



Primary Education-II

To Enrich Primary Education Of Bangladesh

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MI theory has instructional significance of great importance. Seven intelligences can at least provide seven ways to teach topic. But it provides more by using core operations in combination. It provides ample opportunities to open up learning windows of the children. Use of seven intelligences in teaching-learning help children for all round development to make them generally fit for the culture. It offers to develop children as per one's innate tendencies and proclivities. Even if, a child may not be particularly gifted in an intelligence, and yet, because of particular combination or blend of skills can cover up some gaps to make her/him adept in particular vocational or avocational activity. In this way, a child who is "at risk" in one intelligence can be so developed to bring him to "at promise" level in that intelligence. Teaching through the use of multiple intelligences help the teacher to reach every child of the class and everybody gets opportunities to use intelligences in which they are strong as well as weak. Instruction through the use of activities relating to seven intelligences helps individualization of learning. It helps in the blooming of every child.

Multiple ways of teaching and learning (MWTL) is the first order derivative of multiple intelligences theory to be used for classroom instruction. MWTL takes seven intelligences of human child as seen through. MI theory into account and constructs the method of teaching considering the relevant operations of the intelligence. Say for teaching history to a particular class, it can employ some core operations from verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical for a portion and for another bodily-kinesthetic and rhythmic-musical through dramatisation. Say for mathematics, for certain sums or portion of it, the teacher through MWTL can employ any of the operations relating to logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, inter-personal and intra-personal singularly or in combination. Thus MWTL approach to teaching provides scope to use any of the intelligences singularly or in combination having opportunity to use, manipulate, sharpen and explore every possible human abilities, both mental

and physical. MWTL is an all comprehensive teaching method which knowingly uses from the profile or spectrum of 7-intelligences as described by Howard Gardner. However, in this background the chief characteristics of MWTL are—

- (1) it offers multiple entry points for the children in teaching a particular topic,
- (2) it seeks to set goals to be achieved through the manipulation and exploration of the intelligences.
- (3) it sets activities to trigger one or more intelligences to ensure complete understanding of the topic, and
- (4) through on going assessment it goes on evaluating the effectiveness of teaching-learning endeavor.

MWTL based on MI theory is the enrichment intervention for the development of spectrum of intelligences in human child. As method of teaching it is interesting both to teacher and student. Everybody can practice with intelligence or intelligences in one's own area of proclivity and sharpen those intelligences where one is weak. It helps in the total development of the child. The method is specifically important for early childhood education to lay required biopsychological foundation for future development. For childhood education it compensates for the deficiencies of the earlier stage. Thus, for the primary schools of Bangladesh, if MWTL is applied with right enthusiasm by professionally equipped teachers, it will at least produced new quanta of children who will be able to cope with new technologies and advances of the modern world with internalization of all virtues. Accordingly, within three decades country will be able to produce swarm of people having right knowledge, skill and attitude to match with advanced world.

Introduction and Diffusion of MWTL in the Primary Schools of Bangladesh

Historically speaking, Bangladesh is an educationally backward country. It is heading rapidly to become neo-literate society. Traditionally, quality of teaching in school is impoverished. The present competency based primary curriculum demands professionally enriched

teacher with high motivation. But, our primary teachers are professional people with meagre education and short base initial training. They are culturally prone to teach in rote, ritualised and conventional fashion such that children either spew back what they have been taught to stay non-reactive. Teachers are not informed, energetic and thoughtful. They do not actually know how to teach for knowing, doing, thinking, and linking. Government of Bangladesh is at least keen to improve instruction in primary school to raise the intellectual and social quality of its population. It is the good office of UNICEF-Bangladesh who came forward to introduce the concept of multiple intelligences (MI) theory to engage both teachers and children for primary school effectiveness. It was in 1993, Ms. Jean Houston, an UNICEF hired US scholar ran a number of workshops with staff members of UNICEF-

Bangladesh, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) of the government of Bangladesh, National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), Primary Training Institute (PTI), National Academy of Primary Education (NAPE) and other personnel of NGO's. It oriented them with MI theory along

with its instructional implications. The participants could begin to understand that every child has at least seven intelligence which can be sharpened with the exercise of the appropriate core-operations. To the

participants, the nature of ability relating to each intelligence and how to develop it in children was clear. In 1994, Ms Elizabeth Zinck Rothenberger from US on invitation conducted 3 follow up workshops on Multiple Ways of Teaching-Learning (MWTL) based on MI theory with parti-

pation from PMED, DPE, NCTB, PTI, Primary schools and NGO. Through those workshops it was decided that some experimental study should be conducted to see if MWTL can enhance quality of teaching in primary schools of Bangladesh. Accordingly, the job of conducting study with MWTL in primary schools was put on NCTB and UNICEF-Bangladesh. In 1995, NCTB se-

lected five schools in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur districts as experimental school where MWTL was to be put as experimental variable. Other schools using teaching methods other than MWTL were the control of the study. Teachers of 5 selected schools were trained to teach with MWTL as teaching method. With supervision from NCTB specialists and UNESCO consultant they began teaching the class I children with MWTL. The outcomes of the school

based activities were encouraging. Many positive changes in teaching-learning and in the classroom environment were evident within a couple of months. Teachers were found to be more free with children, active in preparing lesson on the basis of MWTL and enjoying teaching.

The children were found to be engaged in taking notes, role-playing, observing events, telling and listening, doing and exploring, singing and dancing and estimating etc. Learning was enjoyable, cathartic, engaging and acquisitive. It led them towards developments of useful abilities. Teachers were enthusiastic in preparing teaching aids and lesson plans. They constantly were involved in workshops to refine their understanding of MWTL.

They, by the end of 1995, made exhibition of teaching aids they used in one of the five experimental schools. Achievement of the children of the experimental schools was compared with the children of schools selected as control. The gain was in favour of the experimental schools.

Through NCTB-UNICEF Collaboration manual for the training of teachers were prepared with the help of the teachers and experts. By the end of 1995, Ms. Elizabeth Rothenberger visited Bangladesh for the second time on invitation by UNICEF-Bangladesh to see MWTL activities and training workshops on it. The field tried training manu-

als were finalised following her suggestions. With success of the experiment of 1995, government decided to introduce MWTL in some of its primary schools to raise the quality of teaching in it. (to be continued)