

The Multiple Intelligences of Reading and Writing

(A Book Review)

Orhan İyitoğlu

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Yildiz Technical University,
TURKEY.

orhanmka@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Armstrong's book "*The Multiple intelligences of Reading and Writing: Making the world come alive*" is reflecting the opposition to the emphasis of linguistic domain in the process of reading and learning. Instead, in a more comprehensive approach, the author informs the readers about how the acts of reading and writing are related to different parts of the brain through a discussion of the results of some relevant brain-based research studies. Based on a combination of the results of those studies and the theory of Multiple Intelligences, he suggests a rich array of ways including specific techniques, methods and literacy styles in regard to each of eight intelligences for a wide range of people to help learners be literate. He embodies this goal of touching on reading and writing of each of multiple intelligences in the following outline of his work:

1. Literacy, Multiple Intelligences, and the Brain
2. Coming to Grips with the Musculature of Words
3. Seeing the Visual Basis of Literacy
4. Grooving with the Rhythms of Language
5. Calculating the Logic of Words
6. Feeling the Emotional Power of Text
7. Relating to the Social Context of Literacy
8. Speaking Out About the Oral Basis of Reading and Writing
9. Opening the Book of Nature

REVIEW

There has been a long-lasting heavy reliance on the linguistic intelligence in the process of both teaching and learning. Valuing this intelligence above the other intelligences put forward by Gardner in his theory of Multiple Intelligences, a great amount of people ranging from the parents, teachers, administrators to educational psychologists, researchers and curriculum developers tended to regard it as a key of being literate in the modern world. Accepting the inevitable role of literacy in the social mobility from the lower to the upper classes, Armstrong suggests MI theory as a solution to donate people with the necessary skills of being literate. This solution takes the form of a more comprehensive approach of reading and writing embracing the results of some brain-related research studies. Hence, he indicates that reading and writing cannot be seen as rooted in only linguistic intelligence but different areas of brain take parts in the process of being literate, too. As a result of this, regarding it as a must to cover all aspects of intelligences since some certain ways of reading and writing will be helpful to certain types of learners, Armstrong adopts an overall approach to reading and writing and promises to appeal to a wide range of the concerned bodies

including teachers, learning disability specialists, speech and language pathologists, reading teachers, bilingual or ESOL educators, private tutors, literacy volunteers, parents.

Armstrong embodies his aim to touch on all of eight multiple intelligences in helping students be efficiently able to read and write in nine parts following an introduction part where he has provided the readers with justifications to his point of view. In this respect, he devotes the first chapter to not only brief explanation about the changes of the perception of literacy and the theory of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences but also a discussion of some research studies that analyze what take place in the brain during the process of reading and writing. He, in this way, indicates the bridges between different parts of the brain and literacy.

The remaining eight chapters of the book are based on the idea shown as a result of brain-related studies that not only linguistic but also all intelligences are involved in the process of reading and writing and therefore a set of different ways should be employed to appeal to all learners who have unique intelligence profiles. In that respect, these eight chapters cover the relationship between the acts of reading and writing and each of eight intelligences in Gardner's MI theory in an inductive way. In other words, the author enlightens the readers about the relation between the acts of reading and writing and each of eight intelligences delving into the smallest part of those acts as letters, words, sentences, texts and books. Armstrong also sheds light on these relations through the results of some research studies from such different fields as brain sciences, cognitive and developmental psychology, biographies of some creative people. The author devotes a specific part to deeply analyze those stated type of relations between the acts of reading and writing and each of bodily-kinesthetic, visual, musical, logical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, verbal and natural intelligences respectively. However, in each of these chapters taking those research-based relations into center, Armstrong mostly attempts to donate those who want to help differently intelligent individuals read and write. Embracing different methods, techniques that may feed those relations, suggestions of books or other literacy materials for them, literacy styles of those intelligently unique readers and writers, Armstrong expands knowledge at the end of the chapters and invites the body of concerned people to set out for the journey of *making the words come alive for all students*.