

INCLUSIVE INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract. Inclusive education happens when all children and students regardless of their specific features, disabilities or gifts are placed under conditions that enhance their personal potential and talents to develop. Successful inclusive education is being achieved mainly when the differences and diversity among children and students are accepted, comprehended and taken into account. Extremely significant appears also the attitude of the adults applying the integration in practice. All pedagogic professionals and concerned sides such as parents and community are responsible for the inclusion quality. The ability of everybody participating in the inclusion process to support, tolerate and accept the diversity and individuality is in itself intelligence – inclusive intelligence. The degree of inclusive intelligence depends not only on the information volume, knowledge and experience, but also on the willingness of every pedagogic professional to support and accept the diversity in children.

Keywords: inclusive education; inclusive intelligence; diversity; teaching

Introduction

In the existing literature focused on the topical theme of inclusive intelligence there are numerous recommendations and conclusions what the integral pedagogic professional should be. What features the professional should comply with, how well trained and effective this professional should be in the enormous inclusive field. The high expectations, the environmental requirements, the generation change and the sensitive parents are considered as only part of the challenges. Intellectual challenges in front of the pedagogic professionals impose development of a complex of qualities supporting them in the not so easy task to be integrating adults in the educational environment. While researching and analyzing the theoretic visions on this theme, a new idea for “*the inclusive intelligence*” was formed among pedagogic professionals. To my knowledge, there is no public information in Bulgarian on inclusive intelligence and the term itself is not used. In the search I did in Internet, in the accessible literature and the scientific periodicals, I never came upon such formulation. The publications found when using the key words “inclusive intelligence” are mainly in English and are connected mostly with organizational development and the attainment of team goals. The inclusive intelligence is being

considered as a new intelligence type for a new type of world. This idea comes from the perception that the repetition and strengthening of inclusive behavior in a particular organization transforms it into habit. The inclusive intelligence does not indicate how clever you are, it shows how clever you make your team¹⁾.

Billy Vaughn considers the inclusive intelligence as development of the inclusive habits that should be fair, supportive and in cooperation with colleagues²⁾. A similar view is shared by Reed Flesher, who believes that inclusive intelligence focuses on developing the talent of all employees, rather than focusing only on the best talent or the challenges facing the organization as a whole³⁾. In this text the formulation “inclusive intelligence” is introduced directly in relation with the inclusive education, as well as with development among the pedagogic professionals of sensitivity and acceptance of inclusion.

In our dynamic and globalized world there are high expectations towards the pedagogic professionals and they include our ability to make conscientiously the correct conclusions and insights about the necessities of every child, student, parent or colleague. Significant part of inclusive intelligence take the assessment of children’s and students’ necessities, provision of possibilities for self-expression, development and participation in the peers’ group at school. The expectations towards the pedagogic professionals are to manage with the challenging documentation and to adapt the curriculum in compliance with the necessities of different children. The study carried out by Damianov reveals that “not all the time teachers in general education school are satisfied with the inclusive education process as frequently they consider it as an administrative burden” (Damianov 2020, 153).

Significant aspect in this management process seems to be our ability to work with and manage the continuous information flow directed to us on administrative, personal and interpersonal level. The high level of pedagogic skills comprises qualitative communication with the children and students both on personal and group levels, organization of the schoolwork in an interactive and inclusive way. The intelligence level is not always dependant on information quantity (knowledge and experience) that we have gathered. Multiple intelligence is based on our willingness to learn, to widen and upgrade our attitudes, experience and comprehension. It is also basic to cope with the professional requirements. The skill to maintain high level of adaptability, sensitivity and humanity towards the children, the parents and colleagues seems an exceptional challenge.

Howard Gardner considers the multiple intelligence as dominant for man as a biological type. Everyone of us has different dominant intelligence types that assist us to compensate our weaknesses and go forward. If directed to one common goal the intelligence types do complement and support mutually. Both children and their teachers comprehend the world acquiring new knowledge and skills in compliance with their preferences and strong sides. Everyone of us possesses unique skills and talents. Pedagogic professionals have to take into account this intelligence feature

and to work using the strong sides of their students. For Gardner there is no unified intelligence responsible for our good management. Our response to the environment requirements and messages is a complex integrating in itself different intelligence types. In his book “Multiple Intelligences” he differentiates 9/nine/ main intelligence types (Gardner 2014). Gardner demonstrates that everyone has the full intelligence specter, but with different stage of development. Inclusive intelligence is a combination of multiple intelligences that supports the pedagogic professionals to accept the “otherness” and to discover new creative paths for inclusion. This is our ability to find out the position of every child in the general view of the kid’s group in a way that everyone feels important and acknowledged. In days of free choice and wide specter of identities children bear multiple experience, parents’ attitude and personal experiences. The path to real inclusion is accepting the idea that differences enhance and widen the specter and cultivate the sense of diversity. Pedagogic professionals are destined to set the direction of this new thinking and this new intelligence type.

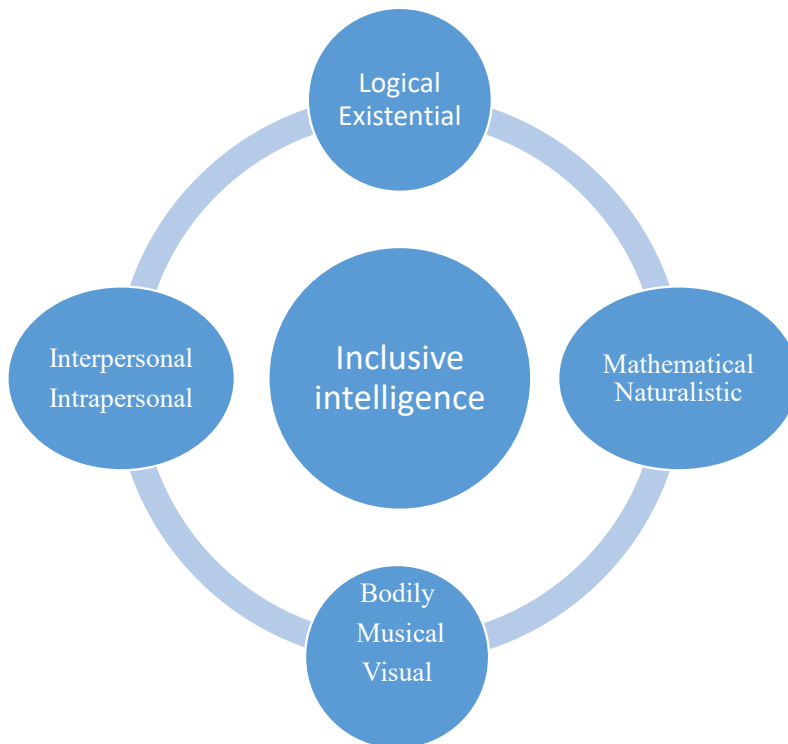


Figure 1. Types of multiple intelligence

Here are mentioned several basic features of the different intelligence types and their use in the work of pedagogic professionals.

1. **Linguistic:** it comprises the skill of pedagogic professionals to master their verbal expression and to use the words to the children's benefit. The base of this intelligence type includes also the well-known training with teaching and transfer of verbal information.

2. **Logical-mathematical:** here the pedagogic professionals apprehend information via figures while processing exact data. This intelligence stays in the base of logical thinking, digital skills and competencies and work with graphic systems.

3. **Musical:** here the skills of pedagogic professionals are connected with their good ear for music, the voice intonation and rhythm in daily speech.

4. **Bodily-kinesthetic:** here the main motor is the body. This is our gift to take the best spatial position and still be sufficiently active and still respond to the surrounding young energy at school.

5. **Visual-spatial:** this intelligence type is connected with spatial thinking, the attitude to colours, lines, shapes, forms and with the creation of inspiring and supportive school environment.

6. **Interpersonal:** this intelligence is particularly important for pedagogic professionals as it is basic for their skills to analyze the students' intentions and feelings. This can be done verbally as well as not verbally.

7. **Intrapersonal:** this intelligence type is characterized by self-control and formation of adequate and precise self-appraisal. This skill is highly valued in the supportive professions and in work with children and students.

8. **Naturalistic:** here the contact with nature and environment friendly thinking towards the surrounding natural world are leading. In the dynamic and urbanized world this is extremely beneficial and a highly-praised, responsible attitude towards the world.

9. **Existential:** it is connected with rationalization and appreciation of Life, of teacher's profession and its importance and impact on the future of children and the world.

To the list of types of intelligences we can quite naturally add another type, namely "nclusive intelligence". In English, the phrase is found as "inclusive intelligence", but is predominantly related to organizational development and the achievement of team goals. The meaning of the proposed terminological expression "inclusive intelligence" in the aspect of inclusive education is the ability that helps teachers to accept the new and different, to be flexible, tolerant of the specifics of all children and students.

In my opinion, to this Gardner's list of intelligences, we could add naturally yet another type, namely "the inclusive intelligence". The importance of inclusive intelligence is growing intensively in the global and dynamic world we live in where communication is really worshiped and daily we come across diversity. In

pedagogic profession the inclusive skills become primary and they are prerequisite for adequate management with the current educational environment. The inclusive intelligence is our ability to perceive the general picture, to apply in practice the complete school approach for inclusion by incorporating every concerned side. Today the educational systems are challenged more than ever to find ways for supporting personal development in line with the community group development.

Inclusive intelligence: it is the ability helping us to accept novelty and diversity. This intelligence gives a chance all children and students to develop themselves in peer's environment. This development is being assisted and managed by every adult on the territory of the respective educational institution. In my opinion, there is place for a new formulation including in itself the skill of pedagogic professionals to render support, acceptance and respect towards the otherness despite its origin.

Extremely high-valued is the ability of pedagogic professional to be flexible, open-minded and curious towards the new, which brings up the inevitable change. Less and less is said about teacher's personality, about its qualities and features. In the opinion of Aneliya Rangelova in our educational system there is "...deficiency of personalities who carry in themselves a mature productivity and affection" (Rangelova 2017, 27). It is quite logical for us to want and require the educational system to enlist and employ open-minded and tolerant persons. These should be adults having no unnecessary prejudices towards the type, ethnicity, disability and gifts of their students. The current environment is supportive and encouraging the exchange of ideas, behavior and developmental philosophies. Long ago school is not anymore in the position of bearer of "the new", information is quite abundant and accessible by everybody willing to find it. The role of education and pedagogic professionals who apply it, is to mould the structure, to "civilize" and inspire children in the process of their personal growth and development. The socializing function of education being the main and the most long-term social impact on the adolescents is placed increasingly on the first line. The mastering of social behavior code is closely related to acceptance of differences and "the otherness". Here, the example of adults in education, their adequate attitude, their way to accept the new and their ability to manage the change are really leading.

Conclusion

Inclusive intelligence will permit us to set up a more supportive educational system lacking no criticism and in the mean time being not rigid and hardened. The wide path to inclusion comprises flexible skills, respecting the opinion of others and generating conditions everyone to express their selves. It taking into account the opinion of others, as well as creating conditions for everybody to express personal vision. It is important to preserve particular values and traditions in Bulgarian education, but it is important as well to keep pace with the time and its messages.

Once again we face the challenge to create a mixture of the good “oldie” and the beneficial new. Everyone being employed in the educational system more than five years is aware that the system could be changed only and solely if the change is accepted by its employees.

The development brings benefits, but also certain fear of the new. The conscious and unconscious oppositions among the pedagogic professionals are the key to the change that we all need. Development of the inclusive intelligence will help pedagogic professionals to become aware and apply their strong features while working with children and students. This is part of the path to revive the power of Bulgarian education and spirit. This would be the revival that all of us so ardently dream for and want to witness again in our kindergartens and schools.

NOTES

1. https://medium.com/@j_brucestewart/the-new-iq-a-new-kind-of-intelligence-for-a-new-kind-of-world-72d453b3ada3 (visited on 14.09.2020).
2. Vaughn, B. (2020). What is Inclusive Intelligence?. Diversity Officer <https://diversityofficermagazine.com/what-is-inclusive-intelligence> (visited on 14.09.2020).
3. <https://thrivetrm.com/incorporating-inclusive-intelligence-talent-management-strategy> (visited on 13.09.2020).

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