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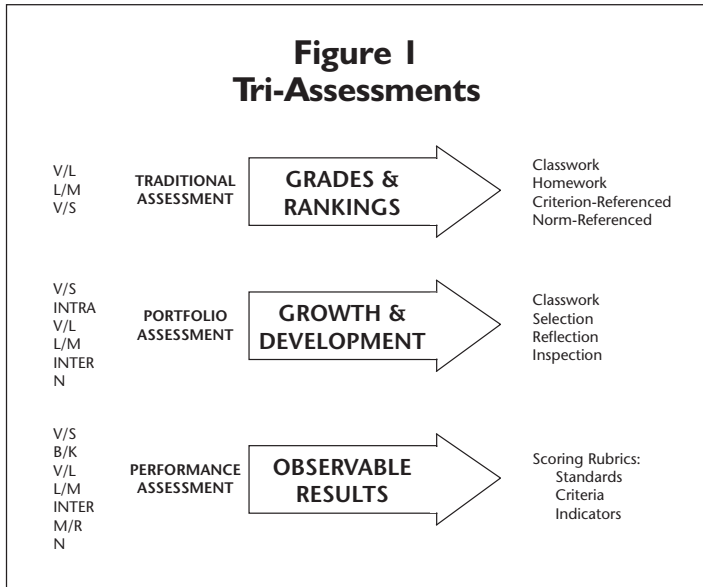
# Finding a Balance

How do teachers assess the totality of human potential, the development of the growth of the learner in all the interrelated realms? How do students reflectively acknowledge the changes and the development within themselves as they learn, grow, and progress? How do teachers authentically, yet practically, measure and assess?

Assessment is about measuring what one knows and can do and what one doesn't know and cannot do. Yet, if the true mission of teaching is to help students learn, the measurement must foster growth and development. It must not close the gates to opportunity but, rather, open the gateways of potential.

If this premise is accepted, assessment must be authentic, dynamic, fluid, and formative. That is not to say that normative, standardized evaluations have no place in the overall assessment scheme.

What is needed is a combination and balance of assessment practices. The tri-assessment model promotes using traditional assessments along with portfolio and performance assessments (see Figure 1). All three of these methods utilize Gardner's multiple intelligences theory and ensure both formative assessment of growth and development and normative evaluation of grades and rankings.



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## The Tri-Assessment Model

In the process of integrating content by developing significant themes and by threading life skills through subject matter, the lines begin to blur between disciplines. While some blurring of disciplines is desirable to create holistic, project-oriented learning, too much blurring causes concern about valid assessments, grades, and traditional discipline-based evaluations. In many cases, schools that use authentic learning and the multiple intelligences theory to move toward an integrated curriculum continue to use traditional assessment measures to determine grades, grade-point averages, and rankings. However, these measures don't always match active, holistic learning models.

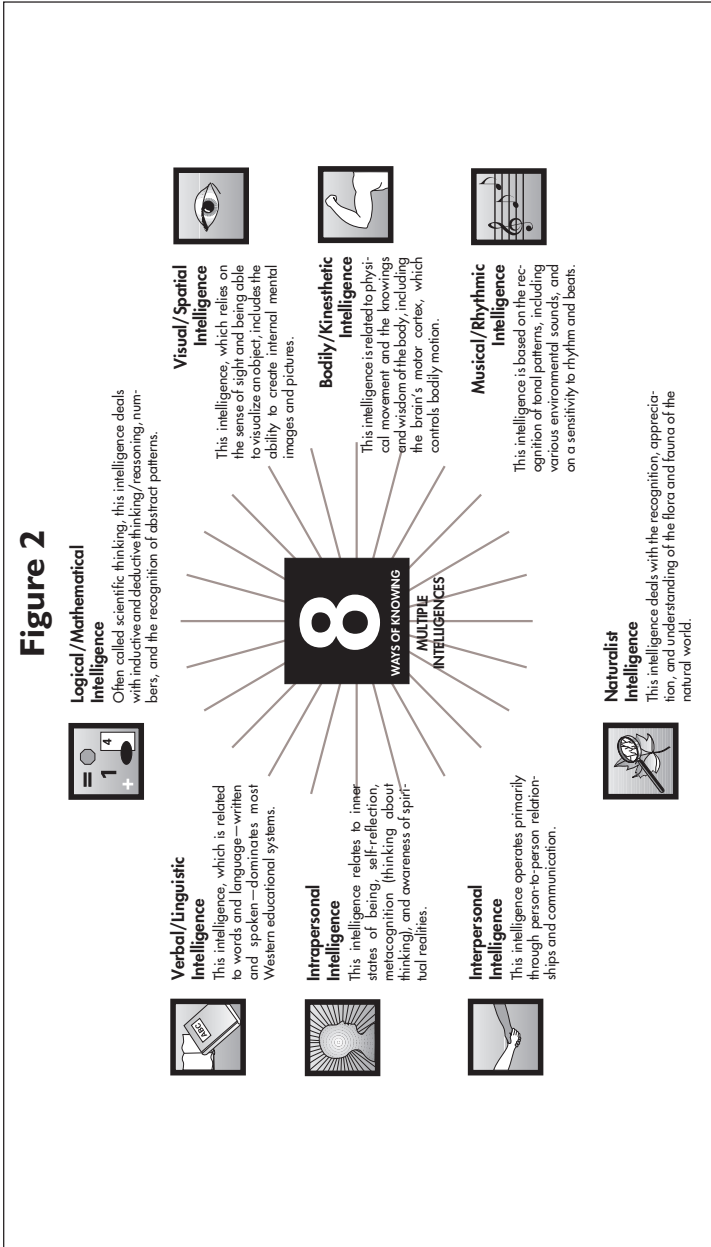
The tri-assessment model provides a reasonable compromise for teachers who are moving toward more authentic assessments but are reluctant to totally abandon more traditional measures. By combining portfolio and performance assessments with traditional assessments, a truer, more holistic look at students is permitted. Each assessment targets a focus as well as specific features that are practical and relevant to the total picture. Each assessment also targets multiple intelligences to assess a wider range of human potential.

### **Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory**

To tap into the full range of human potential, Gardner's eight intelligences seem not only appropriate, but, in fact, perfectly tailored as expressive tools for today's classrooms. Usually regarded as ways of knowing and learning, Gardner's intelligences are more than just receptive tools. Not only do students learn through the verbal, logical, visual, bodily, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist channels, but teachers can easily use the eight intelligences as tools of assessment and evaluation. Figure 2 briefly defines each of the eight intelligences.

### **Traditional**

Traditional assessment often focuses on grades, grade-point averages, and rankings. Included in traditional assessments are class work, homework, and criterion-referenced and standardized measures. In this situation, teachers teach and test students. Teachers retain control of assessment (see Figure 3). Typically, traditional assessments tap primarily the verbal/linguistic and the logical/mathematical intelligences, although the visual/spatial may also be included (see Figure 4).



From *Eight Ways of Teaching: The Artistry of Teaching with Multiple Intelligences*, 3rd ed., by David Lazear. © 1999 by SkyLight Training and Publishing Inc. Reprinted with permission of SkyLight Training and Publishing Inc., Arlington Heights, IL.

### Figure 3 Traditional Assessment

You Teach Me and Test Me

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### Figure 4 Traditional Assessment: A Checklist

#### Multiple Intelligence

Interpersonal  
Verbal/Linguistic

Verbal/Linguistic  
Logical/Mathematical  
Visual/Spatial

Verbal/Linguistic  
Logical/Mathematical  
Visual/Spatial

Verbal/Linguistic  
Logical/Mathematical  
Visual/Spatial

#### Classwork?

- Participation? \_\_\_\_\_
- Quality? \_\_\_\_\_
- Frequency? \_\_\_\_\_
- Written assignments? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Homework?

- Is it done? On time? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is it correct? Accurate? \_\_\_\_\_
- Quality? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Criterion-Referenced Tests and Quizzes?

- Type? \_\_\_\_\_
- Weight? \_\_\_\_\_
- Accuracy? \_\_\_\_\_
- Completed? \_\_\_\_\_
- Quality? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Norm-Referenced Tests?

- Class rank \_\_\_\_\_
- School rank \_\_\_\_\_
- District rank \_\_\_\_\_
- State/national/international  
rank \_\_\_\_\_

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