Using Multiple Intelligences to Learn About Grief and Loss

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After the presentation, participants will be able to:

- explain the different multiple intelligences
- identify concepts relating to loss
- describe how to teach about loss using the multiple intelligences.

“[…T]he process of grieving is complicated and personal. Just as there is no right way to die, there is no right way to grieve” (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2002, p. 464). In addition, just as there are many ways to work through grief and loss, there are also many ways to teach about grief and loss. The conceptual framework of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) can help educators in developing different ways of teaching about this area. Gardner (1993) suggested that individuals learn in different ways; there are eight intelligences (or ways of learning): verbal skills, mathematical skills, spatial skills, bodily-kinesthetic skills, musical skills, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, and naturalistic skills. Although everyone has each intelligence, an individual may be stronger in some intelligences than others (Santrock, 2005, p. 430) and many individuals learn using a combination of two or more intelligences.

When teaching about loss, educators need to keep in mind that there likely are a variety of multiple intelligences represented among a group of learners. Similarly, educators need to be cognizant of the fact that we tend to teach from our strengths including our preferred multiple intelligences which may or may not match those of our audience. For example, some individuals may be able to better learn about and/or address their grief and loss through small group activities (interpersonal intelligence) while others may want to use journaling (intrapersonal intelligence), dance (kinesthetic intelligence), or art (spatial intelligence). By teaching the learners using a variety of intelligences, individuals will be better able to teach others about loss as well as deal more effectively with their grief and loss.

This presentation will be a combination of lecture, small group work, and individual work. Participants will use an inventory to identify their preferred multiple intelligences; individuals will also learn how to use such a tool to develop ways to teach others about loss. During the last part of the presentation, participants work in groups to explain how they would teach about a specific concept regarding loss using one or more of the multiple intelligences.

References

Part I
Complete each section by placing a “1” next to each statement you feel accurately describes you. If you do not identify with a statement, leave the space provided blank. Then total the column in each section.

Section 1
_____ I enjoy categorizing things by common traits
_____ Ecological issues are important to me
_____ Classification helps me make sense of new data
_____ I enjoy working in a garden
_____ I believe preserving our National Parks is important
_____ Putting things in hierarchies makes sense to me
_____ Animals are important in my life
_____ My home has a recycling system in place
_____ I enjoy studying biology, botany and/or zoology
_____ I pick up on subtle differences in meaning
_____ TOTAL for Section 1

Section 2
_____ I easily pick up on patterns
_____ I focus in on noise and sounds
_____ Moving to a beat is easy for me
_____ I enjoy making music
_____ I respond to the cadence of poetry
_____ I remember things by putting them in a rhyme
_____ Concentration is difficult for me if there is background noise
_____ Listening to sounds in nature can be very relaxing
_____ Musicals are more engaging to me than dramatic plays
_____ Remembering song lyrics is easy for me
_____ TOTAL for Section 2

Section 3
_____ I am known for being neat and orderly
_____ Step-by-step directions are a big help
_____ Problem solving comes easily to me
_____ I get easily frustrated with disorganized people
_____ I can complete calculations quickly in my head
_____ Logic puzzles are fun
_____ I can't begin an assignment until I have all my “ducks in a row”
_____ Structure is a good thing
_____ I enjoy troubleshooting something that isn't working properly
_____ Things have to make sense to me or I am dissatisfied
_____ TOTAL for Section 3
Section 4
_____ It is important to see my role in the “big picture” of things
_____ I enjoy discussing questions about life
_____ Religion is important to me
_____ I enjoy viewing art work
_____ Relaxation and meditation exercises are rewarding to me
_____ I like traveling to visit inspiring places
_____ I enjoy reading philosophers
_____ Learning new things is easier when I see their real world application
_____ I wonder if there are other forms of intelligent life in the universe
_____ It is important for me to feel connected to people, ideas and beliefs
_____ TOTAL for Section 4

Section 5
_____ I learn best interacting with others
_____ I enjoy informal chat and serious discussion
_____ The more the merrier
_____ I often serve as a leader among peers and colleagues
_____ I value relationships more than ideas or accomplishments
_____ Study groups are very productive for me
_____ I am a “team player”
_____ Friends are important to me
_____ I belong to more than three clubs or organizations
_____ I dislike working alone
_____ TOTAL for Section 5

Section 6
_____ I learn by doing
_____ I enjoy making things with my hands
_____ Sports are a part of my life
_____ I use gestures and non-verbal cues when I communicate
_____ Demonstrating is better than explaining
_____ I love to dance
_____ I like working with tools
_____ Inactivity can make me more tired than being very busy
_____ Hands-on activities are fun
_____ I live an active lifestyle
_____ TOTAL for Section 6

Section 7
_____ Foreign languages interest me
_____ I enjoy reading books, magazines and web sites
_____ I keep a journal
_____ Word puzzles like crosswords or jumbles are enjoyable
_____ Taking notes helps me remember and understand
_____ I faithfully contact friends through letters and/or e-mail
Section 7

_____ It is easy for me to explain my ideas to others
_____ I write for pleasure
_____ Puns, anagrams and spoonerisms are fun
_____ I enjoy public speaking and participating in debates
_____ TOTAL for Section 7

Section 8

_____ My attitude effects how I learn
_____ I like to be involved in causes that help others
_____ I am keenly aware of my moral beliefs
_____ I learn best when I have an emotional attachment to the subject
_____ Fairness is important to me
_____ Social justice issues interest me
_____ Working alone can be just as productive as working in a group
_____ I need to know why I should do something before I agree to do it
_____ When I believe in something I give more effort towards it
_____ I am willing to protest or sign a petition to right a wrong
_____ TOTAL for Section 8

Section 9

_____ I can visualize ideas in my mind
_____ Rearranging a room and redecorating are fun for me
_____ I enjoy creating my own works of art
_____ I remember better using graphic organizers
_____ I enjoy all kinds of entertainment media
_____ Charts, graphs and tables help me interpret data
_____ A music video can make me more interested in a song
_____ I can recall things as mental pictures
_____ I am good at reading maps and blueprints
_____ Three dimensional puzzles are fun
_____ TOTAL for Section 9

Part II
Now record your totals from each section:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part III
Now determine your intelligence profile!
Key:
Section 1 – This reflects your Naturalist strength
Section 2 – This suggests your Musical strength
Section 3 – This indicates your Logical strength
Section 4 – This illustrates your Existential strength
Section 5 – This shows your Interpersonal strength
Section 6 – This tells your Kinesthetic strength
Section 7 – This indicates your Verbal strength
Section 8 – This reflects your Intrapersonal strength
Section 9 – This suggests your Visual strength

Remember:
   Everyone has all the intelligences!
   You can strengthen an intelligence!
   This inventory is meant as a snapshot in time – it can change!
   M.I. is meant to empower, not label people!

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Intelligences</th>
<th>People with a high degree of this intelligence:</th>
<th>Teaching Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Verbal / Linguistic**| • Express themselves well through language  
• Use words effectively whether speaking or writing  
• High reading comprehension                                        | • Written reports  
• Presentations  
• Essays  
• Reading assignments  
• Storytelling                                                        |
| **Logical / Mathematical** | • Are very good with numbers  
• Understand various patterns  
• Patterns include thought, number, visual, color, etc.               | • Analogies  
• Metaphors & similes  
• Quantitative tests  
• Data analysis                                                          |
| **Musical / Rhythmic**  | • Understand rhythm, melody, pitch & tones  
• Express themselves through rhythm, music or dance  
• Sensitive to sounds in the environment                           | • Listening to music  
• Comparing/contrasting music & rhythms  
• Listening walks  
• Use rap or songs                                                        |
| **Visual / Spatial**    | • Think in terms of images & pictures  
• Good at mentally representing ideas  
• Able to see the world accurately                                      | • Use of art & varying art media  
• Graphic organizers  
• Charts & graphs  
• Photography                                                            |
| **Bodily / Kinesthetic**| • Use their bodies to express their ideas & feelings  
• Tuned into their own body  
• Active learners & learn best by doing                                 | • Movement activities  
• Field trips  
• Activities to “walk in another’s shoes”                                |
| **Interpersonal**       | • Deep understanding of what motivates other people  
• Good at understanding other people’s needs  
• Work well with teams & communicate well with others                   | • Group discussion  
• Small group tasks  
• Group process  
• Team work                                                               |
| **Intrapersonal**       | • Strong sense of self & ability to examine own thoughts & feelings  
• Often like to work alone. Introspective, often dreamers  
• Equipped to make personal decisions about their lives                  | • Journaling  
• Reflecting  
• Opportunities for introspection  
• Individual tasks                                                        |
| **Naturalist**          | • Love the outdoors & strong connection with the environment  
• Sensitive to the needs of plants & animals  
• High appreciation of the natural world                               | • Nature walks  
• Comparisons to the environment                                           |
| **Existential**         | • Think on a universal level  
• Compare self in relation to the universe  
• Ponder deep questions—Who are we? Where do we come from? Why do we die? | • Philosophizing  
• Essential questions  
• Spiritual comparisons                                                    |

(Campbell, 1997; Gardner, 1983; 1991; 2000).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligences</th>
<th>Teaching Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical-logical</td>
<td>• Research statistics on specific types of diseases or losses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Research costs associated with a funeral</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Assess Kubler-Ross’s five stages of grief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal-linguistic</td>
<td>• Write a poem or story about grief and loss</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Read a children’s book</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Read excerpts aloud of others’ experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatial</td>
<td>• Make a documentary about a person or pet</td>
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<td>• Sketch/draw feelings related to grief or loss</td>
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<td>• Create a collage about the loss</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use clay to sculpt feelings of loss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>• Listen to different types/genres of songs about grief/loss</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Research lyrics of songs pertaining to grief or loss</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Write a song about death, grief or loss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>• Journal about the loss</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Allow for silent reflection time</td>
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<td>• Focusing and concentration exercises</td>
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<td>• Set goals for the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bodily-Kinesthetic</td>
<td>• Act out feelings through drama and role playing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Express feelings through yoga</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Do a creative movement to a song pertaining to grief or loss</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Do the sensory deprivation activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>• Hold large group discussions and sharing of personal experiences in loss</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Define loss/grief in small group discussions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Brainstorm available resources to address grief and loss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naturalistic</td>
<td>• Research family health history</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Go on a walk to spend time examining nature</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Discuss the ‘circle of life’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “The Life Clock”*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>• Watch a video about grief or loss like “Tuesdays with Morrie” or “Old Yeller”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Discuss questions like “Who am I?” “Where did I come from?” “What’s my purpose in life?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Learn about death/grief/loss rituals in other cultures’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Multiple Intelligences Lesson Plans

Math-Logic
How can I include numbers, classification, critical-thinking, and calculations?

Verbal-Linguistic
How can I include reading, writing, and speaking?

Spatial
How can I include visuals, colors, art, graphs, and pictures?

Musical
How can I include music, sounds, rhythms, and dance?

Intrapersonal
How can I include private learning time and student choice?

Bodily-Kinesthetic
How can I include movement, exercise, drama, and crafts?

Naturalist
How can I include the natural environment, observations, and data collection?

Interpersonal
How can I include group work, peer sharing, and discussion?

Existential
How can I include philosophizing and spiritual comparisons?
Suggested Juvenile Books on Grief and Dying


Da Capo

Take the used-up heart like a pebble
And throw it far out.

 Soon there is nothing left.
 Soon the last ripple exhausts itself
 in the weeds.

 Returning home, slice carrots, onions, celery.
 Glaze them in oil before adding
 the lentils, water, and herbs.

 Then the roasted chestnuts, a little pepper, the salt.
 Finish with goat cheese and parsley. Eat.
 You may do this, I tell you, it is permitted.
 Begin again the story of your life.