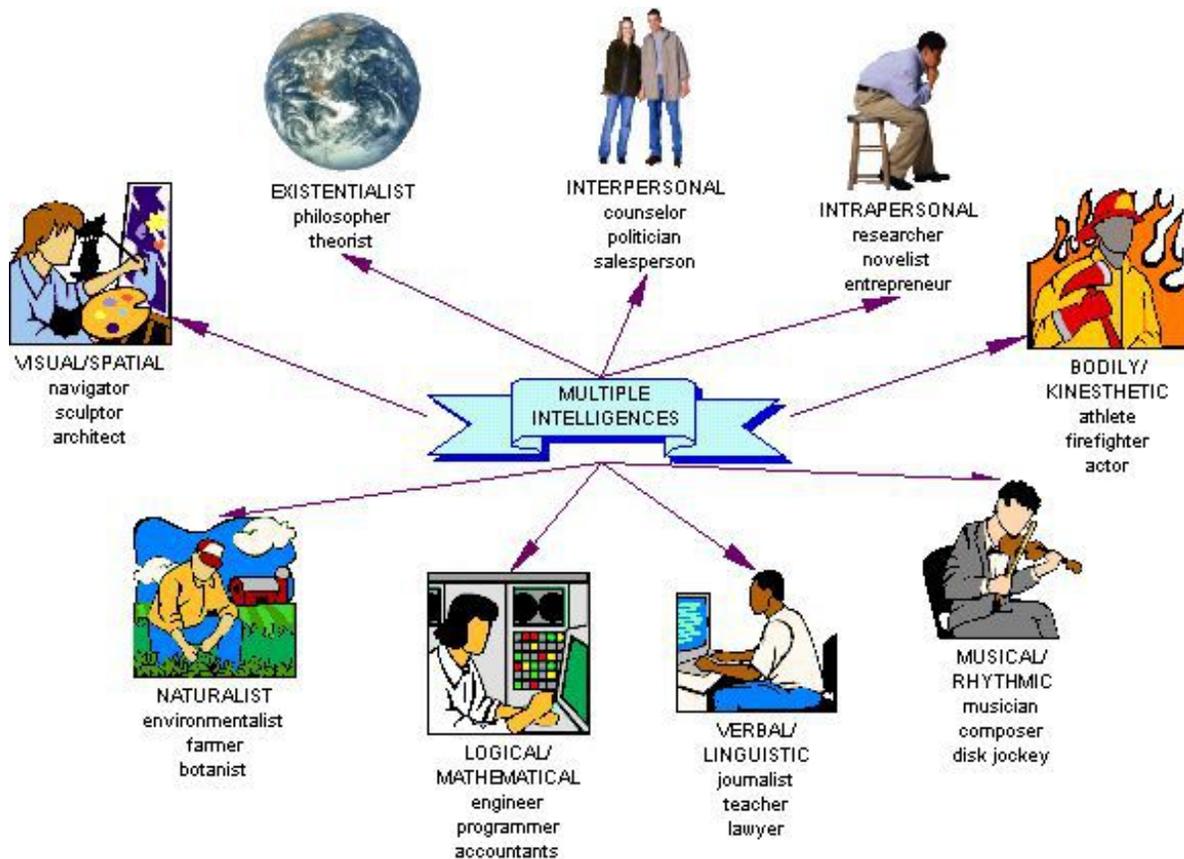


Multiple Intelligences and Lines of Development (an Introduction)

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I will continue posting some of my assignments from the studies of Integral Theory at JFK University. This quarter we are having two courses, namely: Multiple Intelligences and Integral Methodological Pluralism. At MI the concentration is of course on various intelligences and developmental lines.

Howard Gardner seems to be the "Grand Father" of Intelligence research having created the concept **Multiple Intelligences**. The concept of intelligence has been thought of an innate or inborn "quality", which can be developed but which also has certain qualities in its own. Gardner (2006) describes three meanings for intelligence: Intelligence as a species characteristic, intelligence as individual difference and intelligence as fit execution of an assignment. The first is probably the oldest one of these descriptions as it distinguishes for example humans from dolphins. Intelligence for specie can vary under a huge range; for example dolphins are bodily-kinesthetic and spatially probably hundreds of times more developed than humans. Individual difference of intelligences is somewhat clear to everybody: one can argue that one person is more intelligent than the other. The last description, intelligence as fit execution of an assignment, is a little bit more complicated and from here we

can turn into various forms of intelligences: Michael Jordan might be as excellent an athlete as Tiger Woods, but his interpretation of the art of basketball is comparable to a beauty of a ballet dancer. So he is not only good in the bodily-kinesthetic “line”, but rather his interpretation or sheer intelligent in the movement is on a level of a genius.

But what actually is intelligence? Is it something to be measured with an IQ test? Are you intelligent if your IQ is 150, but you can't do anything with your test skills? Where do you need to place different kind of puzzle pieces into an order or guess which number comes next? Or would it actually be “wise” to think Intelligence as a feature, a unique but common capacity, with which there is some use in life? I think that is something Gardner has been investigating furiously and come to a conclusion of 8-9 intelligences: musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and newly recognized existential intelligence, which I would prefer calling spiritual intelligence, although Gardner in his slightly reductionist style won't quite recognize. He says that his “review of the evidence on spirituality proved less straightforward” (Gardner, 2006, p.19) and he continues, which I think describes his reductionist or even absolutistic view on life, that “I don not believe that an intelligence should be confounded with an individual's phenomenological experience” (Gardner, p.20). Here we see a clear example of quadrant reductionism (suppressing the UL phenomenon). Further in his book Gardner talks about “giftedness” and its matrix. His view on creativity again describes his UR quadrant oriented approach on intelligences: he can't possibly see that creativity comes from a place of stillness or from the spiritual realm and his definition of creativity is really not worth mentioning, because the content of it is close to none. Gardner also talks of a term “genius” and “prodigy”, which represent unusually high intelligences from an early age; genius is an adult though who has mastered or expertise in particular intelligence.

Ken Wilber is not talking about intelligences but rather different lines of development or consciousness. He differentiates at least dozen developmental lines, which are for example: cognitive, moral, interpersonal, emotional, psychosexual, kinesthetic, self, values, needs etc. In each specific line there is a “life's question” for each: for example *What am I aware of?* Refers to cognitive line and *How do I feel about this?* refers to Emotional line respectively. Ken distinguishes different lines from each other but what is different from Gardner's view on intelligences is a point that the developmental lines are related to each other in certain ways: cognitive line must always be on a higher level or at the same level as for example values line. “Evidence shows that a person, *in the same act and absolutely simultaneously*, can be at one level of cognition, another level of self-sense, and yet another level of morals, which cannot be explained by models like SD that draw primarily on one line” (Wilber, 2006, p.64) and that particular consideration also differentiates Wilber's lines from Gardner's intelligences. The last difference between Gardner and Wilber is spiritual: Wilber refers to the stages of spiritual intelligence, which in this case specifically means Fowler's Stages of Faith (1995) research findings. And how I personally see this is that Wilber's view on developmental and multiple intelligences is more all-encompassing non-reductionist and trans-rational view.

Sources:

Howard Gardner (1993). *Multiple Intelligences*. Basic Books, 2006 edition.

Ken Wilber (2006). *Integral Spirituality*. Shambhala.

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