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## ***Minds at Work:***

# **LOOKING TO A MORE INTELLIGENT FUTURE**

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**HOST:** *Welcome to Minds at Work, where our job is to help your mind become inspired by your work. I'm your host, Drew Hoffmeyer. In today's episode, entitled, "Looking to a More Intelligent Future," Vernon Bryce, Master of Science, Managing Partner of Kenexa's European operations, examines the Multiple Intelligence Theory and the role it plays in work force productivity and organizational competitiveness. The work place has the greatest potential for the greatest purpose and significance on multiple intelligences.*

**MR. BRYCE:** Looking to a more intelligent future. This article looks at how the evolution of a new concept, a new reality of multiple intelligence theory, now promises much more for work place productivity and organizational competitiveness. With world pressures, world economic pressures in particular, bearing down, could this new theory, well it's a few years old now, but it's not really being applied so much inside business organizations, could this new opportunity to link through assessment and organizational by talent audit, could we use these ideas for a much more intelligent future in a business? So here's the proposition; is there more to life than academic intelligence? For years and years, in fact for over 100 years, one of the great benchmarks of people's abilities has been this concept of G, often called by psychologists, general intelligence that lies behind IQ. Well, as I said, it's about 100 years old, this concept. It was used way back by two very smart gentlemen called Stanford and Binet in France to predict success in educational environments. That was fine, but were we using computers over 100 years ago? IQ has played its part, it's led us down the path some way.

Let's move in to the 21st century; a very interesting set of work done by a guy called Howard Gardner. Last I heard he was at the Harvard Graduate School for Education, particularly the Harvard Project zero. They published way back at you in the '80s, then the idea of IQ theory may be more helpfully superseded by a theory or an approach or whole attitude to the opportunity of multiple intelligences. So this transition from IQ to MI, is there something in it? Well, Gardner would say, and this may affect the way we train people, assess people, even put people into different roles that many advances now in cognitive science, developmental psychology, are suggesting that this notion of intelligence is actually more widely across the brain than just cognitive. Furthermore, there might be a range of abilities he would call intelligences, that when they work together can actually create a lot more than academic intelligence alone. To be specific, Gardner initially identified 7 such faculties. Back then he described them as intelligences. Sure, there is a given, there is such thing as IQ. It is important to measure ability in an IQ kind of cognitive way, there is a lot of evidence to show that it really matters. But there's also a lot of evidence to show that these, while IQ exists, while G exists, while cognitive, mental abilities do exist, it isn't the whole picture. He would say there's a number of others.

First of all, he suggests that there's such a thing as body intelligence or to be more specific, kinesthetic intelligence. It's the intelligence to read the way in which the body is performing. Hand-eye coordination is one example. Of all the intelligences, he says, this is the one that's really taken for granted. Some of us are just really good kicking the football, playing a tennis ball, or a racquet. A lot of us believe this is just a highly trained ability, but Gardner suggests there is an inherent intelligence that helps us perform a broad range of complex bodily kinesthetic tasks in everyday life. He is suggesting that such things are kinesthetic intelligence.

People can perform at high levels often without being given a second thought. There are some people who you can just throw a ball or an object at and their ability to see it, prepare for its landing and to catch it is almost as they haven't given it a second thought. And there are other people, who for a number of reasons are not able to perform at the high level of others. He suggests that this intelligence gives us a much wider range of body movement, and it can be reflected throughout one's whole body. And that people can be much more

aware facially with their posture and their body language, and he describes it as kinesthetic intelligence. Imagine that with academic intelligence, this ability to be much more body aware. I think it's a very interesting area and very interesting for a number of key roles obviously, not just in sport.

Another one he's suggesting is that there is such a thing as musical intelligence. There are a number of people who can just naturally respond to sounds, to rhythms, to vibrations, to pitches, in a very unusual way, not just musical instruments, but the sounds of machines. They can listen to machines and detect different sounds going on that other people can't; and it isn't just a physical alertness to pitch. There are some people that can just tune in to the musicality is another way of describing it, of particular sounds. If you are not musical, it's very difficult to imagine this, but if you have this wonderful intelligence, is how Gardner would suggest, it really adds, not only to your appreciation of the environment, but to your opportunities to work within it. So there's three, in addition to academic intelligence, if you like, kinesthetic and musical.

He suggests a fourth, and it's linguistic. There are some people who just have that knack, that flair to either just pick up languages, to pick up accents, to actually respond to the way things are described in different languages. And I guess this is probably more obvious in our current education system, that some people are just very good at French or Spanish or German or Russian. Some people can pick up 4 or 5 languages. Now what's going on there? Some people can't even pick up their own language. They just stay within the confines of their own language, struggling to express linguistically what we might think are pretty obvious. So he is suggesting a whole range of ability, intelligences as he described it, in linguistic terms. So I suppose a very practical point is if you had a very high level of degree in arts or science, it may not actually help you linguistically. He's suggesting it's a separate domain.

Another one he is suggesting is what he calls mathematical and logical intelligence. This is probably more akin to our cognitive reasoning. It's really a pattern perception. What he's suggesting is, particularly as things get much more abstract, verbally, spatially, numerically, although those are subtly different, he is suggesting that some people can detect these patterns very, very easily, and other people just are unable to. For whatever reason, there must be some neurophysiological differences, there must be some possibly genetic, the DNA, but we're not going into that. What we're saying is that the overt business level, at the work level, there are some people who have this massive potential to grow their mathematical and logical reasoning. Perhaps this is something which is really important to something like programming, maybe something like web design.

While linguistic and musical and kinesthetic don't really help you that much, another one which is perhaps similar to kinesthetic is probably more a mental/spatial ability, while kinesthetic is you in your space. There are some people who can just imagine, picture, deal with shapes, forms, patterns, designs, both concrete and abstract in their mind. They can see color; they can see texture in a very different way to other people. He describes this as spatial intelligence. Possibly art and design is very much concerned with this. There are people who can just keep these images and patterns in their mind. Just as people can keep musicality in their mind, some people can keep these wonderful, spatial perceptions in their mind's eye and this enables them to create and invent totally new things in the spatial world.

A couple of others that he mentions in these 7, I think he's really interesting because I think it gives you a whole new way of looking at people. It gives you a new way of looking at families, job families, or your own personal family. So the other two, interpersonal, there are some people, just naturally flow through human relationships. Now a number of psychologists say well this is a personality factor. Well whatever it is, Gardner is suggesting it is a new area of ability, very different to what we said earlier, which was the logical, mathematical intelligence. And he called it interpersonal. There are some people who just weave their way through complex relationships, sales, service, communication roles, teaching, education, legal, those that can see through the balance of human relationships, whereas, others just clumsily bump along the path where interpersonal excellence is required.

The 7th one, so far, he describes as intrapersonal. Some people have a very sound sense of self. Other people, I can hear it now, are saying, "Well what does that mean?" Well I guess it's not just introspection. There are some people who are really in touch with their inner world. They kind of know their limits; they know their abilities. They know where to place their efforts rather than just bounce around, waiting for the next opportunity. Other psychologists would call this an internal locus of control. They just seem to have that very strong sense of self. Maybe it shows up as self-confidence, but however we describe it, Gardner describes it as a 7th intelligence, this sense of intrapersonal effectiveness. So that list of 7 gives us a very interesting basis on which, for example, to train or to assess, or job fit or to build a team because we probably need a blend of all of this, depending on the team.

Out of interest, recently Gardner added an 8th intelligence to this list. I guess it's ready for his next book, but it is quite interesting. And he

calls it the naturalist. I guess we'd call this green intelligence. There are some people who just naturally recognize, appreciate and understand the natural world around us. I guess we would probably call it eco intelligence. There are those who just sense ecosystems. They sense the macro and the micro systems and how they interact. And some children have this ability. We're not saying this is an adult intelligence. There are some people who are just naturally drawn in one dement often to just the microcosms within a garden or within the sea or with the natural environment. And others are still thinking, "What are they on? What are they looking at?" Imagine the child let loose in a field, let loose on a moor, let loose by the seaside. Isn't it wonderful to imagine what are they seeing? Are they picking up linguistic, the musical, the kinesthetic, the spatial, the mathematical? Is there an interpersonal element here, an intrapersonal, or are they just soaking up the whole natural environment and seeing patterns that would really help us, perhaps manage our flora and our fauna slightly differently. And they may look very inventive. But it's because they are more in touch with the natural world such as some people are more in touch with their feelings. Some people are really great at reading other people's feelings. It makes us wonder how they do that. There's been some discussion about a 9th one and possibly a 10th one. And in fact it doesn't matter how many intelligences there are. What matters is there is a whole range of gifts.

The 9th one, by the way, is what he calls existential intelligence. It's more the philosophy, more the principles behind things. Hopefully there may be room yet for political intelligence. There are some people who just have that natural ability to flow through political environments and hopefully with a bit of existential intelligence, who are we, where are we, what are we doing, where are we going, to give some real thought into our existence. It may make a difference to the way we even work within HR. I suppose it would be interesting to see whether there was such a thing as spiritual intelligence at some stage. The point is, if we imagine that before this podcast, or maybe you've thought of this already, I guess 90% of people have always thought about this, there must be more than just academic intelligence. So the current thinking gives us the opportunity to imagine that everyone, to some degree, has some of these intelligences.

Now Gardner doesn't go on to where it's distributed. I guess it's possible that a few people have none of these and their intelligence is yet to be discovered. I guess it's also possible that some people have multiple intelligences. They may be very fortunate to have 6 or 7 of these. I wonder how they manage those in priorities in their lives.

But here's a thought. And this is really the main thought. What is it that we can do about this in the work place? If we could understand and exploit and apply these multiple intelligences, then this could have a massive knock-on effect into productivity, perhaps work design, and ultimately product design, ultimately process design, and then onward to market and marketing effectiveness. It just gives us more choices, more opportunities, different ways of looking at the work force. How many people are we forcing down the line of their least intelligence? How many people have got this immense intelligence which is not yet exploited? I am often fascinated by suddenly someone popping out of their groove and suddenly becoming a marathon runner or popping out of their groove and suddenly writing a book, or suddenly popping out of the groove and just being brilliant at charity work. What's going on there? My suspicion is that this additional intelligence has been lurking around for years and are just waiting for the spark. So I am very interested myself, not only in what's happening here, but how can we support the application of these processes? So in support of this, the view is there are a number of multiple intelligences at play. How else is it that we can explain that many people have this massive desire to learn through one channel, which is very different, to another channel. So just pulling this together, ultimately the implications for us as individuals and organizations are tremendous, productivity potential, learning potential, selection, working in groups, particularly project teams, even to career choice and innovation.

There are many ways we can apply this reality to new ways of working. Maybe it gives the opportunity, in the career sense or in a personal development sense, to actually transform working lives and organizations to a much more richer and diverse experience.

At this point, there is another point to make, and some of you may be thinking this already, well what about this concept of emotional intelligence? Well the kind of way I see it and a number of psychologists see it, is that emotional Intelligence published around about the '80s or '90s, based on some research which went on really well I think, but wasn't really published until the idea was crystallized, led by Daniel Goldman, who was one of the co-founders of a unit called the Collaborative, Social and Emotional Learning Center at the Yale University Child Study Center. Originally, this was started up with the aim of helping schools and educational establishments, introduced much more emotional literacy to kind of counterbalance some of the bad things that were going on inside schools. Well, I guess a number of us have read this, but my view is if there's room for IQ, which is 100 years old, and there is room for EQ, which is probably, to be fair, 20 or 30 years old, there is a reality at EQ, we'll just see MI as an extension of EI. Emotional Intelligence is this awareness, a self-awareness in particular, a self-discipline, to delay gratification, for example in some of the research, to persist and to read others. And when you read these abilities of self-awareness, self-discipline, persistence, empathy, they read very much like a pocket of MI. So I think these guys are being on to the same thing.

“Working with Emotional Intelligence,” published in 1998, suggested that work place competencies could be based on EI. And I guess this is the same proposition as Gardner. They are both saying the same thing. They are both moving away from this idea of single cognitive intelligence. Maybe others would call this personality, but what we should imagine now is that there’s a whole range of abilities. We don’t denigrate IQ. I really strongly believe, and this is backed by evidence, that cognitive abilities are still an excellent predictor of certain roles, particularly leadership and management roles and supervisory roles and certain design roles, but not every role, says this combination of intelligence which gives us a tremendous opportunity. Goldman has actually said EI is just a different way of being smart. It’s a different way of knowing what’s going on. So while IQ can help us, maybe along 20% of the path, maybe EI brings us up to about 50%. Maybe we can think of Gardner’s predictions that MI makes for a number of new opportunities. It kind of climbs us up to around 60 and 80%. Once we identify, and here’s the interesting thing, do we know, once we identify our own strengths in these new areas, we can perhaps stop asking the question. This is really probably a fundamental question which I will probably leave you with, is rather than saying, how intelligent am I, we should be saying, where am I intelligent? Where are my intelligences, rather than what is my intelligence? Looking ahead, this can create an immense competitive advantage.

MI and EI could create some massive opportunities for us. We could actually develop talent maps. We could map the talent of a roll across these intelligences and we could set out a new basis for selection against these intelligences. And as the internet comes to our rescue, we can perhaps put these online. One of the problems, of course, in putting these online is that we’re playing to the logical, mathematical, reasoned, cognitive respondent rather than the musicality, the kinesthetic. So one of the challenges is finding a way to access these levels of ability. So while we can see that this new approach will give employers valuable insights into the different things that we could do and use to increase productivity and performance, the real challenge is going to be, how do we access the results had we accessed these hidden talents? Beyond this of course, MI does offer us a real chance to release innovation, to create genuine empowerment based on someone’s ability, their range of abilities, where is your intelligence. It makes you think about teams in a very, very different way. So that’s the point, IQ served us now for 100 years, EI, 20 or 30 years. Let’s now consider how MI, both conceptually, practically and permanently can make a difference to our world of work.

**HOST:** *We hope you enjoyed hearing today’s episode, and thank you for joining us at Minds at Work, where we offer you insight into becoming better employees, parents, partners, friends and neighbors. Visit our website at [Kenexapods.com](http://Kenexapods.com) to find the original transcript of this episode or just to drop us a line. That’s KENEXAPODS.com. This episode was brought to you by Kenexa, a leader in building the world’s greatest work forces and serving humanity every day.*

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