes the point that humans never really cognitively understand or learn something until they can create a personal metaphor or model. Using a creative visualisation to realise the topic in their imagination is one way of achieving this.

A graceful way of guiding someone into a trance state is by making use of transitional words like "as" or "when" – words which imply there is a meaningful relationship between two utterances or events. Imagine, for example, you are reading a script and are interrupted by the sound of a police siren wailing in the street outside. You could improvise and incorporate this into the script: "And as you hear the sound of the siren wailing, it takes you deeper and deeper into the trance."

Before writing a script, decide on your setting and then list the things you would see, hear, feel, smell and taste in the location. The ideal script will include as many different VAKOG elements as possible – to cater for the visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory and gustatory sensory modes. Everyone has a preference for a particular mode, and if you omit one, you could be leaving out the one someone really needs in order to be able to get the most out of the experience.

This is not the only reason for involving all the sensory modes. As a result of recently acquired knowledge of how the brain works, we now know that an experience with a powerful attachment to emotions or feelings is more likely to be retained in the long-term memory. By inviting the learners to attune to their feelings during visualisation, we can ensure this has a better chance of taking place.

Another point to remember is that affirmations should be incorporated into the script, both to help the participants to relax and to affirm the students' ability to learn the language easily and well. "And with each stroke of the oars through the water, you feel more and more relaxed," or "And now that you have completed your journey, you can appreciate more than ever how simple English is to understand". The development of self-esteem and self-belief contribute to the physical condition of relaxed alertness which optimises learning and the use of affirmations can help to promote this.

If any of the students seem to be a bit "spaced out" after a guided visualisation, advise them to try stamping their feet on the ground or to breathe out sharply three or four times. Another technique is get them to close their eyes and picture roots emerging from their feet, going deep into the earth. Always check to make sure everyone has "come back" from the journey and is grounded before moving on, especially if it's the end of the class and anyone is driving home.

In the sample scripts for journeys, you will find the following phrase: "You have a minute of clock time, equal to all the time you need... ." It was coined by Dr Jean Houston, director of the Foundation for Mind Research in New York. During an imagery exercise subjective time is experienced. The brain processes millions of images in microseconds, so in one sixty-second period you do have all the time you need.

Written and designed for teachers of English as a second language, this is a visually appealing, thoroughly practical resource full of exercises, activities, stories, visualisations, puzzles and information for immediate use in the classroom.

The book is organised into ten clearly defined units: an introduction to learning styles and the multiple intelligences; a section on each of the eight intelligences; and a final section on teaching young learners. Each unit provides exercises and advice for teaching each intelligence type.

This book contains all that you need to keep your students challenged and learning in the style that suits them best. Covering all essential areas of English Language Teaching, *A Multiple Intelligences Road To An ELT Classroom* makes your teaching accessible, compelling and FUN!

An extremely versatile book, it can also be used as an activities resource for teachers of English as a first language.

"Reading Michael Berman's *A Multiple Intelligences Road To An ELT Classroom* helped me organise my methodological thinking into a neat, manageable system ("the SAFER teaching method") and made me look at language exercises and activities from an entirely new perspective. It enabled me to apply in practice Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory in the ELT classroom."

— *Rolf Palmberg, teacher and trainer, Åbo Akademi University, Vaasa, Finland.*

"Refreshingly lucid and jargon-free. Its emphasis is on the practical application of MI theory and is full of immediately useable and interesting classroom activities, interleaved with thoughtful and well-balanced analysis of the rationale underpinning them, thus encouraging 'intelligent' teacher use."

— *Christine Barker, freelance teacher/trainer.*

Michael Berman is a teacher, teacher-trainer, writer and authority in the field of English Language Teaching. With thirty years' experience of teaching and training both in the UK and overseas, he has a wealth of expertise in imparting his knowledge to teachers everywhere.

**Education**

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