Some Considerations on the Social Construction of Multiple Intelligence. Appreciative Intelligence

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Abstract: In the context of the development of postmodern constructive socialist psychology, Thatchenkery & Metzker (2006) formulated the hypothesis of an appreciative intelligence. The presumption of the existence of a form of appreciative intelligence that is responsible for the positive results of successful individuals is consistent with the theory of multiple intelligences, formulated by Howard Gardner (1983), as a deconstruction of the idea of human intelligence. In this article we stop on the construct appreciative intelligence, which implies the individual's ability to sense the inherent positive in different people and situations, choosing the positive perspectives of development and the route from the strong points of the present, to the identified positive goal. In this article we will discuss the relationship between appreciative intelligence and appreciative inquiry, and the possibility of objectivity and measurement of appreciative intelligence as a general human aptitude. Appreciative intelligence is the ability of individuals to appreciate the positive, while the appreciative survey is the specific human and organizational development methodology centered on the appreciation of the positive.

Keywords: appreciative intelligence, multiple intelligence, appreciative survey, reframing, appreciation.

Introduction

In the context of the development of postmodern constructive socialist psychology, Thatchenkery & Metzker (2006) formulated the hypothesis of an appreciative intelligence. The presumption of the existence of a form of appreciative intelligence that is responsible for the positive results of successful individuals is consistent with the theory of multiple intelligences, formulated by Howard Gardner (1983), as a deconstruction of the idea of human intelligence. In this article, we stop on the construct appreciative intelligence, which implies the individual's ability to sense the inherent positive in different people and situations, choosing the positive perspectives of development and the route from the strong points of the present, to the identified positive goal.

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present to the identified positive goal. In the article we will discuss the relationship between appreciative intelligence and appreciative inquiry, and the possibility of objectivity and measurement of appreciative intelligence as a general human aptitude. Appreciative intelligence is the ability of individuals to appreciate the positive, while the appreciative survey is the specific human and organizational development methodology centered on the appreciation of the positive. The appreciative intelligence was developed in the context of attempts to substantiate the appreciative practices developed from the appreciative survey: appreciative management (Checkland, 1994), appreciative evaluation (Cojocaru, 2008, Watson, 2013), leadership appreciation (Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015), appreciative social welfare (Bradu & Sandu, 2009), appreciative supervision (Cojocaru, 2010, Caras & Sandu, 2014), appreciative education and training (Sandu, Cojocaru & Ponea, 2010), public administration focused on appreciation (Schooley, 2008; Sandu, 2010), appreciative parenting (Cojocaru, 2011; Cojocaru, 2015), appreciative political discourse (Rao, 2014).

Appreciative intelligence

Appreciative intelligence is the ability to see the generative potential in any situation (the oak in an acorn) and to update it. People with high appreciation intelligence are able to visualize and create small sequential steps that build each other, creating an impetus for changing individuals and their environments, which results in positive results (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). Appreciation is defined as a self-explanatory behavioral construct of goodwill that brings positive influences to the organization in time (Chang, Lin, & Chen, 2012; Enalls-Fenner, 2015).

Definitions of appreciative intelligence

Appreciative intelligence is the ability to unite, sublime and expand the intelligence from a wide range of well-known intelligences, namely: linguistic, non-linguistic and person-centered, being basically a kind of meta intelligence, bringing together all kinds of intelligence in for constructive purposes (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006).

In another sense, the appreciative intelligence represents: the ability to reflect and perceive generative potential in difficult situations, and engage in intentional actions to transform potential into positive results (Thatchenkery, Cooperrider & Avital, 2010).

In plastic terms, appreciative intelligence is the ability to see the oak as early as acorn.
The discovery of appreciative intelligence

The discovery of appreciative intelligence by Tojo Thatchenkery (2009) was achieved in the late 1980s, when he studied the characteristics of successful Silicon Valley entrepreneurs in California. The first mention of this term in a publication was made in 1996. Thatchenkery’s hypothesis (2009) was that entrepreneurial success, at least in the IT field, was due to a particular ability to grasp the potential for growth and development of a system (Silicon Valley entrepreneurship) and how to update that potential. The research by Thatchenkery (2009) showed that successful entrepreneurs intentionally recalled market signals as development opportunities.

Excellent intelligence in the context of the theory of multiple intelligences

Tojo Thatchenkery (2009) shows that although some of the ideas that underpin the proposal of appreciative intelligence as a particular form of intelligence come from the appreciative survey, in his vision, appreciation is more a skill than a social practice. Appreciative intelligence is similarly understood as social intelligence, in the sense of multiple intelligence, as they are described by Howard Gardner (1983). Appreciative intelligence is conceptualized by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) as a cognitive ability available to every person, to a lesser or larger, but actively and culturally mediated level.

Appreciative intelligence and appreciative inquiry

The appreciative intelligence and the appreciative survey are correlated, the first being the ability to act appreciatively (in order to identify the development potential of a system, while the second represents a practical methodology for updating that potential, in fact a situation of putting in act the appreciative intelligence (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006).

Appreciative inquiry

The concept of appreciative inquiry was launched by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivatsva in the paper Appreciative inquiry in organizational life, which appeared in 1987. The appreciative inquiry is a particular way of questioning the process of organizational development and / or coaching to prefigure the future, by adopting positive relationships starting from the fundamental value inherent to the person, organization or situation, increasing the capacity of the system of cooperation and change.
Some Considerations on the Social Construction of Multiple Intelligence (…)
Antonio SANDU

(Ponea, 2010b, Kamil, 2011). The method’s fundamental presupposition is the commitment of individuals to improve their own performance.

According to David Cooperrider & Diana Witney (1999; 2005), the appreciative survey is a co-transformative research of the positive from individuals and organizations, being a transforming discovery of the life-generating sources of living systems in their moments of maximum efficiency and maximum creative capacity in the economic, ecological and human field. The appreciative inquiry is seen as a central way of querying the strengths of the system to understand, anticipate and maximize the creative potential.

Principles of appreciative practice:
- social action is likely to be interpreted differently according to the context in which it occurs, and none of the interpretations can be objectively superior to another;
- human actions are prescribed by ideas, beliefs, intentions or theories;
- transforming conventional human behaviors is accomplished by changing ideas, theories, conventional ideologies.

Components of appreciative intelligence

The three components of the appreciative intelligence are:
- redefining the framework or "reframing";
- the appreciation of the positive elements;
- discovering the way in which the future can evolve, starting from the present (Thatchenkery and Matzker, 2006).

Diagram proposed by Simona Ponea (2010a)
1. **Reframing** is the change in the perspective through which things are perceived, the redefinition of the framework is seen as a psychological process by which a person changes the perspective under which he considers an object, a person or a social context. Reframing is a process of redefining the framework of the problem into the challenge for development. In the act of perception, the person emphasizes a series of stimuli on the basis of which they form representations of the object. Reframing is the process of changing perceptions by changing stimuli which are given attention to. Similarly in higher cognitive processes, focusing on one or other of the perspectives of the studied phenomenon, is a reframing. A half-full glass may also be considered half-empty, depending on the focus on the liquid in the glass, or the volume of the glass from which the liquid is missing (Thatchenkery & Matzker, 2006). An example of such reframing is the reconsideration of pupil's cognitive disabilities as a learning deficit and not a handicap (Thatchenkery & Matzker, 2006). Changing the operational definition of cognitive disability reduces the risk of marginalization of the children, but also focuses on the intervention on the development of inclusive educational programs.

2. **Positive appreciation** is the ability to sense the positive in events, situations, even if they seem to be initial obstacles, to focus on the positive elements (affirmative) out of the totality of elements of a social phenomenon. In the view of Thatchenkery and Matzker (2006) the appreciation of the positive is the selectivity and the judging of the (positive) value of something specific. The appreciative state is a particular mental condition of availability for valorization, and recognition of the positive in individuals, organizations, or even situations that people face. Although the appreciative potential exists in each person, the appreciative choice (the orientation towards what goes, the inherent positive in individuals, organizations, life situations) is a voluntary option that develops during socialization processes. Thatchenkery and Matzker (2006) consider that this capacity is specific to successful people, but it can also be educated, making possible the development of personal development programs and appreciative coaching. Appreciation of the positive is about identifying a core quality already existing in a person, for example a personal development program, or children with a particular learning style - as were previously reframed the children with cognitive impairment. For example, these children can focus on other types of intelligence, which can be a prerequisite for personal development and successful socio-professional integration.

3. **The way in which the present future is born** represents the ability to make connections between the generative aspects of the present
and the desired future. The positive elements that may be the prerequisites for the construction of a desired future situation exist in a particular form at present, and the person possessing the appreciative intelligence is able to link the existing resources to the desired state of affairs (Thatchenkery & Matzker 2006; Gurjack, 2012). In the educational process, for example, it is intended to develop those types of intelligence and generally those skills that exist in that person, and to draw a positive path of social and personal development of the beneficiary.

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<tr>
<th>Appreciative Intelligence Components</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reframing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appreciating the Positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeing How the Future Unfolds from the Present</td>
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<th>Appreciative Intelligence Qualities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
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<td>Convictions One's Actions Matter</td>
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<td>Tolerance for Uncertainty</td>
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<td>Irrepressible Resilience</td>
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**Tabel -** Appreciative Intelligence Components and Qualities, *taken over after Gurjack* (2012, p. 34)

The 4 qualities that a person with a high coefficient of appreciative intelligence possesses:

- *Perseverance* - two aspects of cognitive perseverance are taken into consideration, as a focus on a behavioral situation, and behavioural perseverance as a consequence of successful behavior without, however, fixing on behaviors that have become inadequate in the meantime, or on a cognitive success strategy in the past but inadequate to the current situation. Perseverance is the ability not to abandon a desirable idea or behavior and identified as positive until the desired and predicted results have been fully achieved. On the other hand, success is believed to be based on previous successful experiences, and the consequently repeated successive experiences strengthen self-confidence, especially if they are recognized as such by the appreciative attitude of others.

- *Confidence that own actions matter* - is achieved by capitalizing on the results already achieved. The attitude of self-appraisal is also necessary, self-appreciation being the result of recounting experiences as successful, starting from the principle that there is no failure, there’s only feedback. Valuing the results obtained should gradually replace the potential focus on failure of the person, and the positive outcomes to be valued by minimizing the effects of the experiences considered to be failure by rejoining it in the learning experience. The imitation of positive experiences, the anticipatory
socialization of success, and the appreciative generative language are as many instruments of self-belief that their own actions matter. Fixing the control locus on the inside favors maintaining confidence in the ability to sustain and increase the value of its own actions. Self-confirmed prophecies are an important resource for the self-esteem process.

- **Increased tolerance to uncertainty** - is an ability to accept unknown things and see the opportunities that can emerge, rather than the risks to which individuals can be subjected. Ambiguous situations can be interpreted in the positive sense as a growth advantage or on the contrary, as a disruptive factor generating discomfort and anxiety. This ability is important for successful entrepreneurial risk (Thatchenkery & Matzker, 2006). Tolerance to uncertainty favors innovation and adaptation to new, both at the individual and organizational level.

- **Increased resilience** is the ability to quickly recover from difficult situations, and the ability to see positive elements even in the most difficult situations (Thatchenkery, 2009).

![Model of Appreciative Intelligence Development, after Thatchenkery & Metzker (2006)](image)

**Measuring the appreciative intelligence**

Until now, there are no series of globally developed and calibrated tests that accurately measure the appreciative degree of intelligence of an individual. In literature (Heinzman, 2013), the AI-Practices Scale tool was used as measuring instrument, created by Verleysen and Van Acker in 2012,
but it indirectly measures appreciative intelligence and is actually designed to measure the relationship between work engagement and the efficiency of the appreciative survey carried out in the organization under the conditions of prospective thinking. The test measures the level of appreciability in an organization and, depending on it, the efficiency of intelligence in that organization. Research by Verleysen and Van Acker (2012) using the AI-Scale survey has shown that this scale is valid - for the United States - in highlighting positive or negative engagement when specific appraisal survey methods are used. The authors believe that this tool is valid for measuring the appreciative intelligence in the organization, and that it could be extrapolated around the world (Heinzman, 2013).

Epsitemological perspectives on the idea of appreciative intelligence

The principles underlying the appreciative survey and the definition of appreciative intelligence are based on the theory of the social construction of reality in Berger and Lukmann (1991), and in Gergen's (2005) constructivist version. From the constructivist perspective, Thatchenkery (2009) takes over the idea of recalling as a repositioning of the individual to an existing construct and its reinterpretation. The theories on the construction of social reality come from two different sources, the first being of a sociological nature, originated in the work of Berger and Lukmann (1991), and the second in social psychology in the work of Gergen Kaye (1992) and Payne (1999). The sociological perspective refers to the way in which social problems are created, while the psychological dimension refers to the emergence of constructs such as identity, personality and perception, intelligence in the psychological sense of social-constructivism, but also in narrative sociology, the emphasis being placed on the construction of social stories (Gergen & Gergen, 2003). Methanarations generate the local culture in which the individual is immersed and within which he builds his speech and bases his decisions (O'Donoghue, 2010).

The appreciative methodology

The appreciative methodology as it is constituted by the extension of the appreciative survey in the area of counseling and supervision (Cojocaru, 2005) includes the methodology based on the deficiency paradigm, as a case at the limit of the appreciative methodology (Cojocaru, 2008). By borrowing from Neuro-linguistic Programming the expression "there is no failure, but only feedback", the appreciative methodology expands the concept of
positive experience from the idea of success to that of experience generating ways of success.

The appreciative methodology goes beyond constructivism

The appreciative methodology goes beyond constructivism by introducing choice as a factor for establishing social reality. Choosing a positive experience is not implicit, but is programmatic. That is why the constructivism involved in the appreciative methodology goes beyond the postmodern limits of the obsession of individuality, even the particular situation of the intrinsic positivity of human individuality. Positivity is a construct, it is relativized and deconstructed, and later it is itself facing a process of delimitation. The experience of deconstruction involves the necessity of the existence of levels of social reality, and implicitly the operation with the areas of transparency between them. The existence of a model of reiterating the social reality that makes a successful experience can be transferred through a process of visioning, another reality can be considered a fractal model, resulting in a specific epistemology we called *fractal constructivism* (Sandu, 2011).

The 4 D of the Appreciative Inquiry

The appreciative intelligence and method of intervention based on the appreciative survey allows the development of personal and organizational development applications (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2009). The appreciative inquiry has a tetraphasic structure called the 4 D of the Appreciative Inquiry.

![The 4D of Appreciative Inquiry](image-url)
DISCOVERY
The first stage (DISCOVERY) is the phase of identification of positive "stories" and their spreading into the organization. The starting point of appreciative coaching is the selection of affirmative / positive themes. Appreciative coaching is based on an appreciative interview with questions around affirmative themes.

DREAM
Stage II (DREAM) is the stage where customers describe their wishes and dreams about work, their motivation, work and organization relationships (Cojocaru, 2005). At this stage, targets are set.

DESIGN
Stage III (DESIGN) uses the data collected from the first two stages: once the system has a coherent image of what it wants to become, it needs a new social architecture. At this stage, the infrastructure and management system needed to support the vision of the system, is designed (Haar, 2002).

DESTINY
Stage IV (DESTINY, sometimes called Delivery) is the phase of implementation of plans to support, maintain, adjust, develop what has been designed. It is a stage of creating networks and facilitating structures of links designed to develop the co-creator potential (Carter, 2007; Sandu, 2012).

Empirical research on appreciative intelligence
Parkkinen Ida (2015) is undertaking a study that aims to explore organizational change and expand the sphere of knowledge in a comprehensive manner, based on an appreciation approach. The appreciative organizational development lies at the heart of the research entitled: Organizational Change as a Process of Organizational Becoming: A Multidimensional View of Appreciative Intelligence, conducted within the Orthodox Church of Finland.

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<th>ORGANIZATIONAL BECOMING</th>
<th>APPRECIATIVE INTELLIGENCE</th>
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<td>Continuous change</td>
<td>Organizational collectiveness</td>
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The link between organizational development and appreciative intelligence

Parkkinen (2015) aims to study the link between organizational development and appreciative intelligence, more precisely how appreciative intelligence outlines the process of organizational change. Starting from the empirical data collected, the author advances a multidimensional approach to appreciative intelligence, particularly in its individual, collective and organizational dimensions. Starting from these three dimensions, the author builds a model that explains the spreading of appreciation in the process of organizational change as well as the leverage that the appreciative intelligence offers for a successful change in the organization. Parkkinen (2015) demonstrates that appreciative intelligence is applied as a multidimensional context (Parkkinen, 2015, p. 10) extending the model proposed by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006). The concept of appreciative intelligence allows Parkkinen (2015) to interpret multidimensional change in the organization, a change understood in a manner similar to that already existing in literature (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas, Sargent & Hardy, 2011). In the context of his research, the author defines appreciative intelligence as a comprehensive ability to reflect the positive dynamics of change, and at the same time to design a desired future that results from the process of change itself (Parkkinen, 2015, p. 13).
The correlation between levels of appreciative intelligence and work satisfaction

Heinzman (2013) analyzes the possible correlation between appreciative intelligence levels and work satisfaction. The results show a strong correlation between the level of appreciation of the leaders and the satisfaction of the team members. The use of appreciative intelligence encourages individuals to focus in the future and on the development possibilities they see. By focusing on future opportunities and accepting different positions of individuals, a positive change of the organizational environment is possible.

Interconnections between appreciative style and psychological control in young people

A thesis on Interconnections between appreciative style and psychological control in young people is supported by Aliona Paladi in 2015 at the State University of Moldova. The aim of the research is to determine the interconnection between appreciative style - psychological control in young people, from the perspective of specializing in socio-human / exact fields (Paladi, 2015). The author contributes to: developing appreciative style concepts and psychological control; identifying the interconnection between the appreciative (detached, reflexive, analogous, empathic) style, psychological control (internal / external) and related processes (self-esteem, optimism / pessimism); developing the personal development program by means of optimizing the appreciative style and the place of control; establishing the profile of an effective personality from the perspective of the interconnection between appreciative style - psychological control; Establishing the link between the effective personality profile and the field of specialization of young people (Paladi, 2015).

In our opinion, the appreciative style described by the author would be a direct result of appreciative intelligence. A complement to the author's research into the correlation between appreciative intelligence and psychological control in activities requiring innovations would allow the objectivity of the performances of individuals with appreciative intelligence to demonstrate the existence of appreciative intelligence as a particular ability of individuals. Also, a consistency throughout the entire work in the use of the operative definition of appreciation with that of international literature, such as that written by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006), quoted in the literature review of the thesis but abandoned in the empirical research, could have resulted in a particular international visibility of the thesis by Sandu, A. (2017). Some Considerations on the Social Construction of Multiple Intelligence. Appreciative Intelligencem. Postmodern Openings, 8(2), 22-39. Doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.18662/po/2017.0802.02
integrating it into a topical international research line, but also generously in subjects that require research from the point of view of understanding appreciation as part of evidence-based psychology.

Limits in the construction of the appreciative intelligence concept

Parkkinen (2015) also uses the idea of collective intelligence whose existence he considers to be demonstrated in the previous research conducted by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006). Unfortunately, the idea presented is unclear, the author failing to empirically support the emergence of a collective intelligence, whether appreciative or not, in the process of organizational development. The obvious merits of the research are to build on empirical data a theory of the functioning of appreciative intelligence in concrete situations. Thus, the void of Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006), which intuitively presented the concept of appreciative intelligence and its functioning in various situations that appeared in the authors' own research, was surpassed, but without pursuing the construct of appreciative intelligence in concrete situations, eventually in experimental determinations, or extensive research on large lots of subjects capable of generating measurement tools for this intelligence. Ida Parkkinen (2015), however, does not intend to construct the concept of appreciative intelligence in a quantifiable manner, the results of its research being of a qualitative nature.

Critics of the idea of appreciative intelligence

Unfortunately, existing research in the literature has not led to a certainty about the existence or inexistence of this ability. Its multidimensionality either in the initial form proposed by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006), where three components are needed: the capacity to seize the positive, the reframing and the pursuit of the ways to achieve the desired future, and in the derived form proposed by Ida Parkkinen (2015), which speaks of an individual, organizational and social dimension, raises the question of the unity of the construct called appreciative intelligence from the point of view of the existence of a unique dynamic and multidimensional ability, or the advent of rejoining three or more abilities that the individual can manifest separately in various hypostases of life. It is true that only their reunion is seen by the authors as successful, but this does not guarantee that we are not faced with at least three distinct abilities, that when combined, are able to explain the successful behavior of the leaders possessing them.

Another critique of appreciative intelligence may come from its insufficient delimitation of emotional intelligence. The strict exploratory
development of appreciative intelligence research, especially based on qualitative studies, should be complemented by quantitative analyzes carried out on representative samples from various cultural spaces to see to what extent we are talking about an aptitude in the true sense of the word, or a product of postmodern socialization, which, by deconstructing the idea of unique value and promoting axiological pluralism, favors initiatives based on reframing. In the same postmodern context, the appreciative orientation falls, as a direct consequence of the deconstruction-reconstruction of Alterity. The appreciative appraisal of the Alterity is the result of a trained choice of the individual. If appreciation is indeed an inborn ability, its tradability could be limited, which is why it is important that research on appreciation intelligence clarify the relationship between the inborn aptitude to appreciate, and the social construction of appreciation.

In a postmodern context, the theory of appreciative intelligence is tributary to the idea of social reality built, and the working tools proposed to us in attributing appreciative intelligence and its engagement in the current social practice, are correlated with one of the postulate of the appreciative inquiry, namely that the social reality evolves in the direction the individuals ask questions about it (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The appreciative paradigm and the so-called deficiency are both options many times, being at the discretion of the individual to choose one or the other of these approaches. In this context, one may ask whether the appreciative intelligence construct could correspond in the mirror to a sui generis depreciative intelligence, which corresponds to those who spontaneously and continuously realize a negative reframing of any or most of the situations, a potential to seize dangerous, eventual failure, etc., and voluntarily or not build the route to failure.

In our opinion, the idea of appreciative intelligence could expand in both dimensions. It is difficult to understand that negative orientation is exclusively the result of lack of appreciative intelligence that could be brought to the sphere of pathology.

Conclusions

Appreciative intelligence is a useful construct in developing coaching and personal development programs, in substantiating a successful centered pedagogy and explaining the functioning of cognitive behavioral mechanisms of successful leaders.

At the current level of development, the understanding and application of this construct is closely related to the adherence to the
appreciative paradigm and to the appreciative methodology of intervention in work, with individuals and organizations. The construct is incompletely defined and only partially extrapolable outside the appreciative paradigm and especially the socialist constructionist one.

Subsequent research that would identify new tools for measuring appreciative intelligence and to calibrate a measurement scale could turn the construct of appreciative intelligence into a highly effective implementation of positive psychology, and generally of personal development programs based on stimulating alternative intelligence such as the social intelligence of the emotional one, etc.

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Some Considerations on the Social Construction of Multiple Intelligence (...)  
Antonio SANDU


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