

**“Kid Smarts”** (a.k.a. Multiple Intelligences)  
**They’re not just for Language Arts!**

In this last issue we’ll wrap up the “kid smarts” by examining the final three: **visual/spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal**. Remember, all kids are smart! It is up to us to determine not how smart they are, but how they are smart. In Einstein’s words, “Everyone is a genius, but if we judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will forever consider itself stupid!” If you didn’t survey your class this year to uncover their dominant “smart”, I invite you to begin next year by doing that. You’ll be delighted to see how often you can use the “smarts” for instruction all year. It will also help you to differentiate your group work, and you’ll be encouraged to learn that you’re already doing some of it!

***Visual/Spatial***

**Religion/Social Studies:**



- Flow charts and diagrams of time periods help students understand time relationships and sequence of historical eras. Could students create such charts themselves after studying a chapter or time period?
- Ask them to talk to or interview a historical or religious figure in their imagination.
- After studying a period of history (Church History included), they could paint or draw a small mural of events during that time.
- Let them go backwards in time to envision what it was like “back then”. Then go forward in time to imagine what the future will be like. A Future Cities project would apply here.
- Once they’ve seen a map of a country, challenge them to draw the map from memory. They could also make the map out of clay and supply physical features.
- Allow time for appreciating a culture through its visual arts. If there’s time, they might make a decoration from that culture or country to display in the classroom.
- Have some fun with the Western Schism of the 15<sup>th</sup> century by letting the class draw a comic strip or story board of the only era in the Church when there were three popes at one time!

### **Mathematics:**

- Drawing becomes more specific and demanding for math, so these students will be precise in drawing 3D shapes, using tangrams or other manipulatives. Let them demonstrate the four basic operations with those manipulatives.
- Their spatial sense will foster good estimates of measurements by sight and touch.
- Older students will benefit from color coding their math rules for geometry. Have them make a small set of study cards in one color for area rules: one side of the card contains only capital **A** and a drawing of the shape; the other side contains the rule in the same color. Total surface area can be done in the same fashion but in a second color. Volume should be in a third color. They can do a flash card drill with a study buddy. One partner shows the shape, the other says the rule. For the next round, do the opposite.

### **Science/Health:**

- After students view something through a microscope, ask them to draw what they see. Though these learners might not be artists, they have a keen eye for detail.
- During a health lesson on the food pyramid, have them create posters/flyers on healthy eating habits.
- As part of the study of Linnaean classification, students could create a collage of a particular category (e.g. mammals, vertebrates/non-vertebrates).
- Have them observe, either first hand or through pictures, patterns that occur in the world around them; then draw those patterns. There's a math connection here!

### **Music/Fine Arts/Phys. Ed.:**

- While listening to a piece of music, students close their eyes and imagine a sculpture suggested by the music. Afterwards they make it in clay.
- Again with eyes closed, students imagine entering a painting and describe the mood and surroundings.
- While watching a video clip of a dance from another culture, student try to put themselves in the dancers' shoes.

- If they are preparing to perform a play, they imagine then draw the sets for various scenes.
- Students can sketch out some physical feats: gymnastics, football plays etc.



### ***Interpersonal***

#### **Religion/Social Studies:**

- If verbal/linguistic children have written a script involving an important religious/historical figure, have the interpersonal students role play it.
- History is written from the viewpoint of the winner! In the style of a debate, challenge the class to make a case for different perspectives on a war. Don't exclude the Crusades in Religion!
- In the same vein, guide them to discuss the impact of key religious/historical decisions on today's world (e.g. The Monroe Doctrine or the doctrine of the pope's infallibility).
- When you are plowing through a particularly obtuse chapter, assign the class to do a "jigsaw" study of it. Count the students off 1 through 4. Gather all the ones in a corner of the room, the twos in another etc. Each group reads and masters an assigned section, talks about it and rehearses how to teach it when they return to their original groups.
- Invite the class to "pass over" into another time period or person's life and describe feelings, thoughts etc.
- These are the students in any subject who can enact an interview with a famous person. So if those who do the writing are too reluctant to perform, you can always count on these students or your BK children.

#### **Mathematics:**

- Put interpersonal students in a group to help solve *and explain* complex story problems. Younger students could draw the explanations.
- If these students are above average, use *each-one-teach-one* for new processes or operations. You teach first, then they can paraphrase/explain to a partner.
- Challenge teams to construct and solve problems which link many math operations.

### **Science/Health:**

- Can these students create alternate campaign slogans for “Just say NO” using new strategies?
- Assign teams for lab experiments.
- Assign controversial health topics to teams who then write team position papers and present them in class.
- Have students research and discuss *before and after* of scientific paradigm shifts (e.g. before and after the discovery of the polio vaccine).

### **Music/Fine Arts/Phys. Ed.:**

- If the class has learned a dance from another country in Social Studies, ask them to perform it in class. If this has not been done in Social Studies, this is the perfect time to teach it and surprise the Social Studies teacher!
- Assign teams to decide on a sculpture which they build out of clay. (It can be an original piece or they may replicate an existing piece.)
- Teach rounds, harmony and counter-melody songs.
- Use peer coaching teams for individual projects.
- Have students work in pairs to improve sports skills.
- Ask for interpersonal volunteers to make up a game and explain it in phys. ed. class.



### **Intrapersonal**

### **Religion/Social Studies:**

- Advocate the keeping of a journal titled “Questions in my life that religion/history might be able to answer”. Another option is a *feelings diary* as they read about current events.

- Teach the construction of a PMI chart (**P**lus, **M**inus, **I**nteresting) for religious/historical decisions.
- Allow students to reflect on which religious or historical figure they would want to be, and include the *why* of their choice.
- After a lesson containing “things that didn’t go well”, ask the students to reflect on their own mistakes from the past that they won’t repeat. Teachers should be humble enough to admit mistakes from their lives as well.
- Demonstrate some “awareness techniques” to reduce stress. We know that, more and more, students come to our classrooms emotionally overwhelmed. These students in particular tend to keep emotions inside, and may benefit from things like: breathing exercises, observing their thoughts while not judging them, distinguishing between energizing emotions (love, compassion, joy) and depleting emotions (anger, worry, disappointment); and trying to let go of the latter. These techniques can be included in the various prayer forms we teach: meditation, being part of a Scripture scene and talking to Jesus.
- All children love stories, but this one will appeal to the intrapersonal ones in your room. As a young lad, Frederick Douglas pursued his education by himself. He ran errands in his neighborhood quickly in order to have time to beg a reading lesson from white boys. He brought bread to feed them and got more important bread in return: knowledge. Encourage children to tell stories of their family members who learned a skill, or overcame obstacles.
- Another engaging story involves the SS St. Louis, a refugee ship during WW II. It carried 1,000 Jews escaping Nazi Germany and sailed toward Cuba. When Cuba refused entry, the captain requested permission to dock in the U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt ignored the request, so the St. Louis sailed the Atlantic until finally the captain received permission from four European countries to disembark the refugees. Most survived, but many were sent to the death camps. Since these intrapersonal students express emotions well, ask them to reflect on American moral responsibility concerning this story.
- Ask: *How would you be different if you had grown up in another culture?*

### **Mathematics:**

- Challenge the students to track the thinking patterns which they use to solve various kinds of math problems.

- See if they can bridge the gap between math and real life.
- As you would in reading, use guided imagery to visualize story problems.
- Periodically ask them to self-assess their strengths/weaknesses in math.

**Science/Health:**

- Assign a “Be Healthy” project: for one month, students design meal programs and exercise plans. At the end of the month they evaluate the plans: Did I implement them? Was I consistent? Do I feel healthier? Would I continue?
- Use some of the “awareness techniques” above for achieving relaxation and a good night sleep.

**Music/Fine Arts/Phys. Ed.:**

- Have them imagine themselves as each character in a play.
- Ask them to observe how various kinds of music affect their mood.
- Supply clay for them to sculpt a representation of their moods.
- Using a mirror, let students draw themselves from different angles or in various moods.
- Ask for responses on how different physical exercises make the students feel.
- The deep breathing and relaxation methods above serve as a good cool down after exercise. They are also useful in calming children who are “on the verge”.

***That’s it for this year. Have a restful and safe summer. God bless all you do for your students. We’re fortunate to have you in Catholic education!***

