

iDiscoveri XSEED presents  
**HOWARD GARDNER**  
India Tour 2012

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# IQ number many not reflect a child's abilities: Howard Gardner

## Lecture on 'Multiple Intelligences and Child-Centred Education'

Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI:** Assigning a number to a child's intelligence with the help of an intelligence quotient test may not reflect the child's abilities, for each child may possess multiple intelligences, or different combinations of intelligences - this was the message that Howard Gardner, John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, sent out here on Wednesday.

Speaking on 'Multiple Intelligences and Child-Centred Education,' at a lecture organised by iDiscoveri Education as part of his five-city India tour, he said, "There is a lot of effort in the world to develop the ideal way to get out a single number for intelligence - either through a multiple choice test which the United States has pioneered in, or through brain or gene measures where there is a lot of interest."

Terming the efforts "futile," Prof. Gardner said human beings have many different types



Professor Howard Gardner in Chennai on Wednesday. - PHOTO: K.V. SRINIVASAN

of intelligence and many more combinations of intelligence. It would, therefore, be a Herculean task to try to measure all of them. While intelligence had a heritable component, much of it depended on what was valued in society, the environment a child grew up in, how good the quality of teaching is, how motivated a learner is and the support available.

"As culture changes, intelligences that are important

change...so you can never bet on a single intelligence as being good for all times and all seasons," he said.

Elaborating, he said that about 100 years ago, schools were largely about language. About 150 years ago, one did not have to take a math test to get into Harvard, but needed to take one that tested the candidate's knowledge of languages such as Latin, Greek or Hebrew. "Obviously we are liv-

ing in a century where logic and math have become more important."

Prof. Gardner observed that educators must realise that society needed both, individuals with a "searchlight" mind that had the ability to broadly survey a host of subjects, and those with a "laser intelligence" that helped them focus deeply on a particular subject, the way Mozart did on music, for instance.

Pointing to the way forward, he said teachers should strive to "individualise" teaching, and "pluralise" their presentation, by conveying the same idea or concept in different ways to different learners. It was also important to assess learners in ways that allow them to show what they have learnt, he said.

The talk was followed by an interactive session moderated by Ashish Rajpal, Managing Director, iDiscoveri Education. Earlier, Prof. Gardner summarised his acclaimed Theory of Multiple Intelligences and cleared some misconceptions around it.