

How do we learn?

Over the course of the year, the Leadership team will be presenting different ideas, theories and research papers on how we learn? Learning theory is complex, involved and as expected has many points of view. At Ashburton Primary School, as at most schools, we have melded a number of learning theories to develop our beliefs and understandings about how students learn in order to provide the best possible learning outcomes academically, socially and emotionally for your children. Most learning theories abide under three premises;

We learn through social interaction

We all learn in different ways and at different rates

Learning needs to be relevant, meaningful and purposeful

How do we learn?

Take a few minutes and record your thoughts. If you have to try something new at work or at home such as getting a new mobile phone or planning a project, what do you need in your environment to be successful? Your list may look something like this.

- Watching and observing
- Reading and analysing
- Using an instruction manual
- Talking to someone else
- Trial and error (having a go)
- Writing down ideas
- Thinking time
- Drawing a picture
- Asking someone for help
- Reflecting on what did or did not work
- Using prior knowledge

What kind of learner are you? Do you learn by doing, reading, watching or visualising? Do you need to talk to problem solve or do you need quiet time or personal thinking time? Do you think creatively or analytically? Howard Gardner states there are eight forms of multiple intelligences that we are naturally inclined to. These are;

linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, body-kinesthetic, intrapersonal (e.g., insight, metacognition) interpersonal (e.g., social skills) and naturalist.

How does this relate to teaching and learning?

The theory recognises that we all learn in different ways and have an aptitude or strength in one or two particular intelligences. The theory also states that when information is presented in your preferred intelligence understanding can come more easily and readily. The impact this has on your children is that teachers present information using a variety of learning styles and understand children often have a natural aptitude to solve problems or learn in a certain way. We are able to tap into their strengths and share their expertise with their peers through various means. Sometimes this can be presenting projects in a different way such as posters, movies, using graphs and statistics etc. or when students work together in a group they will all think differently in order to develop a multifaceted approach. Some will be analytically, or highly creative or logical. All intelligences are equally valued and required to produce the best possible results.

The great thing about Howard Gardner's theory is that it recognises that we are all individuals with unique gifts and talents. To read more go to <http://pzweb.harvard.edu/pis/hg.htm>