

## New Developments in the Application of Multiple Intelligences

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On Saturday November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 22 motivated participants gathered at the Bio Children Rehabilitation Foundation in Arnhem to be part of the first networking day of the aMI foundation, the "Association of Multiple Intelligences". We had great expectations.

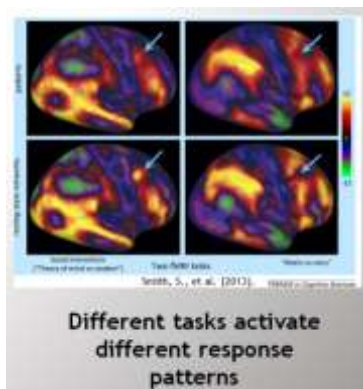
*The concept of Multiple Intelligences was developed by Howard Gardner. Gardner attributes the human capacity to solve problems, create valuable knowledge and products, and provide services, to 8 relatively independent intellectual faculties. He distinguishes verbal / linguistic intelligence (language smart), logical / mathematical intelligence (number smart), visual / spatial intelligence (picture smart), musical / rhythmic intelligence (music smart), physical / kinesthetic intelligence (body smart), nature-oriented intelligence (nature smart), interpersonal intelligence (people smart) and intrapersonal intelligence (self smart).*

The Association Multiple Intelligence (aMI) has an important goal and driving force: the increase of knowledge and applicability of Multiple Intelligences (MI's), for a broader use of all the intelligences in people's work and life. In order to achieve this goal the association organizes various activities, including this networking day.

The theme of the networking day is the relationship between IQ and Multiple Intelligences and the use and application of Multiple Intelligences in organizations. As a (career) coachee, I myself have positive experiences with MI's. So I am looking for more opportunities to use these concepts in my own work. I am curious what the sessions of the day's program will bring and am especially interested in the approach toward networking: how are we going to make this happen?

### Branton Shearer Talks about the Validity of MI Measurements

The first speaker is the American scientist Branton Shearer. He is the developer of the Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS™). This inventory measures the 8 different intelligences as differentiated by Howard Gardner. In his lecture, Shearer takes us on a voyage of discovery through hundreds of publications of neuroscientists. It takes some adjustment to get used to the idea that



neuroscientists understand our

intelligences as complex electrochemical reactions and interactions in our brain. One of the advantages of this approach is that it allows for quantification: you can measure brain activity while people do tasks that are related to one of the intelligences. The results show that there are indeed different neural networks to be identified in accordance with the 8 intelligences. It is a fascinating presentation illustrated by a myriad of brain scans and brainy pictures. As a tribute to Kinesthetic Intelligence we do simple exercises to

experience some of the findings: what parts are used in your brain when for instance one stands on one leg while leaning forward. The discoveries of neuroscience raise many questions from the participants about scientific insights and different ways of looking at intelligence. Shearer gives nuanced answers to the various questions; one notices that he is well versed in the topic as he switches effortlessly to lead the discussion through a wide range of related topics.

I found this an interesting lecture about the relationship between the measured brain activities and the different MI tasks. It also taught me that my knowledge about the technique of interpreting MRI scans falls short of having an in-depth discussion about the outcomes and the significance of this type of research. However, if I want to dive deeper into this topic, the opportunity will come in October 2018, as a glance on the next presentation tells me.

### **Conference 'Celebrate 2.0' by Monika de Waal and Monique van Vliet - de Jager**

In this session we start immediately with networking. That means working in small groups on an introductory assignment with the participants at one's table. It is captivating to find out that others are working with the MI from a different world.

Monika de Waal and Monique van Vliet - de Jager give a short presentation about the design of the conference Celebrate 2.0 'Developing (MI) talents' which will be held in October 2018. There will be a scientific thread, a practical application thread and a



creative together-on-the-stroke thread. In three groups we walk past the three threads and have a short brainstorm on topics that we would like to see at the conference. The conversations in the subgroups are very animated and sometimes equally passionate. People talk and develop their ideas while talking. It works well to develop a thorough line of thought together about ways to contribute to concepts and the body of knowledge of Multiple Intelligences.

### **Haiko Jessurun 'MI's and the Under-utilisation of Talent'.**

After lunch we are immersed in the world of organizations and the use and application of MI's. The psychologist Haiko Jessurun kicks off with his research on the question why such a high amount of employees are chronically underperforming in their work (the estimates vary between 6 - 16% shows a quick scan on Google). Is there a mismatch between the abilities of a person and the demands that a job requires? In his research, Jessurun builds a bridge between the world of child therapy and organizational science. He has adapted a well-known model to visualize giftedness ('Munich model giftedness') so that it becomes applicable for adults in their work. The model (see the picture below) shows the interaction between predictive factors (the multiple intelligences on the left in yellow) and performance areas (work results on the right in green). People can use their talents to a greater or

lesser extent to perform under the influence of moderators, that are personality factors (in blue above) and work factors (in pink below). It is a splendid and complex model that you can talk about for hours. We won't do that. Instead Jessurun shows how he tests this model. He measures the individual abilities with the MIDAS™ (Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales) and the influence of work factors with the KEYS inventory. The latter is a validated instrument that measures the creative climate in an organization on six dimensions. Jessurun has asked a large group of employees in a GGZ (mental health) organization to complete both inventories. The results are very interesting. It appears that people with one kind of MI pattern in their profile need different control options in their work than people with a different pattern in their MI profile. The presentation of the results leads to an animated discussion about the ways in which the MI's are measured and the meaning of the different intelligences. As an organizational consultant, I am curious about the next step: how can you give people the opportunity to fill in their working environment to meet their own needs? A practical application of Multiple Intelligences is shown in the last presentation.



### **William Tomà 'Practical Application of MI for Talent Support of Facility Managers'**

William Tomà is the operational CEO of YASK, a large facility service provider. Organizations like KPN, RABObank, and a hospital can rely on YASK and ask for the entire facility management (integrated facility management), or a part of it (ie. cleaning in a hospital). YASK is aware of the fast developments in the facility services and develops into a management organization in order to respond adequately to this challenge. This implies that the organization needs a radically different way of organizing: other teams with different tasks, new forms of management, to name but a few examples.



YASK uses the MI scores of its employees as a basis to talk about preferred activities and developmental opportunities. Frits Schoeren (organizational coach and chair of the aMI Foundation) helps the organization with the interpretation, use and application of the Multiple Intelligence scores. It is a fascinating story about the use of Multiple Intelligences in the event of a major organizational change and the questions that need to be dealt with.

### **Continuous Knowledge Sharing and Networking ....**

It was an intensive day. The group was small enough for speakers to keep in touch with the whole audience and to allow for discussion of their questions. The group was also large enough to discuss experiences with MI in small subgroups during the brainstorming sessions and elaborate on themes while having a nice walk during lunch break. I learnt that the application of MI's mainly lies in guiding individuals (coachees, children in education, participants in training) in developing their self-knowledge and in (talent) development in organizations. I found the experiences of the speakers who used MI's in organizations inspiring. The discussion in the organizational field about, for example, Quality of Work can derive a new impulse from the Multiple Intelligences. I am also curious if MI's can provide a new perspective for the remuneration policy. These are interesting possibilities to investigate. If more people come to the aMI networking days - and that will certainly happen, in view of the need for more knowledge about Multiple Intelligences - the aMI Foundation can continue to experiment with forms of work that will encompass theory and practical knowledge. Facilitated group discussions, workshops with working methods and applications for MI, experimenting with pop-up research; I am already looking forward to it.

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