

CONDUCTING THE EDUCATION DEBATE

Getting Organized: Consult the eight areas of intelligence in Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences (MI) theory on page 297 of your textbook. Can you identify your learning style (see question 2, on page 307 of your textbook)? Does your learning style vary with what you learn? For example, do you learn differently in physics or math than you do in chemistry or physical education? Gardner considered a ninth intelligence, which he called the spiritual intelligence (see pages 308-309 of your textbook). Would you add spiritual intelligence to your learning-styles inventory?

Create Teams: Conduct research on the arguments for and against MI theory, and then divide the class into opposing teams: Pro and Con. Within each team, appoint a leader(s) for the Government (the Board of Education's trustees—side proposition promoting the motion/policy) and the opposition. Usually, the leaders open the debate with their speeches, which the moderator could limit to five minutes each.

Choose Moderators: Appoint two students to act as moderators during the debate, alternating so they can also participate in the discussion. The moderator will present the motion under debate. Moderators must remain neutral, recognizing speakers who raise their hands and giving equal opportunity to those on both sides. Moderators may also ask frequent speakers to hold off, giving others an opportunity to speak.

Frame the Debate: The motion must be an affirmative statement to be arguable, and the Pro side must ensure in their opening speech that they define the motion so as to generate good discussion. For instance: *Be it resolved that the ... District School Board will offer classes to separate groupings of students, based on the categories in Gardner's MI theory.*

The Pro side must then define the motion to mean something practical enough to be debateable, such as using sets of learning styles to tailor courses for distinct groups (e.g., a history-through-film course for visual learners, an outdoor-education course in geography for bodily-kinaesthetic naturalists) instead of offering eight varieties of every subject (e.g., intrapersonal geography, musical geography, etc.; bodily-kinaesthetic math, etc.).

Be it resolved that the ... District School Board will offer opportunities within every course for differentiated instruction and assessment, drawing on the categories in Gardner's MI theory.

Notice the difference in how the theory is being implemented in the second motion, and how the Pro side would need to frame the debate around tailoring instruction and assessment to the needs of a diverse or heterogeneous group instead of a supposedly more homogenous one.

Be it resolved that the ... District School Board will offer separate classes to boys and girls, as well as differentiate instruction according to Gardner's MI theory.

Here we draw on question 1. b) on page 297 of your textbook to widen the debate. See Making Connections on pages 298-299 of your textbook to widen it further along lines of Aboriginal and Afrocentric schools. Research existing cases to gather pros and cons for such identity-based schooling.



BLM 12.1 Continued

Assessing the Debate:

Use the following rubric to understand how your work in the debate will be assessed.

Category	PROPOSITION	OPPOSITION
knowledge	/10	/10
Content		
Points of Information (using directed questions to advance your own cause and add information)		
thinking	/10	/10
Analysis		
Refutation and Rebuttal (countering moves)		
communication	/10	/10
Organization		
Presentation		
application	/10	/10
Argumentation		
Score	/40	/40
Winner		

Debriefing (post-mortem): Discuss how the debate went. Did key ideas come out or were they lost in rhetoric and theatrics? Where did you see critical thinking in action, and how does this exemplify practical wisdom (see textbook page 295)?

