



Dear Student Advocates (also known as MI Enthusiasts),

Raise your hand if you like spring better than winter!

We're down to the last lap of the school year. If you're like me, summer is coming too quickly because there are all these things that you still need to accomplish! Don't misunderstand me: I like my summer as much as the next guy. But there's so much to do!

I'm working on an article, "What parents need to know," and as part of my data collection, I asked some parents (and some educators) for ideas. What *do* parents need to know? Their responses were really quite good, and I'm taking the liberty of sharing them here. You may simply enjoy reading them, or you may want to share them with your students' parents. Here's another idea: You may want to elicit your own list and see how it compares to mine. I'd enjoy hearing what you think of this list. Check out: [Parent Wisdom](#)



On a different sort of note -- but not really -- I found an article in the March 4, 2008 *New York Times*, "A One-Eyed Invader in the Bedroom," to be quite disturbing. It begins with a powerful sentence: "Here's one way to keep your children healthy: Ban the bedroom TV." The author, Tara Parker-Pope, says that "a growing body of research shows strong associations between TV in the bedroom and numerous health and educational problems." Kids with a TV in the bedroom, she continues, tend to have more sleep problems, are more likely to be overweight, and are at a higher risk for smoking.



And get this: In a study done in Buffalo of 80 children age 4-7, she notes, "the presence of a TV in the bedroom increased average viewing by 9 hours a week, to 30 from 21." Of course, this doesn't even address what kids watch in their bedrooms. Finally, in a California study, children with a TV in their bedroom "scored significantly and consistently lower on math, reading, and language arts tests."

Why do parents allow this? Well, in part, it's

because TV has become such a normal part of our home landscape that parents simply don't stop to think about its pernicious impact. Besides, Henry tells mom that "Johnny has a TV in his bedroom!"

I share this information because I believe that



we have a responsibility to do something about it. We aren't our students' parents and there's a line between being an educator and a parent; I get that. But we need to share this sort of information so that our students' parents can at least have the opportunity to make a thoughtful decision. Too often people, all of us, take things as they are without stepping back and analyzing. So please, feel free to share these issues (or refer to the original article) with your students' parents.

Then, what can be done at school? Here's a small step that works for us. At the New City School we hold school-wide tournaments in checkers, chess, Othello, and Boggle. There are boys' and girls' grade level champions, and that group then plays an adult, a teacher or administrator, in our library amidst hoopla. The kids love it and some of them get quite good. What's wonderful is that this experience helps them derive satisfaction from something that doesn't need a battery or have to be plugged in. I'm convinced that some of our students will be chess players throughout their lives! Teaching children to develop and enjoy all of their intelligences should be a goal of every educator.

This issue features an article about using MI in a Jr. ROTC program. Written by Tim Clapper, it shows the power of MI. I think you'll find it interesting.

Differentiated Instruction and the Multiple Intelligences

By Tim Clapper

I am fortunate to be one of only a few thousand US Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) instructors conducting leadership and citizenship training in approximately 1600 units throughout the United States. I am even more fortunate, or I should say, my students are more fortunate that our curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of several types of learners. In the day of standard based assessment, one might shy away from conducting cooperative learning and differentiating their lessons to meet the needs of many students. However, many of us will argue that it is exactly what is needed to not only increase state examination scores but most importantly, to increase authentic and meaningful learning that the student may actually be able to apply.

So what is differentiated instruction and how do the multiple intelligences fit in to all this? Simply put, differentiated instruction is using the knowledge of how your students learn best and putting this together in a delivery package that reaches more students. Typically, the traditional classroom is filled with silence with the exception of the teacher delivering a lecture or other information that reaches one type of learner, the auditory learner. The instruction is also tailored to one segment of the class. The



teacher may direct their instruction around the student slower to pick up the task or to the common, middle ground segment. Others, often the students who are entirely lost, or the gifted students, found themselves left out or in a state of boredom.

In JROTC we use several tools to bring the classroom and instruction to the differentiated level. Of course, of first and foremost importance is instructor or teacher training. If the teacher does not have the willingness to pursue additional training to benefit their students, it will be difficult to enact differentiated training in the classroom. Professional development sessions should focus on several elements of student learning and teachers should be encouraged to seek higher degrees offering training in this area. Our JROTC higher headquarters mandates that their instructors complete the distance learning and brief resident training and encourages us to seek higher degrees to enable us to deliver the differentiated curriculum they have developed.



After instructor education, our plan is one that many others may seek to use themselves. It begins with assessing what the students know and also determine what type of learners they have in their classrooms. Here is where the teacher administers surveys and skills maps to determine the student's strengths and learning preferences. This is also the place where a huge component of differentiated instruction comes in and that is Gardner's multiple intelligences (MI). In JROTC we tend not to focus on one or all of the MI's but to address a few of them with each lesson. We also will not only let students perform in their area of MI strength, but also encourage them to step outside their comfort zone (another model of teaching and component of differentiated instruction) to develop their MI areas that may not be so strong. MI feeds well into the other strategies, tools, and concepts of differentiated instruction. Skits and role-playing can be authentic tools for teaching and demonstrating student knowledge. They also serve the visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic learning styles addressed by the Dunn and Dunn Model. Of course those familiar with MI can see all sorts of intelligences being used in role plays and skits including the interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily/kinesthetic, and visual/spatial. In fact, all of the MI's may be addressed depending on the subject, time, and resources available.

When teaching the principles of leadership to our JROTC cadets, skits put together which epitomize the principle being addressed tend to hold student's attention, assist with learning by giving them something to associate the material to, and help them learn how to apply the knowledge to something they can use. I found that I do not have to teach to the test because as many are aware, there is a difference between memorizing the data

and actually learning it and being able to apply it. After a lesson in leadership conducted in a differentiated learning environment, students are not only able to identify the principles but can apply them which is better than selecting possible responses on a standardized test. But, oh by the way, since they know the material, would it not make sense that they will do better on those tests as well? The answer is that they do!

High school dropout rates are said to be on the rise in a most unexpected segment of our student society; the gifted. Some could argue that there are not gifted students but instead students that are exceptional in certain areas of MI, notably linguistic and mathematical.

Regardless, in the typical classroom they may become bored with the instruction and lose faith.

The solution I hear often is to use them as assistant instructors, but this still does little to develop their intellect in that typical classroom setting. Using MI does offer solutions. Teachers may develop more challenging situations or place the student in a self-paced mode with advanced work that helps to develop the student's weaker intelligence area while addressing the subject being taught. Of course, this requires the teacher to know their students learning requirements as addressed earlier. (This photo is submitted by Tim Clapper.)



Think JROTC and the unknowing think of boot camp. This is furthest from the truth since we teach learning skills, leadership, and citizenship in an active learning environment. This is the basis of differentiated instruction and the multiple intelligences are a key and fun component of this great learning process.

Tim Clapper is a US Army JROTC instructor who has taught in New York City, Long Island, and Boston areas in both affluent and socioeconomic disadvantaged schools. He also has conducted several classes in cooperative learning techniques (CoLT) as an educational consultant. He is currently working on his final project for a Masters of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs where he expects to graduate May 2008. Tim can be reached at sfcbtvet@hotmail.com.

Let me hear from you!

This ASCD MI Network is designed to facilitate sharing and to offer support to educator using MI. As Tim's article indicates and as Branton Shearer's article in the last issue demonstrated, there is much that we can learn from one another. How about you? What can you share? *Zap me an email (trhoerr@newcityschool.org) if you are interested in helping others learn from your*

experiences.

This photo is from Pi Day -- March 13 (3.14) -- at my school. Our sixth grade celebrates Pi Day. Kids brought cakes and pies decorated with the Pi symbol and played Pi games. We also held a contest, as we do every year, to see how many consecutive digits of Pi can be memorized. **This year's winner, Julia, recited 221 consecutive digits of Pi!** I'm not sure which intelligence that is, but it's awfully impressive. This photo shows some of the class making the Pi symbol.



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This network is sponsored by ASCD, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Check out www.ascd.org for great information on workshops, conferences, books, magazines, and journals. If you get a chance, check out my bi-monthly column, "Principal Connection," in *Educational Leadership*.

Thanks to those who attended my session, "Multiple Intelligences: Focusing On Success," at the Annual ASCD Conference in New Orleans last month. There were 40 or so of us, talking about MI, looking at strategies to facilitate implementation and sharing ideas.

Let me hear from you! What questions, comments, or suggestions do you have?

TOM

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p.s. The pictures in this newsletter are from the New City School.