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Introduction

Howard Gardner's landmark study of multiple intelligences has opened many avenues for improving the process of learning and challenges teachers to explore new instructional practices no matter what the context of their schools. In her book, *If the Shoe Fits…: How to Develop Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* (1993), Carolyn Chapman provided hundreds of tools, techniques, structures, and strategies for facilitating the development of multiple intelligences in the classroom. Carolyn built on Gardner's assumption, "To my mind, a human intellectual competence must entail a set of skills of problem solving—enabling the individual *to resolve genuine problems or difficulties* that he or she encounters and, when appropriate, to create an effective product—and must also entail the potential for *finding or creating problems*—thereby laying the groundwork for acquisition of new knowledge" (Gardner, 1983, p. 60). Carolyn invited teachers to fit each student with the "best shoes" for exploring the experience of learning. She incorporated the spirit of Gardner's theory by selecting only those rich, varied, and practical instructional tools that usefully translate the theory into sound practice.

Most teachers who wish to integrate multiple intelligences theory into the classroom face a challenge that Carolyn did not address fully in her previous book—*assessment.* Because federal and state education agencies and the general public are calling for schools to be more accountable, assessing student performance is of great concern. Many school districts gear instruction toward standardized tests. Teachers are consequently pressured to tailor instruction to fit the tests. Though this practice contradicts what is known about the best teaching, learning, and assessment methods, the system speaks and the teachers must respond. In this environment, even the most committed teacher finds it difficult to use multiple intelligences-based instruction and the many alternative assessment practices that align with it.

"In our district," quoted the testing director of an affluent Long Island town, "we do *not* teach to the test." However, parents in the district discuss how teachers, pressured by administrators, subtly adjust the curriculum in the weeks preceding the state tests. Sample tests appear "just to familiarize students." Math tasks take on a repetitive character, "because we want the children to do well, and we know the types of questions that will be asked."

In an affluent Chicago suburb, test preparation went to extremes. Parents who noticed major score discrepancies among schools in the same district pushed for an investigation. The board found that a principal purposefully pressured teachers to get students ready for tests. Teachers were advised to match the curriculum to the predicted test questions, to encourage certain students to stay home during test week, and to coach others who were sure to do very well.

These extreme examples may be isolated. On the other hand, many conversations among teachers focus on what they are asked to do to prepare their students for tests. For example,