

## Using gardner's multiple intelligences to develop students' notetaking techniques for literature review at foreign language teaching

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### Abstract

To take notes, students need to develop their thinking skills which can help them to improve their writings. The current research aims to test students' use of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) to develop their thinking and writing skills, primarily the use of the notetaking technique in writing the literature review section. The researcher aimed at including Gardner's linguistic intelligence in academic writing, mainly dissertation writing. To this end, the researcher selected 39 foreign language teaching (EFL) Master Students for the experiment. The researcher employed a pretest and a posttest to check and evaluate students' use of the notetaking technique. The findings revealed that teachers could integrate Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory in the EFL context. The results also showed that students tend to employ the first intelligence to develop their writing skills and improve the use of notetaking techniques in writing the literature review section. The analysis indicated that students were more motivated to use thinking techniques in writing rather than traditional methods.

**Keywords:** EFL; Gardner's Multiple Intelligence; literature review writing; notetaking technique; reading strategies.

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## 1. Introduction

Research on how to teach and learn foreign languages, primarily English, has witnessed many changes in the last few decades (Leung & Valdés, 2019; Tinsley & Dolezal, 2019). Scholars were interested in developing approaches that can enhance EFL learners' linguistic skills, mainly writing, speaking, and listening. However, few studies explored the importance of some approaches like De Bono's (2017) *The Six Thinking Hats* and Gardner's *Multiple Intelligence* to improve the students' critical thinking (Xu, 2020). Most recent studies tend to use approaches linked to developing thinking skills with English language teaching and learning. Some studies were interested in boosting students' writing with their thinking skills, while others were more concerned with speaking or listening skills. However, these studies did not provide detailed techniques on how to develop linguistic skills with the students' thinking.

Teachers need to develop both linguistic and thinking skills (Leung & Valdés, 2019). They also need to provide an atmosphere and learning environment that favour using students' thinking skills in the learning process. Some approaches proved their effectiveness among pupils, while others were more useful for the university level. For the current study, the researcher selected Gardner's *Multiple Intelligence* (MI), although the approach was employed to teach children since it makes the learning process more enjoyable. Most of the studies, which adopted the approach to teaching English, are at the university level, focused on how it is employed in the teaching process in general.

In the early 1980s, Gardner introduced his Multiple Intelligences to the field of education. Many studies explored its effectiveness in education (Gardner, 2011). The EFL context made no exception since instructors started supporting the inclusion of critical thinking in developing the four linguistic skills. However, few studies investigated its use and effectiveness in academic writing, mainly dissertation or thesis writing. Besides, research on developing students' note-taking and reading strategies remain limited. To the researcher's knowledge, no studies employed the approach to improve students' academic writing skills, mainly developing students' notetaking while writing the literature review section. Hence, this research work sheds light on how MI can develop students' thinking skills and help them to master notetaking since this technique is of vital importance to writing the literature review.

### 1.1. Literature Review

Multiple Intelligence (MI) is a theory that Gardner (2010) introduced in 1983. Scholars welcomed the theory and its use in teaching and learning languages. Zarei and Mohseni (2012) highlighted that the effectiveness of MI lies in the psychological potential that it "provides" to "a learner with an opportunity to process information which can be activated in cultural products that are culturally valuable," (as cited in Derakhshan & Faribi, 2015, p. 64).

Gardner (2011) proposed Six Intelligences and added two intelligences later on. They became known as *naturalist intelligence*. These types are organized as follows:

- *Linguistic intelligence* is concerned with spoken and written language. It explains the ability to learn languages. This ability is not restricted to learning the language, but rather to its use to achieve certain goals such as communication.
- *Logical-mathematical intelligence* involves the use of intelligence. It is concerned with developing this ability and its use to solve problems. The investigation of the problem is done through scientific theories to solve mathematical and scientific problems.
- *Musical intelligence* is concerned with developing an ability to compose and recognize musical components such as tones, rhythms, pitches, etc.
- *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence* involves the body or apart from the body to solve the problem.
- *Spatial intelligence* is concerned with the individual's visual capacity. It is associated with photographers, decorators, designers, etc.

- *Interpersonal intelligence* is concerned with developing a capacity to understand people's motives, desires, and intentions.
- *Intrapersonal intelligence* involves developing a working model that "allows people to work effectively with others. Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders, and counselors all need well-developed interpreted intelligence," (Ahmed, 2012, p. 28).
- *Naturalistic intelligence* is linked to the ability to classify animals and plants in the environment.

The following figure gives an overview of the intelligence techniques proposed by Gardner (1999):

**Figure 1**  
*Gardner's Multiple Intelligences*



Source: Adapted from Wijaya, (2013, p. vi)

In his part, McKenzie (2002) maintained that this intelligence is divided into three main domains, mainly the interactive, the introspective, and the analytical. Gardner (1999) claimed that the theory is effective in teaching and learning languages. He added that teachers can apply the theory to better understand their learners. As far as students are concerned, the approach can help them to discover their abilities and develop them. Therefore, it may help students to gain control of the learning process.

Researchers like Armstrong (2000) emphasized that the theory helps in developing the students' writing and reading skills by providing some teaching strategies. The theory allows students to use all the intelligence in developing the four linguistic skills not only for writing or reading. In his part, Nolan (2003) pointed out that:

*The theory can be used in many different ways and works well in the entire school system. It offers opportunities for students to use and develop all the different intelligences, not only the ones that they excel in. It also offers different styles and methods as well as various activities. Each of the intelligence is perspective in every learner and it is part of the teachers' job to help children develop their intelligence (As cited in Ahmed, 2012, p. 29).*

Ahmed (2012) added that students have different learning needs, styles, and potentials. He maintained that MI allows students to learn in different ways. Similarly, Armstrong (2000) observed that teachers can test their students' strengths to develop a suitable environment according to their intelligence. In applying MI in English language teaching, the teacher becomes a facilitator and a language designer rather than a teacher. According to Ma'mun (2012, pp. 135), the use of this approach becomes a challenge for the teacher "not only in the lesson plan and class activity but also in seeking for teaching materials". This means that teachers should provide learning materials depending on their intelligence needs. The following figure gives an overview of how the teacher can organize the learning materials by using MI:

**Figure 2**

*An activity based on the kind of intelligence*

Num	Intelligence	Interest	Teaching Material	Teaching Activity
1	Linguistic	Reading, writing, telling story, playing word game	Books, news papers, tape recorder, journals, stories	Lectures, discussion, story telling, debate, reading, writing, reports presentation, journal writing, word game
2	Mathematic	Questioning, puzzle, calculating	Computer	Matching, gap-filling, comparison and contrast, puzzle, ordering
3	Musical	Singing, whistling, humming, tapping feet and hand, listening	Song and music tapes, musical instrument	Background music, creating song to summarize concepts or ideas, make up story with song
4	Bodily-kinaesthetic	Dancing, running, gesturing, touching,	Sports and physical game material	Relaxing exercise, cooperative and competitive game
5	Spatial	Designing, drawing, visualizing	Illustrated story, graph, charts, slides, movies, art	Advertisement designing, video show, illustrating concept and thing, cartoons
6	Interpersonal	Leading, organizing, relating, and mediating	Materials for group game, questioners	Group and circle work, pair work, questioners, team problem solving
7	Intrapersonal	Setting goals, mediating, dreaming, planning, and reflecting	Self-paced project, reflective materials	Project work, individual instruction, independent study, personal goal setting

Source: Adapted from Armstrong, (as cited in Ma'mun, 2012, p. 136)

According to Gardner (1983), MI is important for the classroom environment. He added that teachers need to think about using all the intelligence in teaching languages rather than applying just linguistic intelligence. Gardner claimed that students should use their intelligence in class before learning how to read and write. In his part, Fuey (1986) also claimed that teachers should be wise enough in responding to the students' mode of learning. He added that:

*Students from different educational backgrounds have varying preferences for rote learning, problem-solving, creative thinking, and critical evaluation. Teachers should be able to identify the different learning styles of their students and exploit the strengths of intelligence of these students to teach writing (As cited in Looi & Ghazakli, 2010, pp. 54).*

Researchers tend to change writing instructions over time. They start adopting new approaches to teaching writing. Focusing on grammar and spelling mistakes has become a part of old writing conventions. Teachers turned their interests in writing into a vehicle that promotes critical thinking. For this reason, the writing process becomes directed by many stages. Many researchers turn their interests towards the use of thinking approaches like MI in developing writing skills. Campbell and Campbell (1999) highlighted that through the use of MI, "educators can identify and affirm a wider spectrum of students' competencies," (as cited in Wijaya, 2013, pp. 5). However, most studies conducted on how to use this intelligence to improve writing and reading in the EFL context remain surface studies because these studies did not provide techniques or activities that help in using the approach. In this context, Gunduz and Unal (2016, pp. 15) posited that "MI-based activities

were more effective than the traditional way of instruction in enabling the students to write more effectively”.

As far as the Algerian context is concerned, a recent study was conducted by Rihani (2016). Her study was limited to the use of the approach in motivating the students to participate. Hence, no studies were conducted on how to improve students’ academic writing, while other studies worldwide sought to investigate teachers’ perceptions or gender differences in using MI in the EFL classes. In his part, Zebari, Allo, and Mohammedzadeh (2018, pp. 98) highlighted that “identifying students’ dominant intelligence is a sound remedial solution for such a problem before embarking on any teaching program” .

## 1.2. Purpose of study

Few research works were conducted on how to use linguistic intelligence in developing students’ notetaking. The significance of this research is to provide ways to help students in taking notes and organizing them to write their literature review section through boosting their thinking skills. The researcher aims to develop the students’ thinking skills with their writing competence, mainly in dissertation writing through implementing a classroom environment that favors thinking and practice. To this end, the following research questions are set as follows:

- How can Multiple Intelligence improve students’ thinking skills?
- How can Multiple Intelligence boost students’ writing skills?
- How can Multiple Intelligence help students in mastering the notetaking technique?

## 2. Materials and Methods

The researcher employed experimental research since it is the most powerful quantitative research method. According to Gall et al. (2007, p. 365), “the experiment is the most powerful ... method for establishing cause-and-effect relationships between two or more variables”. As far as the variables that direct the current research are, there were two kinds of variables. The independent variable contains two factors including teaching techniques and the student’s linguistic intelligence. Students’ linguistic intelligence is divided into high and low. The dependent variable is the student’s ability to read and select scholars for citations, i.e., their use of the notetaking technique. Table one shows the variables used in the experiment:

**Table 1**  
*Variables for the experiment*

Variables	
Independent variables	Teaching techniques Students’ linguistic intelligence
Dependent variables	Notetaking

### 2.1. Participants

The participants selected for the experiments were first-year master’s students studying English literature and civilization at Dr. Moulay Tahar University, Saida, Algeria. The researcher conducted the study during the First Semester of the academic year 2020/2021. The group contained 39 students. Students were tested to check their linguistic intelligence before experimenting.

### 2.2. Research Instruments

The researcher selected a test for the experiment. The linguistic intelligence test aimed to provide an overview of the students’ level of linguistic competence. It also attempted to test whether the students can use their linguistic intelligence to develop their notetaking or not. Table two provides an overview of the students’ levels. After the pretest, the teacher introduced students to in-

text citations and referencing styles, mainly the American Psychological Association (APA) and Modern Language Association (MLA). Students also received a good background on different sources for dissertation writing and how to organize them following both Mind Mapping and Notetaking techniques. Students also conducted a reading test through which they were asked to collect scholars' studies and opinions from the references provided by the teacher. The experiment took six weeks due to the protocols taken by the department during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students had just two hours to study research methodology per week.

To test the students' level in notetaking, the researcher gave students a set of texts as a part of the pretest. These texts form a part of the reading test to take notes. Another test was conducted after the experiment to test both their linguistic intelligence and notetaking. The linguistic test aimed to test students' knowledge of notetaking and mastery of the language. After the pretest, the teacher checked students' level in taking notes to write the literature review section.

### 2.3.Procedure

When it comes to dissertation writing, the process receives the least attention, mainly on combining thinking skills to improve students' academic writing skills. Throughout the current research, the researcher will explore the possibility of integrating thinking techniques in dissertation writing, mainly in writing the literature review section through developing students' notetaking. The researcher's main concern is limited to the use of linguistic intelligence to test students' level of intelligence and the possibility of using it to develop their ability to take notes. The researcher selected the first intelligence by examining students' verbal-linguistic smartness, she can test their motivation towards reading different sources including books, articles, theses/dissertations, and websites. The researcher also aimed to test students' motivation towards notetaking in writing i.e., students, who used to take notes, may score better in writing the literature review section rather than those who share negative attitudes towards the notetaking technique. The researcher attempted to provide teachers of research methodology and supervisors with techniques that can help them to guide students in writing the literature review section.

The researcher adopted Armstrong (2000) and Yaumi's (2012) journal writing technique in which students can collect previous studies that have come across through reading different sources. To take notes, students have to follow what is called *Mind Mapping* which is also a technique in writing. This technique stresses the point that through brainstorming, students can search for a way that helps them to brainstorm about their topics to take notes. Armstrong (2000) suggested that there are general rules to brainstorm. After brainstorming "is done, students then can construct, arrange, and develop their writing based on the ideas mention and organized in the brainstorming" (Wijaya, 2013, p. 42). Figure 3 gives an overview of how the student can use the *Mind Mapping technique* to brainstorm and take notes for the literature review section.

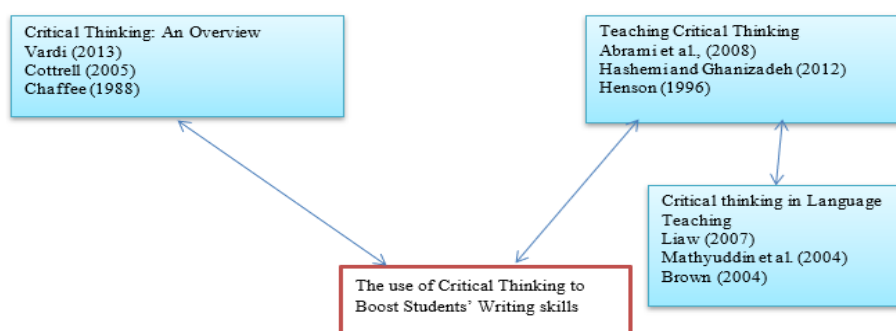


Figure 3, Mind mapping as a technique to brainstorm in writing the literature

Figure three gives an example of how the student can brainstorm based on different sources he collected through his readings. Hence, every student can develop his journal writing to develop his linguistic intelligence. This may help the student to take notes for the literature review section. According to Yaumi (2012), journal writing can be employed as a tool to motivate students to brainstorm and take notes (Wijaya, 2013). He maintained that journal writing “is a tool of self-discovery, increasing concentration, a place to gather ideas and reveal emotions, a site to build up writing ability, as well as an arena to grow motivation and self-confidence through words construction and manipulation,” (as cited in Wijaya, 2013, p. 42).

As far as notetaking is concerned, university students still find difficulties in taking notes, mainly master’s students. Scholars like Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005) considered notetaking as a skill that students should master to be able to write their academic papers. They claimed that “Being able to take good notes is an important learning skill, yet many students are poor note-takers; their note is incomplete and inaccurate” (Barkley, Cross, and Major, 2005, p. 135).

Teachers are struggling to develop their students’ notetaking techniques from their first- year at the university level. However, taking notes to write the literature review and organize a thesis citation receives the least attention. In taking notes for writing the literature, there are a variety of ways such as mind maps, tables, index cards, one big word document, notebook, a citation manager, etc. Indeed, the most used way is the use of tables as figure 4 shows:

Citation Info (Title, Author, Year)	Summary of Key Points (include quotes if direct quoting and page numbers)	Context or Relationships	Significance (to the field or you)	Important Figures (brief description, page #)	References to follow up on	Other Notes

Figure 4, Notetaking table  
 Source: Adapted from Oregon State University (2020, para. 3)

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Results of the Pretest

Table 2 shows the students’ linguistic intelligence based on three criteria:

**Table 2, Students’ level of linguistic intelligence in the pretest**

Students’ level of linguistic intelligence	Linguistic level
Grammar	56%
Vocabulary	39%
Punctuation	33%
Targeting the issue	61%
Mastering academic techniques	17%

Table 2 reveals the students’ low linguistic level. Although they are trained for three years during their license level, they still face difficulties in terms of grammar, vocabulary use, and

punctuation. They also showed a low level in mastering academic techniques since they have not academic reading and writing as a module during their graduate level.

### 3.1.1. Reading Test Results

During the pretest, the researcher provided a set of sources for students to read and take notes. Students' reading competence was linked to their note-taking competence and teachers' teaching approaches. Table three gives an overview of the results reached from the pretest taking into account the four variables, mainly reading competence, note-taking competence, linguistic intelligence, and teaching approaches. This test aims to test the relationship between reading competence and note-taking.

**Table 3, Results of the pretest depending on the selected variables**

Variables	Students' level of performance
Reading competence	45%
Note-taking competence	11%
Linguistic intelligence	28%
Teachers' approaches	19%

Table three shows the low background of the four variables since they were used separately. To read different sources, students were not given the appropriate reading strategies. When it comes to the note-taking technique, it scores the lowest percentage. For the students' use of linguistic intelligence, it is 28%. This result indicates that these variants should be intertwined to develop the students' linguistic intelligence and note-taking techniques.

### 3.1.2. Note-taking Technique Test

The researcher aimed to test students' background in using the note-taking technique to write the literature review section. The test revealed that students had low background knowledge in taking notes since teachers of research methodology did not introduce them to the study skills as a module. This means that they had poor knowledge of the reading strategies used to take notes or even techniques followed in taking notes.

**Table 4, Students' knowledge in using the notetaking technique**

Variables	Students' knowledge
Identifying and remembering key points	61%
Help recall and concentration	23%
See the connection between sources	09%
Avoid plagiarism	11%

Table four indicates that students' knowledge in notetaking and its use is limited to "identifying and remembering key points" and "help recall concentration". They did not know that notetaking is also used to connect sources and avoid plagiarism.

## 3.2. Results of the Posttest

After the researcher introduced notetaking as a technique, she also gave the students an overview of Gardner's multiple intelligences, mainly linguistic intelligence. The researcher also employed reading and linguistic intelligence tests. The first test addresses students' linguistic competence in applying the reading strategies. The second test aims to test the use of linguistic intelligence with the notetaking technique.



**Table 5, Results of posttest with developing students' reading strategies**

Variables	Students' level
Monitoring comprehension	63%
Metacognition	54%
Graphic and semantic organizers	46%
Generating questions	66%

Table five reveals that students' level in using the reading strategies has developed after they used and linked them to notetaking techniques. Students succeeded in monitoring comprehension. The teacher focused on developing her students' metacognitive strategies i.e., they started to have control over their reading. They also learned to identify the purpose behind reading. They also learned how to organize concepts and their definitions. The researcher aimed to develop the students' reading strategies since they have a link with developing their notetaking techniques.

The teacher introduced students to notetaking techniques with their linguistic intelligence. Table 6 gives an overview of the main points developed through the experiment:

**Table 6, Results of posttest with developing students' notetaking techniques**

Variables	Students' level
Check sources to get agreement and disagreement	75%
Think as you read	56%
Asking questions while reading	69%
Label your notes intelligently	83%

Table six demonstrates that students' level in taking notes through mastering its techniques has improved after the experiment. They learned that asking questions while reading and taking notes is essential. They also learned that the main aim of reading different sources is to get the agreement and disagreement of scholars to build a good synthesis. Most importantly, they also learned how to label all the gathered notes intelligently by using their critical thinking skills.

Students can develop their notetaking techniques through acquiring good linguistic intelligence, mainly in listing sources, contrasting, and comparing different views to identify the literary gap since they are writing the literature review section. The teacher attempted to enhance students' linguistic intelligence through the following points:

**Table 7, Results of posttest with developing students' linguistic intelligence**

Variables	Students' level
Think in words	63%
Like to read and write	85%
Be excellent interpreters of the language	56%

Table seven reveals that the students' linguistic intelligence has improved with their notetaking techniques and readings strategies. That is, students need to use different strategies to be motivated to read, write, and cite. The use of thinking skills is also found through reading the different notes taken by students. When it comes to interpreting the language, the researcher felt that students need to improve their ability in synthesizing.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings of the current study show that the use of multiple intelligence, mainly linguistic intelligence, to develop the students' notetaking techniques, has proved its effectiveness. The results

also indicate that the use of multiple intelligences helped the researcher to test her students' reading competence. Hence, they support Simpson's (1996). The reading competence was developed by introducing the students to different reading strategies that can improve their notetaking. As far as linguistic intelligence is concerned, students were able to develop their language, mainly organization, vocabulary, contents, and writing mechanics. This finding goes in line with Armstrong's (2000).

Regarding the use of the notetaking technique in writing the literature review section, the students were introduced to different steps of notetaking in terms of checking sources to get agreement and disagreement among different writers. It also helps students to use their critical thinking during the reading process. The results also reveal that the use of notetaking as a technique helps in developing the students' reading ability. Although notetaking was developed to take notes for lectures, many teachers nowadays are employing the approach in reading and academic writing. This is the case of the literature review section. This result supports Brahami and Nosratzadeh's study (2017).

The results also indicate that students, with a good level of using their linguistic intelligence, can employ the reading strategies appropriately. This proves that linguistic intelligence and reading strategies are intertwined in learning the target language. These variables are also important to be developed when the student wants to improve his notetaking. This result goes hand in hand with Neil's (2017) study.

## 5. Conclusion

To apply the notetaking technique in writing the literature, the student should master the different reading strategies. Students need to improve different reading strategies during their graduate-level because they need to be familiar with the cultural background of the texts. Hence, students, who did not develop their reading competence, found it difficult to read published works and take notes.

It can be concluded that there is a relation between developing the students' linguistic competence, reading strategies, and notetaking technique. This means that students with high linguistic intelligence should also improve their reading competence since these variables are interrelated. Besides, students, who did not master the reading strategies, were not able to take notes and used its techniques in writing the literature review section. Hence, the teacher should focus on developing the students' thinking skills before teaching them how to take notes by choosing the appropriate teaching methods.

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