



Using Multiple Intelligence Theory to Enhance Camp

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Camp can become a special place for all kinds of kids. One way to make your camp meet the learning needs of a bigger variety of campers is to understand and use research on multiple intelligences. Check out some of the websites at the end of this article to learn more and let your imagination and your planning team go wild.

Visual/Spatial Intelligence (picture smart) -how can we challenge kids who have a unique ability to perceive the visual? Include maps as well as clues in your treasure hunt. Be sure to make a camp video/slide show. Take a cue from Energy Express and do “big art” including murals, and lots of paint. Bring in examples of the work of famous artists and use them in programs or reflection activities, work on a camp jigsaw puzzle.

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence (word smart) – we already involve these kids, but we can do more: present a “daily thought” and each evening at council circle ask campers to share what that thought means to them. (Be sure and tell them ahead of time so they can feel prepared.) Have a limerick writing contest; use tall tales, and word games. Ask kids to explain and share their ideas. Have a r time where everyone in camp reads something for 15 minutes a day-make sure adults participate too. Stage a debate; learn a new word each day and reward kids who use the word correctly.

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

(number/reasoning smart) -these folks love problems, measuring, figuring out things like treasure hunt clues, how much lumber will be needed for a craft project, and how to increase a recipe to serve the whole camp. Set up true experiential learning situations for these campers and give them plenty of time to work it all out. Don't let the counselors have all the fun - have the groups create their own treasure hunts. They'll even help you figure out how many leaves are on that oak tree.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

(body smart) -these campers revel in camp ball games, folk dancing, crafts, skits, and anything where they can move around, build, and stay active. Don't expect them to sit quietly through a long assembly or listen to someone lecture in class. Get them up and keep them moving.

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

(music smart) -these campers actually think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g. crickets, bells, dripping taps). We can count on them to actually learn the tune to that new song. Challenge them by using many kinds of music, let the tribe form its own kitchen band and perform, teach rhythm and clapping games.

Interpersonal Intelligence

(people smart)-these campers get along well others. They try to see things from other people's point of view. Generally they try to maintain peace in group settings and encourage co-operation. They use both verbal and non-verbal language, like eye contact and body language, to open communication channels with others. They make great counselors and can help



with trust building and resolving conflicts. They excel at bring a group to a consensus.

Intrapersonal Intelligence (self smart) - is the ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. Charting was made for these campers. They understand what they can and cannot do and see how they fit into a group. Activities which ask campers to write or talk about how they feel, what their dreams are, and who they want to become are ideal ways to engage these campers.

Naturalistic Intelligence (nature smart) – this learner equates things to an experience in the natural world. This “intelligence” is the newest and is not yet widely recognized, however it has a unique application in a camp setting. Naturalist intelligence deals with sensing patterns in and making connections to elements in nature. Campers may be very interested in the environment, animals and the earth.

Here are some of the challenges given to campers – take a minute to analyze each activity and see what kinds of kids will enjoy and excel. Can you think of other ways to engage these learners?

1. Tribes were given facts and information about tobacco use and asked to write and perform a commercial to convince their peers not to use tobacco.
2. Tribes were given identical boxes of “junk” (pulleys, tinker toys, marbles, tape, string, funnels, a science board for a support system, etc.) and information about Rube Goldberg machines. They were asked to create

a machine that did something – anything – with as many steps as possible.

3. Tribes were asked to create an original line dance; the music was their choice.
4. Tribes were challenged to write or put together a reflections program that was meaningful to their peers. Poems, stories, candles, etc. were made available for their use, but creativity and originality was encouraged. They could choose the location, time of day; the subject was “nature and our world.”
5. Campers were taught to use hand held GPS units and asked to set up a treasure hunt for the next group.
6. Groups were asked to design sidewalk mural that best illustrated their tribe.
7. Tribes were asked to make an entry for a camp parade. All sorts of cardboard, paint, tape, paper, crepe paper, were made available. Each member of the tribe had to be in the parade unit.

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

http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm

http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/natural_genius.htm

http://www.chariho.k12.ri.us/curriculum/MI_Smart/MImapDef.HTM

<http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/environmental/wilson2.htm>