The Enlightenment of the Multiple Intelligences Evaluation Theory on the Reform of College Students’ Evaluation

Xiao-jing WU and Chia-hung WANG

College of Information Science and Engineering, Fujian University of Technology, Fuzhou City, Fujian Province 350118, China

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Abstract. The theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Professor Howard Gardner of Harvard University in the United States, is the analysis of the theory of human intelligence. The multiple intelligences evaluation is a kind of comprehensive and objective assessment which aims to promote the development of students’ intellectual potentials, improve their ability of solving problems and ultimately enhance their overall quality. The structure and properties of multiple intelligences evaluation is to promote the evaluation for students' all-round development. Thus, the theory of multiple intelligences evaluation plays an important role not only in evaluation concept, but in the reform of evaluation content and methods for current college students. In recent years, the implementation of education evaluation reform in China is greatly influenced by the theory of multiple intelligences. Therefore, starting from the background of quality-oriented education promotion in China, the author attempts to analyze and discuss the significance and influence of multiple intelligences evaluation on college students' evaluation reform.

Introduction

The theory of multiple intelligences (MI), proposed by Professor Howard Gardner of Harvard University in *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983), is a theory that analyzes the nature and structure of human intelligence. According to this theory, an intelligence must fulfill eight criteria: potential for brain isolation by brain damage, place in evolutionary history, presence of core operations, susceptibility to encoding (symbolic expression), a distinct developmental progression, the existence of savants, prodigies and other exceptional people, and support from experimental psychology and psychometric findings.

In accordance with the education policy, *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China & Higher Education Law of the People’s Republic of China*, quality-oriented education, the main education philosophy accepted in China, is proposed to focus on the requirements for students’ long-term development in China. The fundamental purpose of quality-oriented education, which is taking all students into consideration, is to comprehensively improve the basic quality of the students. Respecting the students’ subjectivity, focusing on the potentiality development of their wisdom, and paying attention to form their sound personality are the basic characteristics of quality-oriented education advocated in China. As mentioned above, the theory of multiple intelligences is in full accord with the connotation of quality-oriented education and can promotes the development of school education in China efficiently.

Multiple Intelligences Evaluation

Colleges and universities often assess the students through a single written examination. The effect of this evaluation is clearly one-sided and not scientific. The ultimate result of such evaluation limits or makes the students’ lots of important potentials not be recognized and developed. On the contrary, the multiple intelligences evaluation focuses on exploring the practical and creative ability of students in
learning, discovering and solving problems, rather than how to develop students’ ability to obtain high scores.

The Human Intelligence

Professor Gardner argues that the theory of multiple intelligences is different from traditional education perspectives. As is known to all, intelligence signifies the ability to solve problems or create products in a particular cultural background or in society. In other words, it means to be able to target a particular goal, and to find the right path to accomplish this goal. With the creation of cultural products, we need to possess the ability to acquire knowledge, disseminate knowledge and express personal views or feelings.

According to this elaboration, we can get the conclusion that human beings possess a variety of intelligent potentials. These intelligent potentials mutually restrain, integrate and influence. The traditional school education tends to pay special attention to language intelligence and logical intelligence, thus ignoring the individual’s other intelligences. In other words, the so-called "IQ theory" based on the student's intelligence test simply misplaces intelligence as the ability of writing, or the ability of question-answering in writing. In this regard, Professor Gardner insists that the core of intelligent theory should be to develop the ability of human beings, from discovering the problem to solving them. The essence of intelligence must be multiple.

The Multiple Intelligences Evaluation

With regard to the methods of multiple intelligences evaluation, the theory of multiple intelligences puts forward that human beings possess the multiple intellectual development. Therefore, only unilaterally paying attention to student's pen-test score is one-sided and not scientific. Students’ pen-test score does not represent everything, and cannot be used as an important means of evaluating the development of their abilities. The purpose of school education should develop a variety of intelligence and help students find their own intelligence characteristics and hobbies, so that the school can give a full understanding for each student's cognitive characteristics and make it develop the best. The multiple intelligences evaluation has not only had a profound impact on the current traditional education evaluation, but plays an important part in the modern education reform theory as well.

The Enlightenment on Higher Education Evaluation Reform in China

Student evaluation is an important and indispensable part of higher education evaluation. The followings are the inspirations for the reform and practice of higher education according to the multiple intelligences evaluation:

Students-oriented Development

The theory of multiple intelligences requires that the purpose of higher education evaluation is to establish and promote the comprehensive development for all students. Traditional evaluation emphasizes on teachers’ personal assessment of the students and pays much more attention to various forms of pen-test results and subjects’ achievement. Requiring the change of educational evaluation concept, quality-oriented education aims to promote student-oriented evaluation, and fully highlights the student’s individual status as the main subject of learning. However, currently most of the colleges and universities take students’ pen-test or examination results as their evaluation standard of the comprehensive ability and quality of students, with a consequence that they only pay attention to the selection of a small number of outstanding students. Apparently, it is contrary to the purpose of all-student and quality-oriented evaluation and deviates from the promotion of comprehensive development of students.

The most important function of the multiple intelligences evaluation is to promote the comprehensive development of all students. The multiple intelligences argues that the most fundamental function of student evaluation is to stimulate and promote students to be better. Without
the development promotion, students’ personality development goals will not be determined clearly. Without the development promotion, the feedback and correct improvement proposals in their development process will not be provided accurately. Without the development promotion, the evaluation will be meaningless.

**Multi-perspective, Multi-dimensional and Multi-evaluation Methods**

On the one hand, the emphasis on the evaluation of students’ individual development process is an important part of the content of higher education evaluation reform. The multiple intelligences evaluation requires that the evaluation of college students should not only pay attention to the evaluation results, but also to the evaluation process. Most traditional colleges and universities are frequently emphasize on the results, while ignoring the process. The multiple intelligences evaluation argues that students’ individual learning process is very important and irreplaceable to their development.

In their process of learning, only through their own experiencing, learning and understanding, making their own continuous improvement and upgrading, students will build a suitable development system for their own. Therefore, by highlighting students’ individual learning process, the kind of evaluation of students can effectively improve teachers’ teaching methods and promote the comprehensive quality, comprehensive ability and development of students. Multiple intelligences evaluation requires the evaluation from the emphasis on the individual development in the vertical comparison, in which to explore the progress of students and improve, so as to promote their promotion.

In addition, multiple intelligences evaluation also advocates to changing the current simple and inefficient evaluation means, and to despising the old evaluation standard. It also requires a pluralistic evaluation system which can form students’ emotions, world outlook, life values, and improve their innovative, practical and comprehensive ability.

**The Use of Diversity and Comprehensive Evaluation Criteria**

As is known to all, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the capability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and those of others, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior, and manage and/or adjust emotions to adapt to environments or achieve one's goal(s). According to the study of modern psychology, emotional Intelligence (EI), refers to the individual's understanding of emotions, evaluation, regulation, adaptation and performance, and many other aspects of the ability, actually a comprehensive emotional capacity. Therefore, the student's emotional intelligence should also be included in our consideration of the student evaluation system seriously. However, it is obvious that there are many deficiencies in the content of the higher education evaluation system, such as the lack of guidance on students' emotional consideration and the guiding principle of consideration operation.

The author believes that not only the assessment of students’ emotional intelligence and their development process, but the specific requirements, manifestations, etc, should be included in the higher education evaluation system content. According to this evaluation content, students will recognize their own shortcomings through self and mutual evaluation and can easily figure out their goals and the way to promote self-improvement ultimately.

At present, the assessment of student's academic performance in most colleges and universities is more limited in the student's cognitive intelligence evaluation, and too much emphasizes on their pen-test scores and academic achievement. This kind of evaluation is not only difficult to reflect the comprehensive quality of students and innovation ability of the evaluation, but also difficult to get rid of the traditional evaluation concept on the overall quality of students assessment. Therefore, the multiple intelligences evaluation advocates abandoning the existing evaluation criteria in the excessive emphasis on students’ pen-test scores and academic performance criteria. It requires that the student evaluation should divide the practical and innovative content of the individual
development into the specific parts according to the different requirements of their individual development process, and the different categories and stages that they want to adapt.

The multiple intelligences evaluation implements the students' ability to solve problems and their development of comprehensive practical ability. First of all, from the view of the development of students' ability, quality-oriented education advocates the development of students' practical and innovation ability. That is, the individual learning process should be classified from understanding the problem, answering the problem to solving the problem, not just pen-test and academic achievement. Secondly, from the perspective of training objectives, our educational objectives and pursuit is to teach students knowledge, cultivate their comprehensive ability, improve their overall quality, and ultimately promote their comprehensive and coordinated development. Generally speaking, the higher education objectives are required to aim at improving students' individual learning ability, practical ability and innovation ability.

Conclusion

To sum up, the concept of multiple intelligent evaluation highlights the essential requirements of quality-oriented education, that is, to promote the overall development of all students. Therefore, the college student evaluation system must be constructed to promote the comprehensive development of all students as the core of the student evaluation system. The multiple intelligent evaluation can correctly handle the relationship between students’ academic-oriented evaluation and the evaluation on comprehensive development of the students. With multi-perspective, multi-dimensional and multi-evaluation methods, the multiple intelligent evaluation makes great efforts to develop students' multiple intellectual potentials, to promote the gradual improvement of physical and mental health and their self-confidence, and ultimately enhance the overall quality of students and their comprehensive ability to solve problems.

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References


