

LESSON 5-1

We're All Right, We're All Bright

Overview

Students read stories about famous people who represent each of the eight major intelligences and analyze the people's areas of strength. Then they assess their own range of intelligences.

Cognitive Objective

Students will recognize that there are many different kinds of intelligence.

Affective Objective

Students will assess and identify their own intellectual strengths.

Interactive Objective

Students will work in small groups to analyze stories, then identify and acknowledge the variety of strengths represented among members of the class.

Preparation

- ▶ You've already divided the class into eight groups and made copies of the stories, one for each member of the group.
- ▶ On chart paper, make headings for the charts used in this lesson ("Biographies" and "Eight Intelligences in Class"). For each of the eight intelligences, list at

least one student who is strong in each area so you can help the class fill out the chart. Keep the list to yourself.

- ▶ Copy one sheet of intelligence symbols for each student.

Material

1. markers
2. glue
3. scissors

+ "Consider This" from the anthology
copies of biographies from the anthology

TEACHING THE LESSON

Follow up on community service commitments and personal challenges.

Ask for quick reports on the students' contacts with their Adult Allies and progress on their challenges.

Introduction

Read aloud to the class "Consider This." It contains examples of people who succeeded when others thought they would fail.

As you can see from this story, many very successful people were mistakenly considered to be dumb when they were young. It's partly because adults

often had a limited idea of what it was to be smart. There are many different ways to be intelligent, at least eight of them, in fact. I'm going to give each group a story about someone who is especially intelligent. As you read the stories, I'd like you to pay special attention to the ways that these people are smart. Then we'll talk about these different kinds of intelligence.

Students Read and Analyze Biographies

Give each group one biography to read and analyze. Don't mention the specific terms for the eight major intelligences yet. You'll bring that in later. Each group analyzes and discusses the biography, considering the following that you write on the board:

- In what ways is this person especially smart?
- Did this person have problems in school? If so, what kind?
- Why do you think this was so?

Ask each group to be prepared to give a two-minute oral summary of this person's life.

Introduce the Eight Major Intelligences and Chart Examples from Biographies

Note: It is possible that students will want to classify some stories under intelligences different from the ones indicated in the following text. Point out that what they are looking for is the *dominant* intelligence. We all have *all* the intelligences, but in various combinations.

Allow time for students to read and discuss in their small groups.

Now that you've had a chance to read about a particular person, let's discuss the stories and the ways the people are intelligent.

Howard Gardner is a scientist who has developed a definition of intelligence. He says intelligence is the ability to do three things: solve real-life problems; think of new problems to solve so people can create new knowledge; and make something or offer a service that is valuable in a society.

With that definition, Dr. Gardner studied many people and found that there are at least eight different kinds of intelligence. As we talk about each intelligence, you'll tell me which of the biographies describes someone who's especially strong in that particular intelligence.

The verbal/linguistic intelligence involves understanding the sounds of words, how they go together, what they mean, and how to use them to communicate, entertain yourself, and to get your message across. Which story was about someone whose strongest intelligence was this kind? S. E. Hinton. Will that group please summarize her story? What are her outstanding skills? Did she have any trouble in school? What kind? What do you think was the reason? Fill in the chart as the students answer. Some students may suggest Maya Angelou for this one, but point out that she has an even more important kind of intelligence, one that made it possible for her to use her verbal intelligence effectively.

The logical/mathematical intelligence involves being able to reason, problem solve, and understand patterns. It is used by scientists, mathematicians, and people such as Sherlock Holmes. Which story is about someone in whom this intelligence is dominant? Stephen Hawking. Will that group please summarize the story? Ask the other questions and fill in the chart.

These two are the kinds of intelligence that most people, and even many teachers, think about when they say someone is smart. There are others, though.