



Seminar Leadership

Leading a Seminar: Learning Styles

Walking with Jesus

iFOLLOW

The iFollow Discipleship Series

About the iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition

Categories

The iFollow Discipleship Series is designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God. This assumes that individuals are in unique places in their journey and there is no perfect set of lessons that everyone must complete to become a disciple—in fact discipleship is an eternal journey. Therefore the iFollow curriculum is a menu of milestones that an individual, small group, or even an entire church can choose from. The lessons can be placed in three general categories: **Meeting with Jesus** (does not assume a commitment to Jesus Christ); **Walking with Jesus** (assumes an acceptance of Jesus Christ); and **Working with Jesus** (assumes a desire to serve Jesus Christ).

Components

Each lesson has a presenter's manuscript which can be read word for word, but will be stronger if the presenter puts it in his/her own words and uses personal illustrations. The graphic slides can be played directly from the Pastor's DVD or customized and played from a computer. There are also several group activities and discussion questions to choose from as well as printable student handouts.

Usage

The lessons are designed to be used in small groups, pastor's Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, training sessions, discussion groups, and some lessons may be appropriate sermon outlines.

Credits

Curriculum Development: The iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition curriculum development was lead by the **Center for Creative Ministry**. **General Editor:** Monte Sahlin; **Assistant Editor:** Debbonnaire Kovacs; **Directional Advisory:** Brad Forbes, Carole Kilcher, Ceri Myers, Cesar Gonzalez, Clayton Kinney, Curtis Rittenour, Dave Osborne, Dave VanDenburgh, Gerry Chudleigh, Jane Thayer, Jerry Thomas, John Appel, Jose Rojas, Kim Johnson, Nicole Chao, Paul Richardson, Rich DuBose, Shasta Nelson, William Sutton; **Pastoral Advisory:** Claudio Consuegra, Collette Pekar, Dave Hutman, Don Driver, Fredrick Russell, Jerry Nelson, Jesse Wilson, Leslie Bumgardner, Loren Fenton, Rebecca Brillhart; **Unit Authors:** Alberto Valenzuela, Althea Pineda, Corienne Hay, Debbonnaire Kovacs, Ed Dickerson, Gianluca Bruno, Gil Bahnsen, Greg Nelson, Jack Calkins, James Whibberding, Karen Collum, Monte Sahlin, Norma Sahlin, Pam Splawinski, Patty Ntihuka, Reinder Bruinsma, Ryan Bell; **Additional contribution** by Maria Ovando-Gibson; **Additional editing:** Dave Gemmell, Meredith Carter; **Graphic Design:** Mind Over Media; **Layout:** Paul D. Young; **Web Development:** Narrow Gate Media.

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www.ifollowdiscipleship.org

Seminar Leadership: Learning Styles

This presentation is designed for people who desire to serve Jesus Christ and help lead others to Him.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand and recognize learning style differences
2. Able to identify different learning styles in a group and tailor presentations to accommodate multiple learning styles
3. Understand how to implement and modify materials to accommodate learning styles
4. Discover one's own major learning styles

Content Outline

1. Multiple Intelligences a New Idea
 - A. May meet objections
2. Common Lecture Style Taken for Granted
 - A. Not like rituals of Ancient Israel
 - B. Ignores central rituals of Christianity
 - C. Jesus used varying approaches
3. Current practices from the Reformation
 - A. Catechism: memorization, rote
 - B. In place for a long time
4. Understanding Child development/multiple intelligences
 - A. Golden rule ineffective
5. Gardner's Nine Intelligences
 - A. Linguistic
 - B. Logical/Mathematical
 - C. Musical/Rhythmical
 - D. Bodily/Kinesthetic
 - E. Spatial
 - F. Naturalistic
 - G. Intrapersonal
 - H. Interpersonal
 - I. Existential
6. Teaching for Each Kind of Intelligence



Background Material for the Presenter

For many of us, the idea of different ways of learning is relatively new. And any time someone introduces new approaches to teaching Biblical truths, some people will be uncomfortable, and some will be critical. We have become so accustomed to lecture style preaching that we may regard anything else as somehow inappropriate for a church setting, or even for teaching spiritual truths in another setting.

As common and as natural as this attitude is, it overlooks two important truths. First, the typical sermon-based church service today bears very little resemblance to worship in ancient Israel. And second, two of the central rituals to which all Christians practice involve more than simple lectures/listener interaction.

On the first point, worship in Israel was very *physical*, what we shall later describe as tactile/kinesthetic. The penitent brought the lamb to the entrance of the sanctuary encampment, where he confessed his sins on the sacrificial animal, and then sacrificed it himself. No mere sitting and listening involved in that. Often, there would be liturgical and responsive readings of Psalms. Our current services derive from the synagogue, and the synagogue service arose in Babylon in response to need to find a means of worship when the Jews were denied the use of the Temple.

As to the second point, the two central rituals of Christianity, baptism and communion, involve physical reenactments of pivotal events in the life of Christ. In fact, as we shall see later, baptism and communion—especially when communion involves the ritual of foot-washing—serve as excellent examples of teaching for multiple intelligences. These two points may prove helpful in explaining the role and necessity of adapting spiritual teaching for multiple intelligences.

Not surprisingly, we can point out that God was “way ahead of the curve” on this one. Having designed human beings, including there are multiple intelligences, he also designed teaching methods to effectively reach them. And another point. Jesus himself often employed teaching methods that reached beyond mere lectures/listener instruction. He fed the 5000, he withered the fig tree, and he breathed on the disciples, saying, “receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:22 NIV)

It’s important to remember that the idea of educating the masses, as opposed to an elite few, is inextricably linked to Protestantism. Before that, only priests needed to be able to read the Bible. But once Luther propounded the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, education of the masses became a necessity.

Unfortunately, teaching primarily took the form of memorization as featured in the catechism: a scripted series of questions with correct answers. Answers to be memorized.

For a very long time, that was the only model for learning. Rarely did anyone consider that children might learn differently from adults, much less that adults might learn differ-

ently. Only in the last century and a half or so has significant study on child development and learning psychology begun. And practice in schools lags far behind research.

About 40 years ago, we began hearing of three primary modes of learning: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. In recent years, Howard Gardner of Harvard University has identified first seven, and eventually nine different kinds of intelligence. Each of these types of intelligence represent ways of receiving and processing information.

Examining Jesus' methods, we see that he used concrete examples and varying methods to impress truths upon the listeners minds. "Jesus plucked the beautiful lily, and placed it in the hands of children and youth" COL 19. "As Jesus spoke this parable, the mustard plant could be seen far and near, lifting itself above the grass and grain, and waving its branches lightly in the air." COL 77. Coming to understand these nine kinds of intelligence to help us understand how we learn, and how we can help others learn as well.

Failure of the Golden Rule

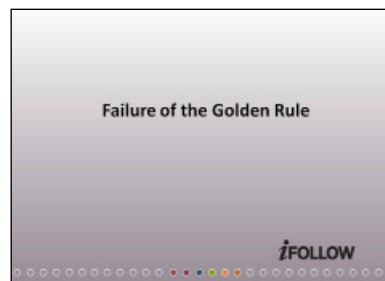
Strangely, the Golden rule doesn't work very well here. Teaching others as we would wish to be thought ourselves often doesn't work very well, for the simple reason that they learn differently than we do. As George Bernard Shaw said, "Do not do onto others as you would have them do to you: that tastes may not be the same." Given nine different ways of understanding and processing information, there's a small likelihood that everyone in a given group of learners will share the same dominant learning style. And as the teachers job to understand that, and to formulate strategies to meet the needs of all learners. First we will have a brief overview of the various kinds of intelligence, and then we will take a detailed look at each one and how they can be used.

Nine Types of Intelligence

1. Linguistic Intelligence: the capacity to use language to express what's on your mind and to understand other people. Any kind of writer, orator, speaker, lawyer, or other person for whom language is an important stock in trade **has great linguistic intelligence.**

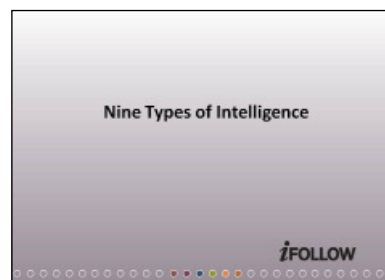
2. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence: the capacity to understand the underlying principles of some kind of causal system, the way a scientist or a logician does; or to manipulate numbers, quantities, and operations, the way a mathematician does.

3. Musical /Rhythmic Intelligence: the capacity to think in music; to be able to hear patterns, recognize them, and perhaps manipulate them. People who have strong musical



intelligence don't just remember music easily, they can't get it out of their minds, it's so omnipresent.

4. Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence: the capacity to use your whole body or parts of your body (your hands, your fingers, your arms) to solve a problem, make something, or put on some kind of production. The most evident examples are people in athletics or the performing arts, particularly dancing or acting.



5. Spatial Intelligence: the ability to represent the spatial world internally in your mind -- the way a sailor or airplane pilot navigates the large spatial world, or the way a chess player or sculptor represents a more circumscribed spatial world. Spatial intelligence can be used in the arts or in the sciences.

6. Naturalist Intelligence: the ability to discriminate among living things (plants, animals) and sensitivity to other features of the natural world (clouds, rock configurations). This ability was clearly of value in our evolutionary past as hunters, gatherers, and farmers; it continues to be central in such roles as botanist or chef.

7. Intrapersonal Intelligence: having an understanding of yourself; knowing who you are, what you can do, what you want to do, how you react to things, which things to avoid, and which things to gravitate toward. We are drawn to people who have a good understanding of themselves. They tend to know what they can and can't do, and to know where to go if they need help.

8. Interpersonal Intelligence: the ability to understand other people. It's an ability we all need, but is especially important for teachers, clinicians, salespersons, or politicians—anybody who deals with other people.

9. Existential Intelligence: the ability and proclivity to pose (and ponder) questions about life, death, and ultimate realities.

[Source: www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/ed_mi_overview.html Originally, there were seven. "Naturalist" and "Existential" were added later.]

Linguistic Intelligence

The individual with linguistic intelligence usually is well served by typical presentations. They are interested in language and words and so they generally pay close attention and have no difficulty processing the information of a largely oral presentation. They generally have fairly large vocabularies and they will appreciate the use of technical terms. They respond well to text on the screen and on the hand out. They also tend to be articulate themselves, and they enjoy puns, quotations, word puzzles—almost anything involving words.

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Instruction Example: Linguistic learners love words. A poem, word search, simple crossword, core values, mission statements, mottos — Linguistic learners shine at these tasks. Add any of these to any well-delivered lecture, and linguistic learners will be well served.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

These are the abstract thinkers whether in terms of theory or in terms of numbers. They especially like to understand the underlying principles. Where others may ask about the practical application of such ideas, the logical/mathematical thinker will revel in the abstract discussion. People who get deeply exercised over such questions as “prelapsarianism” versus “postlapsarianism” are likely to be out of the logical/mathematical bent.

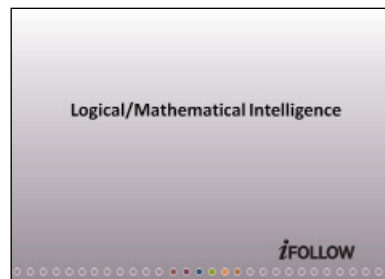
Instruction Example: These learners always need to understand the underlying principle, the unifying concept, patterns and relationships of ideas. So taking a minute to outline those underlying principles will greatly assist them in learning. Asking them to repeat their understanding of the underlying principle in their own words will benefit them, the presenter, and many other learners as well.



Musical/ Rhythmical Intelligence

These are people who have difficulty studying without music going on in the background. Unfortunately, people with other learning styles will be distracted by that same music. Music learners also readily retain any information conveyed through song. Of course, there are times and places where the opportunity to sing may be unavailable. However, as we shall see, in such instances the use of poetry can be very effective.

Instruction Example: Of course including a simple song will help these learners. But rhythmic poetry, even free verse, and especially the Psalms will also benefit them. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the Psalms do not rhyme in Hebrew, but they are rhythmic. One example of a use of a song, when discussing footwashing, including a recording of Michael Card’s, “The Basin and the Towel,” will reinforce the concept for musical learners in a way they seldom forget.



Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

These learners need to touch, feel, or move for their best



opportunity to learn. They often fidget or easily grow tired sitting still, and their attention may wander unless they can find a means for physical outlet. They benefit from almost any large bodily movements, such as walking, waving their arms, and in the proper circumstances, some forms of dance or marching. In the traditional church setting, with pews, it can be difficult to accommodate these learners. As we shall see, the two central rituals of Christianity, baptism and communion, both have significant elements of that benefit kinesthetic learners. An examination of Israelite rituals reveals that many of them includes significant kinesthetic elements. Given that we generally do so little to aid this particular segment of learners, and the promise of kinesthetic elements in Biblical rituals, this area needs special attention.

“Father Abraham,” “I Am in the Lord’s Army,” even “Deep and Wide,” are songs with kinesthetic elements commonly used with children and teens. But we tend to frown on such things when employed by adults, even though Bodily/Kinesthetic intelligence may remain their dominant learning style throughout their lives.

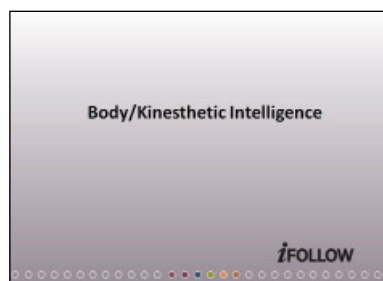
Instruction Example: Bodily/Kinesthetic learners benefit from physically acting out a concept or process. In baptism, for example, they go beneath the water and then return above the surface. This provides a very concrete learning experience for this type of learner. To reinforce the concept of justification, sanctification, and glorification, for example, you might have a group perform a simple improvisational skit.

Have one person take on the role of Sin, another the Sinner, a third the role of Death, and a fourth the role of Christ. The character of Sin comes to the Sinner and mimes the action of handcuffing the Sinner to himself (Sin), and to Death. Tell this trio to go to Christ, where the Sinner repents and asks for forgiveness. Christ then declares Sinner “not guilty,” and takes Death away from Sinner. That’s justification. Death no longer has dominion over the sinner. But Sin is still handcuffed to the Sinner.

Now, have Sinner begin to walk with Christ. And as they walk, Sin loses its grip on the Sinner. Sin can no longer exercise power over Sinner, but he is still **present**. That’s sanctification.

Finally, have them walk to a destination labeled the Second Coming. Sin no longer has a grip On Sinner, but he still walks with Sinner. At the place labeled Second Coming, Christ shouts, and Sin is banished, and is no longer present, and Sinner becomes Sinless. That’s glorification.

This may seem labored and simplistic, but Bodily/Kinesthetic learners will retain the information learned in this fashion.



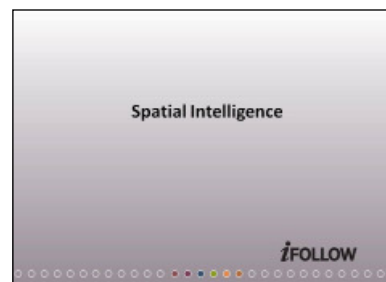
Spatial Intelligence

Very similar to the earlier category of “visual intelligence,” spatial intelligence includes not only two-dimensional representations such as charts, graphs, and pictures, but also three-dimensional objects including sculpture and scale models. With the increasing use of computer slideshows, two-dimensional representations are increasingly common. Inclusion of three-dimensional objects will aid not only a Spatial learners, but the ability to touch and manipulate objects will benefit Bodily/Kinesthetic learners as well.

Instructional Example: Using the same example of justification, sanctification, and glorification from above, let the Spatial learner draw a diagram, or a picture, or create a physical model teaching the same ideas.

Naturalist Intelligence

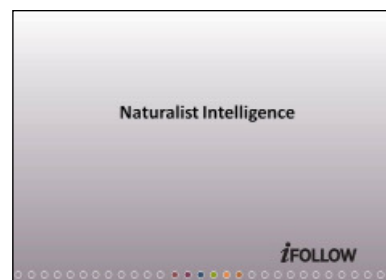
Contrary to Gardner’s claims about “our evolutionary past,” our interest in natural things comes from our intimate role as stewards of creation. Ironic that someone named Gardner would not hearken back to the Garden of Eden. As indicated by the name of those who learn primarily through Naturalist Intelligence are fascinated with natural objects. They are often attuned more to what’s happening outside the window than inside the classroom or auditorium.



Instruction Example: There are many sources of “nature nuggets” that can be used for this group. Snowflakes can demonstrate God’s creativity and the uniqueness of each individual; use the hen protecting its chicks to demonstrate the fathers watch care over us. The amazing strength of the egg, so thin and yet so rigid demonstrates God’s marvelous design. Fortunately among Adventists especially, books and articles abound which describe how to use nature to teach.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

The intrapersonal learner does not do well in small groups, where everyone is expected to contribute and 15 to 20 minutes, the arrangement much beloved by seminar presenters. The intrapersonal learner consults with himself/herself. Until they explore a concept or truth internally, they have nothing to share. And typically, that internal exploration takes more than a few minutes, and requires solitude. Hence their poor performance in small groups, and in a limited time period. On the other hand, when ready to share, they often make significant contributions.



Instructional Example: Putting an intrapersonal learner in a group sharing situation does not work well. Where the interpersonal learner—as we shall soon see—finds the interchange stimulating, all the chatter simply distracts intrapersonal learner, attempting to master a new concept or idea. The intrapersonal learner needs time alone to ponder what has been taught. So instead of sending everyone immediately to small groups to discuss what is presented, ask people to simply sit and think quietly to themselves for five minutes or so. After they've had a chance to think about it, the intrapersonals often make significant contributions. In a seminar concerning spiritual matters, this might be designated a time of silent meditation and prayer.



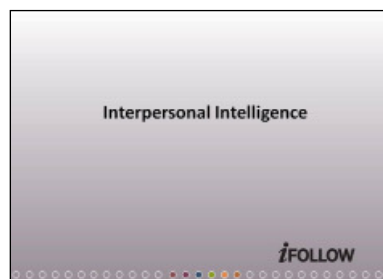
Interpersonal Intelligence

The interpersonal learner drives on interaction with other people. They often volunteer questions to the speaker, even when questions are not sought! They get a lot out of the typical seminar, especially those that break into small groups from time to time. The others in the small group—not least because they may not share the interpersonal learning style—may not fare as well, but the interpersonal learner revels in the setting and often dominates as well. Interpersonal learners need the interaction however, so do not neglect to provide the opportunity.

Instructional Example: As already noted, the small group works well for learners with this type of intelligence. The interaction stimulates them, and helps focus their thinking. An alternative would be to have them present to the group.

Existential Intelligence

The Logical/Mathematical learner looks for organizing principles. The existential learner seeks the meaning of those principles in our lives. The learner who sees through the lens of existential intelligence will discern profound truths often the simplest things. Whereas the naturalist learner may see God's creativity in the snowflake, the existential learner will note how quickly they melt and find in that a parable of the impermanence of life.



Instructional Example: Existential intelligence tends to be one of the more difficult learning styles to teach, simply because it's more about how the learner approaches information, than how they receive that information. Chances are, the teacher will be able to quickly identify the existential learner, because they will bring up existential questions and applications seemingly out of nowhere. But the in-

structor can learn to a) remember to ask if anyone has discovered concepts that speak to our existence, and b) once identified, to specifically ask the existential learner(s) what they see in the material presented.

Learning Styles in Traditional Church Activities

Some examples of how these learning styles exhibit themselves in church practices are:

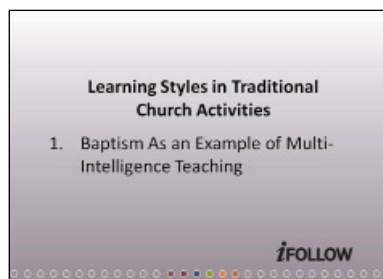
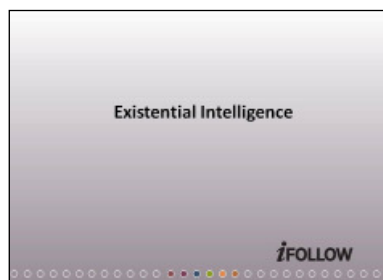
Baptism As an Example of Multi-Intelligence Teaching:

The ritual of baptism as currently practiced involves multiple intelligences. Of course, the preacher talks, and the words are welcomed by the *Linguistic* learners. When the pastor explains that baptism is a reenactment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, he explains the principal for the *Logical/Abstract* learner. The physical act itself, of course, rivets the attention of the *Bodily/Kinesthetic* learner, and is a direct physical experience for both the baptizer and the one being baptized.

This physical reenactment also benefits the *Spatial* learner, who sees the one being baptized disappearing beneath the water and reappearing above the surface—a dramatic graphic demonstration. The *Naturalist* learner will focus on the movements of the water itself—which argues in favor of a baptistery where the water is visible. Speaking of how baptism is an outward testimony of an inward change, that by going beneath the water we “die to self,” that we are experiencing life in a whole new way, communicates effectively with the *Intrapersonal* and *Existential learners*. That’s seven of the nine intelligences, and we haven’t sung yet! Singing obviously adds the *Musical* learners, and to some degree, since singing is a group activity, the *Interpersonal learner*. Adding a responsive reading, or a testimonial would also speak to the *Interpersonal learner*. The common practice of having members shake hands to welcome newly baptized members provides another avenue for the *Interpersonal learner*.

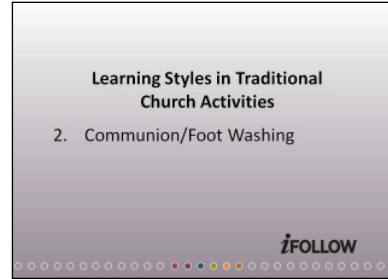
Communion/Foot Washing: It’s amazing to see how God provided opportunities for every kind of learner in the fundamental rituals of Christianity. And when we see how foot washing provides many of those opportunities, we can be thankful that Adventists have not abandoned the practice.

Of course, as we always do, the *Linguistic learners* benefit from the reading of Scripture and the homilies offered throughout this service. *Musical learners* benefit from the songs. *Logical/Mathematical learners* benefit from the concepts presented. But these learners are generally well served. The amazing thing is how well this combined foot washing and



Communion service meets the needs of the other kinds of intelligence. The *Naturalist learner* benefits not only from the sloshing in the movements of the water in the basin, and as the basins are emptied, but also from the fruitiness of the grape juice, and the taste of the bread. The *Bodily/Kinesthetic learner* could hardly be better served, what with the stooping and kneeling, the washing and drying, the fetching and emptying of water, the warm friction of the towel.

The *Intrapersonal learner* and the *Existential learner* benefits from the many extended silences, and explicit opportunities to meditate (contemplate) the meaning of what is being reenacted. The foot washing itself, followed by the prayer is intensely *Interpersonal*. As the whole experience is highly visual in nature, and three-dimensional to boot, appealing directly to the spatial learner.



Handout in this Package

1. Nine Types of Intelligence



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Discussion Questions

1. Which one of the nine intelligences is least accommodated in our typical services?
2. When you determine your own dominant intelligence styles, did you find yourself surprised?
3. Besides the examples of Communion and baptism, what religious services or other customs speak to multiple intelligences?
4. Have participants compare their chart of personal intelligences with at least two others. Which way would be the best for the three individuals to share information?
5. Make a list of ways a seminar or service could appeal to each of the intelligences.

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Questions

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Group Activity

Learning exercise

(make a copy for each participant)

Identify your dominant learning styles. Make a choice from each pair as if they were the only two alternatives. Circle the number of the one that is easier for you.

Identify Your Dominant Learning Style

1. Reading or hearing explanations (words) or 2. Seeing the underlying patterns or principles?

1. Reading or hearing explanations (words) or 3. Singing, setting to music, or in a chant?

1. Reading or hearing explanations (words) or 4. Role-playing, large body movements?

1. Reading or hearing explanations (words) or 5. Seeing pictures or physical objects?

1. Reading or hearing explanations (words) or 6. Using natural objects or living things?

1. Reading or hearing explanations (words) or 7. Taking time for personal contemplation?

1. Reading or hearing explanations (words) or 8. In discussion with others?

1. Reading or hearing explanations (words) or 9. Understanding the implications for existence?

2. Seeing the underlying patterns or principles or 3. Singing, setting to music, or in a chant?

2. Seeing the underlying patterns or principles or 4. Role-playing, large body movements?

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4. Role-playing, large body movements or 5. Seeing pictures or physical objects?

4. Role-playing, large body movements or 6. Using natural objects or living things?

4. Role-playing, large body movements or 7. Taking time for personal contemplation?

4. Role-playing, large body movements or 8. In discussion with others?

4. Role-playing, large body movements or 9. Understanding the implications for existence?

5. Seeing pictures or physical objects or 6. Using natural objects or living things?

5. Seeing pictures or physical objects or 7. Taking time for personal contemplation?

5. Seeing pictures or physical objects or 8. In discussion with others?

5. Seeing pictures or physical objects or 9. Understanding the implications for existence?

6. Using natural objects or living things or 7. Taking time for personal contemplation?

6. Using natural objects or living things or 8. In discussion with others?

6. Using natural objects or living things or 9. Understanding the implications for existence?

7. Taking time for personal contemplation or 8. In discussion with others?

7. Taking time for personal contemplation or 9. Understanding the implications for existence?

8. In discussion with others or 9. Understanding the implications for existence?

Handout 1

Nine Types of Intelligence

1. **Linguistic Intelligence:** the capacity to use language to express what's on your mind and to understand other people. Any kind of writer, orator, speaker, lawyer, or other person for whom language is an important stock in trade has great linguistic intelligence.
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6. **Naturalist Intelligence:** the ability to discriminate among living things (plants, animals) and sensitivity to other features of the natural world (clouds, rock configurations). This ability was clearly of value in our evolutionary past as hunters, gatherers, and farmers; it continues to be central in such roles as botanist or chef.
7. **Intrapersonal Intelligence:** having an understanding of yourself; knowing who you are, what you can do, what you want to do, how you react to things, which things to avoid, and which things to gravitate toward. We are drawn to people who have a good understanding of themselves. They tend to know what they can and can't do, and to know where to go if they need help.
8. **Interpersonal Intelligence:** the ability to understand other people. It's an ability we all need, but is especially important for teachers, clinicians, salespersons, or politicians—anybody who deals with other people.

9. **Existential Intelligence:** the ability and proclivity to pose (and ponder) questions about life, death, and ultimate realities.

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