

## MIND GAMES 1: Circuit Training the Intelligences

### ***A Workshop exploring Multiple Intelligences***

Over 20 years ago, the introduction of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory revolutionised the face of education. The theory strongly criticised the hitherto accepted notion that there is a single human intelligence, which applies to all people and which can be measured through standard tests. With Multiple Intelligences theory, Gardner introduced the powerful – and exciting - concept that there is not one 'intelligence' but a range of different human intelligences, from musical to logical-mathematical to the intelligence involved in self-understanding. This ground-breaking theory led to new forms of performance-based assessments, re-examination of curricula, exploration of interdisciplinary activities in education, and more.

Within a youth theatre setting, Multiple Intelligences theory also has its place. While a youth theatre leader may be strong in linguistic intelligence and therefore tend towards more text-based workshops, his/her group may offer more strengths in musical, spatial and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences. Awareness of multiple intelligences can ultimately lead to more fulfilling and exciting youth drama experience for everyone in the group.

**(See box below for description of each intelligence)**

In July 2005, as part of the NAYD *Leading On... Training for Youth Theatre Leaders* programme, Anna Galligan and Kevin Murphy led a series of workshops designed to demonstrate and explore Multiple Intelligences with Youth Theatre leaders. Here they introduce 'Mind Games' or Circuit Training the Intelligences...

### **Workshop Structure**

To explore Multiple Intelligences in the workshop space, we used the structure of 'Circuit Training' familiar to everyone from those PE classes of long ago! Seven different 'stations' were set up at equal distances around the room; each station was marked with the name and an explanation of the intelligence. At each of the stations, there were two task envelopes marked 'group' and 'individual'. On the front of each envelope were the instructions for the task. Any material needed for the task was inside the envelope – provided it fit (eg. not the musical instruments!)

*At each station, there are different activities, each exploring a different intelligence. The tasks are explained in the large brown envelopes. When you arrive at a station, you have 4 minutes to do the individual task and then 6 minutes for the group task. When you have completed the task, replace any material back into the brown envelope.*

*We all begin at the same time and move at the same time - like circuit training - around the room. Agree with the group what the signal will be – we used a drum, with different beats signalling ‘4 minutes individual task’, ‘6 minutes group task’ and ‘move on to next station’. Divide time as appropriate to length of workshop, number of people and size of space.*

*Be aware of yourself both as an individual and within the group. There will be time allotted between stations to jot down any observations about the exercise, the intelligence or your approach to it. You may find some exercises easier than others. Be honest with yourself.*

### **And we're off!**

*After a warm up, divide the group evenly among the stations. When you hear this noise, start the individual exercise. Then this noise means start the group exercise. Then this noise is for taking notes, and last but not least, this noise is for moving to the next station. If you have completed the individual or group exercise before time is up, try not to distract or ‘foresee’ the next task.*

*The stations are marked numerically – always move to the next number except in the case of 7 where you move to 1.*

*Let's give it a go.*

## **Circuit training the Intelligences**

### **Individual Tasks**

#### **1 - Linguistic**

Write a poem or prose piece starting with the sentence ‘The solitary soul looked out to sea...’  
Max. 100 words. Take note of how you felt doing this task.

## 2 - Logical/Mathematical

Complete the following sums. You can make notes or written calculations. Take note of how you felt doing this task.

## 3 - Musical

Play with the musical instruments. Take note of how you felt doing this task.

## 4 - Bodily/Kinesthetic

Find three ways of doing the movements as indicated inside the envelope – we used: touch your toes, jump, run, hop, skip, walk, turn. Take note of how you felt doing this task.

## 5 - Visual /Spatial

Using any means, ie. verbal, written, drawn, etc. create a map from your bedroom to your kitchen including as much detail as possible. Take note of how you felt doing this task.

## 6 - Interpersonal

Look at the gallery of pictures. What can you see? What are the people in the pictures feeling, thinking, etc? How do they relate to others in the same photograph? How to they relate to what they are doing? Take note of how you felt doing this task.

## 7 - Intrapersonal

Using any medium of expression, express what you are feeling now about the tasks. Place something to remind you in a white envelope and seal it and write your name on it. This is for yourself only. (These were returned to the participants later.) Place the white envelope in the large brown envelope.

## 8 - Naturalistic

Please sit on one of the seats and compile as much information, observations and patterns as you notice in the larger group. (4 minutes.)

## Group tasks

### 1 - Linguistic

The words of a poem are enclosed in an envelope. Rearrange the words. The aim is to recreate the original poem. (We used one verse from 'What's Words, Ozzie?' from *The Book of Judas* by Brendan Kennelly.) If you have time, write down the group's final version. Note any observations, and return all the words to the envelope.

### 2 - Logical/Mathematical

There is a card enclosed. How many colours are there? How many squares of each colour? How many squares? Note any observations and return the card to the envelope. (Card image available from NAYD.)

### 3 - Musical

Using the instruments, compose a piece with a beginning, middle and end. Be prepared to perform your piece.

### 4 - Bodily-kinesthetic

There are adjectives enclosed in the envelope. Each group member takes an adjective and silently acts out the adjective until the rest of the group guess exactly what it is. We used challenging adjectives, such as: trendy, muffled, broken, glittery, and so on. Note any observations and return all the words to the envelope.

### 5 - Visual/Spatial

On the other side of the room is a chessboard complete with pieces. Recreate the chessboard. Only one person at a time can look at the chessboard, and cannot speak or take notes when looking at the chessboard. Note any observations and remove your chess pieces from the board.

### 6 - Interpersonal

Having looked at the gallery, have a conversation with your group on what you discovered about the photographs. Note any observations.

## 7 - Naturalistic

As a group, compile the data found individually. Please note any observations and hold onto your data.

### **Debrief**

After the circuit training, we allowed the groups to discuss and share thoughts about the exercise. It was an open discussion as we did not want to colour the following discussion among the larger group. We had no idea what the reactions, observations or learning from exploring the intelligences would be.

*In your team, discuss the previous hour. What roles did you take in the group? Was it influenced by the task? Were some exercises easier/difficult as an individual? As a group? How were the exercises? Were there any mental blocks? Did working in the group help? Choose a few points that you think might interest the rest of the group.*

Take back the points to the whole group.

*Are there questions about the exercise? About the intelligences? Did the order help/impede? What other influences helped/hindered? Any other thoughts, theories, questions to share?*

Many participants talked about how they 'felt' different at each station, and reported that they felt they had 'exercised'. One pointed out that it produced as much adrenaline and was as tiring as doing purely physical circuit training. Others talked of different parts of their brain 'lighting' up.

The debriefing is an essential part of the exercise, as this was where most of the learning occurred – by both the leaders and the participants. For example, at the bodily kinesthetic station, some reported feeling more self-conscious carrying out the individual task - moving without a context while being watched – than when being watched carrying out the 'charades' group task. This is an interesting observation regarding drama workshops.

Following the Circuit Training session, we looked at each multiple intelligence separately by exploring exercises regularly used in a drama workshop (The Human Typewriter, Word Tennis, Fizz Buzz, etc.)

### **The Intelligences**

For more details on multiple intelligences, see: [www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm)

**Linguistic intelligence** involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information.

**Logical-mathematical intelligence** consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner's words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically.

**Musical intelligence** involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms.

**Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence** entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems. It is the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements.

**Spatial intelligence** involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas.

**Interpersonal intelligence** is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others.

**Intrapersonal intelligence** entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations. In Howard Gardner's view, it involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives

**Naturalistic:** Ability to recognize patterns in nature and to classify according to minute detail.

### **Further reading:**

*Frames of Mind* by Howard Gardner (ISBN 0465-02510-2)

*Multiple Intelligences* by Howard Gardner (ISBN 0465-01822-x)

[www.howardgardner.com](http://www.howardgardner.com)

[www.pz.harvard.edu](http://www.pz.harvard.edu)

## MIND GAMES 2: The Cube Man

### ***A Workshop exploring Multiple Intelligences***

Based on the ideas of Rudolf Laban, the following workshop looks at the use of Multiple Intelligences in a workshop context. Rudolf Laban (1879-1953) was a dancer, choreographer and dance/movement theoretician.

#### **Preparing the Space**

Write or print out the alphabet on large pages, one letter per page. Print or draw The Cube Man (see fig. 1) for each participant. Have enough pencils. Bring different types of music, preferably instrumental.

Make sure the space is clear of obstacles and that the walls are visible. Starting in the top left corner place the alphabet around the room (see fig. 2). The room should be warm, but not hot.

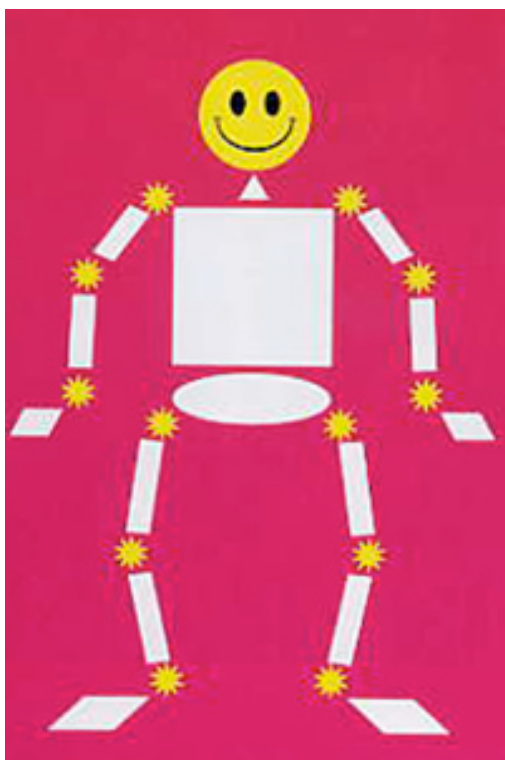


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

#### **Physical Warm up**

As this workshop is movement based, it is important that the participants are physically warmed up. Do an appropriate warm-up for the participants taking into account age, ability and temperature they have just left and the temperature of the room.

Give the participants a copy of The Cube Man and a pencil. *Using the numbers 0 to 9, allocate each number to a joint or body part on your Cube Man.*

*Now at the bottom of the page write out the first 7 digits of your telephone. Then directly underneath, write out the first 7 letters of your name. e.g.*

0 6 5 4 5 6 4  
J O E B L O G

Draw the participants' attention to the alphabet placed around the room. *I just want you to spell out the first 7 letters of your name by pointing to the letter. Do it a few times so you become familiar where your letters are.*

### **Working out the phrase of movement.**

*So now you know where your letters are, I want you to go back to The Cube Man. Taking the first 7 digits of your phone number as you have written them, make yourself familiar with the joints/body parts to which you allocated those numbers. For example, JOE has 0 written at his head, 6 at his right elbow, 5 at the back of his left knee, 4 at his left little finger, etc. So his sequence will be: head, right elbow, back of left knee, left little finger, back of left knee, right elbow.*

*Now, instead of pointing at your letter, you are going to 'point' using the joint or body part allocated to that letter when you wrote out your number and the first 7 letters of your name. So, JOE will be 'pointing' with his head towards the letter J, his right elbow will go to the letter O, back of his left knee to E and so on.*

Allow time for the participants to work this out. (10 to 15 mins is good time)

*Now teach yourself the phrase so that it is very familiar to you.*

*Play with the timing of the movement, so you might move quickly between some movements and slowly between others. When you've explored the options, teach yourself the phrase with the timing you've chosen.*

Again allow time for the participants to work through their individual phrases. ( 5 to 10 mins here)

*Now add a different quality to each movement in the phrase, for example, some movements may be sharp, soft, staccato, rounded and so on.*

Again allow time for exploration and learning the phrase with qualities included.

*Now, get into groups of three. Show each other your phrase.*

*Now do them all at the same time in your groups of three. (Or whatever number is appropriate but keep the groups small.)*

*Working with your partners, integrate the phrases. Play with space. Are there movements that naturally 'fit' into each other? Then, find a beginning and end to the group's work.*

Allow the participants to 'rehearse' all at the same time. The facilitator calls the starting point, and asks the participants to remain silent and still if they finish before other groups.

### **Performing the Phrases**

Depending on numbers, watch a number of groups go through their pieces at the same time. After each showing, ask the rest of the group what did they see? Relationships? Narratives? Things they liked? And so on....

Bring all the groups down to one end of the room to the watchers area and ask two sets of three to enter the playing area.

*We are going to watch, and you are going to start your pieces as you did when we watched before. I will then give you additional instructions. Don't stop the movement but act on the new instruction as you understand it. When you get to the end of your piece just loop it around and start again. I will let you know when to bring the piece to an end.*

Give side coaches that explore the confinement or expansion of space: you are in a lift, a corridor, a field, on the moon.

On completion, again ask the watchers what did they see? Observations? How did space influence the movement? Relationships? Narrative? Ask the players what that was like to do.

### **Phrases of Music**

The first group of players joins the watchers. Invite another two sets of three into the playing area.

*Now, we will do the piece once from beginning to end. Then the second time round, I'll put on some music. Again just continue until you hear the music phase-out.*

On completion ask the watchers does the music influence the dancer? Change the watching for the viewer? Any other observations?

Ask the players what that was like to do? Did the music influence their movements?

Same group. *We are going to do the same again but with different music.* Choose something in contrast to the last piece of music.

Again ask the watchers did it change the piece? If so how? Compare and contrast with the first piece of music.

Again refer to the players and how did the music influence them if at all?

Ask this set of players to rejoin the watchers, and invite the remaining groups into the playing area.

*Again, I want you to do your pieces from beginning to end just once.*

*Then: We are about to play some music again, but this time I will also give you additional instructions. Don't stop the movement but act on the new instruction as you understand it. When you get to the end of your piece just loop it around and start again. I will let you know when to bring the piece to an end.*

Side coaches we used:

*Choose someone to love in the group*

*You are having an affair...*

*But their partner is also in the group*

*There's a smell...*

*It's coming from someone in the group...*

*It's coming from you.*

Choose narratives appropriate to the participants' age range, experience and how well they know each other.

Again take feedback from the watchers and the players.

Bring the group back together and finish with an appropriate closing.

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