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Introduction:

Welcome to the MI Handbook! This handbook has emerged from my years of teaching through the Multiple Intelligences in a primary, multi-age classroom. I wrote this book to share with other teachers what I have learned. I will begin with a story about one of my students named Richard and then briefly introduce Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

RICHARD'S BREAKTHROUGH

"Mr. Campbell! Mr. Campbell!
Come over to the Archie Roach
Centre and listen to what Richard
taught us. "

"Okay, just a second."

"No—this is really good! You
have to come right now!"

I let Kristina finish the paragraph she was reading to me and moved to the classroom music centre. A group of four students—two year fives, a year four, and Richard, a year three—were working with a small keyboard and hand-made percussion instruments on what we called a two-part rhythm.

At the time, we were studying cells, the building blocks of life, and the way many cells in the body divide at the same time. To develop this concept musically, the students at the Archie Roach Centre were creating rhythmic accompaniment to lyrics about mitosis.

As I arrived, the group explained that Richard had taught them to play an intricate three-part rhythm. This lively and inviting composition was completely of the group's creation. Soon, the whole class (not easily distracted, since students are used to lots of daily activity) had gathered around. The piece went on for about four minutes. The class stood in awe. No group had composed such complex music and this was clearly beyond anything I had suggested or demonstrated. In fact, it was well beyond anything I knew how to do.



As the composition reached a crescendo and ended with a natural cadence, the class spontaneously erupted in applause. They all recognised good music created right in their own classroom.

Most remarkable was Richard's role in the development of the composition. Richard had difficulty in nearly all subject areas—he had been identified for pull-out programs and labelled a special education student. What was surprising about his role as primary composer at the Archie Roach Centre was that nobody, including Richard, himself, had known he was musically proficient. What we witnessed was the sudden unfolding of a unique musical talent.

Richard had had no musical training at home or at school other than his daily work at the Archie Roach Centre. After five months of working with music in the classroom, Richard discovered an inherent talent. His classmates, duly impressed, congratulated him. Their praise was a new experience for someone who had rarely been successful.

Over the next few days, Richard's musical accomplishments continued. Soon students from other classes were coming to listen. Interestingly, Richard himself began to change—he carried himself with more pride, and he began taking academic risks that he would have previously avoided.

By the end of the school year, Richard had grown in many ways. I ran into him one day in the middle of the summer holidays. He was exuberant as he told me he had his own keyboard and was “making music like mad.” This was not the same reticent, withdrawn, year three student I had met just ten months earlier.

Richard's story might be more dramatic than some, but it's not unusual in a Multiple Intelligences classroom. When students learn in diverse ways on a daily basis, they frequently experience breakthroughs. Such breakthroughs include identifying areas of strength, using strengths to overcome weaknesses and discovering a love of learning.

This book was written to assist teachers who are interested in working with the Multiple Intelligences in their classrooms. It is based on my seven years of experience teaching through the Multiple Intelligences. This book is written as a direct response to the teachers who have asked me “How do we start?” “What resources do we need?” And most commonly, “Do you have MI lesson plans to share?”

The MI Handbook, while certainly not everything you ever needed to know about the Multiple Intelligences, is a useful tool to help you with your efforts to teach to the strengths of each student. Good luck!

Bruce Campbell

PART I: PREPARING THE MI CLASSROOM

Part 1 answers the question: How do you start a Multiple Intelligences program?

In this section, you will find descriptions of several existing Multiple Intelligences classrooms so that you can identify a variety of ways to infuse MI into your classroom. I next describe my own classroom, which has been in place since 1987 and which has been replicated successfully in hundreds of other classrooms. Since teachers often request additional information on the seven learning centres in my classroom, I explain how they were named, and how I group students for centre work. Part I closes with suggesting steps to start a MI program, and by identifying some of the resources to gather. This initial section includes:

Diverse Multiple Intelligences Classroom Models

Daily Format in one MI Classroom

Multiple Intelligences Centres

Grouping Students for MI Centres or Co-operative Learning

Starting a Multiple Intelligences Program

Resources for an MI Classroom