We often don’t view ourselves the way we are in reality or the way others see us. We may have a hard time analyzing our strengths and weakness to utilize them to the best of our ability.

Thankfully, there are several tools to help us discover more about ourselves to better succeed not only at NWACC but in every area of life.

Would you call yourself intelligent? I bet you are. Maybe you don’t think you are because you had a hard time in College Algebra or you had no idea what your English instructor meant when your class covered *Hamlet*. **But you are intelligent.** How do I know? Can you play an instrument? Were you captain of your high school’s basketball team? Do you have a green thumb? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are intelligent. How so? **There are multiple intelligences.**

**MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES**

Howard Gardner, a psychologist and professor at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, claims that there are nine intelligences:

1) Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence is based on well-developed verbal skills and sensitivity to sounds, meanings, and rhythms of words. Obviously, writers utilize this intelligence, but reporters, journalists, lawyers, teachers, and translators do as well.

2) Mathematical-Logical Intelligence is based on the ability to think conceptually and abstractly and to discern logical or numerical patterns. Obviously, those in mathematics, such as accountants, use this intelligence, but computer programmers, scientists, engineers, and researchers do as well because it isn’t limited to numerical activities.

3) Musical Intelligence is based on the ability to produce and appreciate rhythm, pitch, and timber. Those with this type of intelligence may be instrumentalists, singers, conductors, disc jockeys, orators, writers, or composers.

4) Visual-Spatial Intelligence is based on the capacity to think in images and pictures and to visualize accurately and abstractly. Artists, designers, navigators, inventors, interior designers, mechanics, engineers, and architects most often utilize this intelligence.

5) Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence is based on the ability to control one’s body movements and to handle objects skillfully. Possible career choices using this intelligence include athletes, pilots, dancers, musicians, actors, surgeons, builders, police officers, and soldiers.

6) Interpersonal Intelligence is based on the capacity to detect and respond appropriately to the moods, motivations, and desires of others. If this is your primary intelligence, you may do well in sales, politics, management, teaching, or social work.
7) Intrapersonal Intelligence is based on the capacity to be self-aware and in tune with inner feelings, values, beliefs, and thinking processes. Many with this intelligence are authors, psychologists, counselors, philosophers, or clergymen.

8) Natural Intelligence is based on the ability to recognize and categorize plants, animals, and other objects in nature. Natural intelligence is most often utilized by naturalists, farmers, and gardeners.

9) Existential Intelligence is based on sensitivity and a capacity to tackle deep questions about human existence, such as the meaning of life, why do we die, and how did we get here. Those with this intelligence include shamans, priests, mathematicians, physicists, scientists, cosmologists, and philosophers.

Gardner saw intelligence as being:

- the ability to create an effective product or offer a service that is valued in a culture
- a set of skills that make it possible for a person to solve problems in life
- the potential for finding or creating solutions for problems, which involves gathering new knowledge

**MAKING YOUR INTELLIGENCES WORK FOR YOU**

But you don’t possess just one or two of these intelligences. You possess ALL NINE of them to varying degrees. We each have an individual intellectual composition, and each of our intelligences can work independently, such as when you draw on your musical intelligence to sight read a piece of music, or they can work together, such as when you draw on your verbal-linguistic intelligence, too, to compose lyrics set to music.

Think of it this way. Imagine you are in a class with J.K. Rowling, Steve Jobs, Beyoncé, Christopher Nolan, Mia Hamm, Colin Powell, Deepak Chopra, Jane Goodall, and Tina Fey. J.K. is writing the next Harry Potter adventure on scraps of paper. Steve is daydreaming about computer designs. Beyoncé softly hums a song. Chris is playing with a video app on his phone. Mia can’t wait to get to her intramurals practice. Colin has organized the school’s charity fund drive. Deepak provides in-class spiritual counseling. Jane adds a new animal to the class menagerie daily. Tina scrawls witty absurdities in the margins of her notebook. How many of these people are brilliant? Are they intelligent in the same way?

Why is it important to discover our dominant intelligences? Not only will it boost your confidence in these areas, but this discovery can tell you a lot about your interests (and career fields in which you could excel) as well as how you can learn best. Because not only are there multiple intelligences, there are also multiple ways of learning.

**LEARNING STYLES**

Have you struggled to study for a multiple-choice exam? Or do you have trouble with essay questions? Can you easily recall information like dates and names or do you struggle to memorize them? Do you excel at labeling diagrams, maps, etc. or do you forget the locations of everything? When you study, do
you prefer a silent, isolated place or do you work better with others or listening to music? Do you find that you can process information better while you are running or working out?

According to Fleming, there are four basic learning styles: visual; aural/auditory; reading and writing; and tactile/kinesthetic. To learn, we utilize our senses to process information, and most of us use multiple senses to do so. However, you may find that you use one type of learning more than others.

Visual learners learn by seeing and looking.
Aural/Auditory learners learn by hearing and listening.
Reading and writing learners learn by reading and writing.
Tactile/kinesthetic learners learn by touching and doing.

It is helpful to study each of the learning styles because you may have to adapt to situations in which you cannot use your preferred learning style. The best teachers are able to appeal to every kind of learner by incorporating different methods of teaching. Still, most instructors have one or two methods that they rely on. If this method does not support your learning style, you will have to find ways to make it work.

For example, if you are a visual learner and one of your instructors prefers to lecture from the podium and does not utilize PowerPoint or handouts, you may need to find a way to visualize the lesson. You can take notes while listening, record the lecture and take notes from your recording, and/or turn your notes into a visualization of some sort during your own time. On the other hand, may you are a reading and writing learner while your instructor teaches visually; you may need to turn all of the charts, diagrams, and illustrations you see into written statements to remember the information they provide.

Understanding learning styles and how they relate to teaching can also help you pass your tests. For example, let’s pretend you have to take a written exam and a lab exam in Biology. If you are a tactile or kinesthetic learner, you will probably have less trouble with the lab exam since it is hands-on. As such, you may want to spend more time preparing for the written exam. Depending on what kind of written exam it is, a learner may struggle more than others. A visual learner will quickly recall diagrams while auditory and reading and writing learners can zip faster through multiple-choice questions whether he or she memorized jingles (auditory) or read the chapter over and over (reading and writing).

Familiarize yourself with, not only your learning type, but also with the others. After all, you will be mentoring many students and may not come across one who shares your exact learning style. You need to be prepared to offer advice to help learners of all styles succeed!

**LEARNING BY SEEING AND LOOKING**

**VISUAL LEARNERS**
- take numerous detailed notes or asks for handouts
- use visual materials, such as pictures, charts, maps, graphs, etc.
- tend to sit in the front to have a clear view of teachers when they are speaking to see their body language and facial expressions
- are usually neat and clean
- often close their eyes to visualize or remember something
- find something to watch if they are bored during a lesson
• like to see what they are learning
• benefit from illustrations and presentations that use color
• illustrates ideas as a picture or brainstorming bubble before writing them down
• use multi-media (e.g. computers, videos, and filmstrips)
• write a story and illustrate it or read illustrated books
• are attracted to written or spoken language rich in imagery
• prefer stimuli to be isolated from auditory and kinesthetic distraction
• find passive surroundings ideal

LEARNING BY HEARING AND LISTENING

AURAL/AUDITORY LEARNERS
• sit where they can hear but needn't pay attention to what is happening in front
• participate in class discussions/debates
• like to make speeches and presentations
• use a tape recorder during lectures instead of taking notes
• may not coordinate colors or clothes, but can explain why they are wearing what they are wearing
• hum or talk to themselves or others when bored
• acquire knowledge by reading aloud
• remember by verbalizing lessons to themselves (if they don't have difficulty reading maps or diagrams or handling conceptual assignments like mathematics)—this is accomplished through musical jingles or mnemonics
• discuss ideas verbally
• dictate to others to write for them
• use verbal analogies and storytelling to demonstrate points

LEARNING BY READING AND WRITING

READING AND WRITING LEARNERS
• write out words over and over
• often take exhaustive notes
• work best in quiet areas
• prefer to study by themselves
• would rather read by themselves or to others than be read to
• like articulate teachers who put a lot of information into sentences
• frequently uses a dictionary
• like to make and use lists
• make flashcards
• read notes (silently) over and over
• rewrite the ideas and principles into other words
• organize any visualizations into statements
• turning reactions, actions, diagrams, charts, and flows into words
• imagine lists arranged in multiple choice questions and distinguish each from each

LEARNING BY TOUCHING AND DOING

TACTILE/KINESTHETIC LEARNERS
• need to be active and take frequent breaks

Module 2: Learning Styles 4
• speak with their hands and with gestures
• work in a standing position
• chew gum while studying
• use bright colors to highlight reading material
• dress up work space with posters
• skim through reading material to get a rough idea what it is about before settling down to read in detail
• remember what was done, but have difficulty recalling what was said or seen
• find reasons to tinker or move when bored
• rely on what they can directly experience or perform
• are helped by activities that require moving around such as cooking, construction, engineering, and art to perceive and learn
• enjoy field trips and tasks that involve manipulating materials
• sit near the door or someplace else where they can easily get up and move around
• are uncomfortable in classrooms where they lack opportunities for hands-on experience
• communicate by touching or appreciate physically expressed encouragement, such as a pat on the back

REFERENCES CITED


<http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm>.


REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Complete the multiple intelligences assessment (<http://www.literacyworks.org/mi/home.html>) and learning style questionnaire (<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire>). Then reflect on your learning style and your dominant intelligences, on what you have read above, and on your own experiences in mentoring in writing responses to the following questions. **It is not necessary to retype the questions, just label them: "1.1" for Module 1, Question 1, "1.2" for Module 1, Question 2, and so on.**

**Reflection Question 1.** According to the multiple intelligences questionnaire, what are your three dominate intelligences? Do you feel these are accurate assessments? Why or why not?

**Reflection Question 2.** According to the learning styles questionnaire, what is your dominant learning style? Do you feel this is an accurate assessment? Why or why not?

**Reflection Question 3.** How can better understanding your dominant intelligences and learning style affect how well you do at NWACC academically? How can these help in your studies, such as with lectures and note-taking?

**Reflection Question 4.** How can understanding your dominant intelligences and learning style affect how you mentor other NWACC students?

**Email your answers to Ashley Byrd at pass@nwacc.edu**