

## 2.2 GRIT infused of civic engagement

### 1. Conceptualisation of intelligence

Academic success has often been linked to intelligence. Meanwhile, conceptualisations of intelligence have a long history of debate. The first controversial issue is whether intelligence has a singular character or whether there are several relatively independent intellectual faculties. The "purists" - from Charles Spearman to his current disciples Herrnstein and Murray - have defended the notion of a single "general intelligence". Since Binet's time, intelligence tests have tended to mainly measure verbal memory, verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, recognition of logical sequences and the ability to express how everyday problems can be solved. Based on his research, Binet published the first intelligence test in 1905. This test, which is still used today, has a cognitive conceptualisation of intelligence.

Subsequently, other authors have expanded this concept of intelligence. Goleman believes that a hugely significant set of skills and abilities have largely been ignored: those related to people and emotions. In particular, Goleman talks about the importance of recognising one's own emotional life, of regulating one's own feelings, of understanding the emotions of others and of being able to work with and empathise with others. In turn, he proposes strategies to strengthen these capacities, especially in children. He even suggests that the world could be a more welcoming place if we fostered emotional intelligence as diligently as we have fostered cognitive aspects. Along the same lines, other authors advocate the need to combine intelligence and morality to create a world in which we all want to live. In this sense, in his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (2011), Howard Gardner proposes the existence of seven separate intelligences in human beings (Figure 1). The first two (linguistic and logical-mathematical) are the ones that have usually been assessed in traditional schools. Linguistic intelligence involves a special sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages and to use language to achieve certain goals. Logical-mathematical intelligence involves the ability to analyse problems in a logical manner, to carry out mathematical operations and to conduct research in a scientific manner. Musical intelligence involves the ability to interpret, compose and appreciate musical patterns. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence involves the ability to use parts of one's own body (such as the hand or mouth) or the whole body to solve problems or create products. Spatial intelligence involves the ability to recognise and act in large spaces (as, for example, sailors and pilots do) and in smaller spaces (as sculptors or surgeons do). Interpersonal intelligence is linked to a person's ability to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of others, and thus their ability to work effectively with others.

Salespeople and actors need high interpersonal intelligence. Finally, intrapersonal intelligence involves the ability to understand oneself, to have a useful and effective model of oneself - including one's own desires, fears and capabilities - and to use this information effectively in regulating one's own behaviour. Naturalistic intelligence is the most recent addition to Gardner's theory and has been met with more resistance than his original seven intelligences. According to Gardner, individuals who are high in this type of intelligence are more in tune with nature and are often interested in nurturing, exploring the environment, and learning about other species. These individuals are said to be highly aware of even subtle changes to their environments. Intelligences are entirely amoral and any of them can be employed in a constructive or destructive manner.

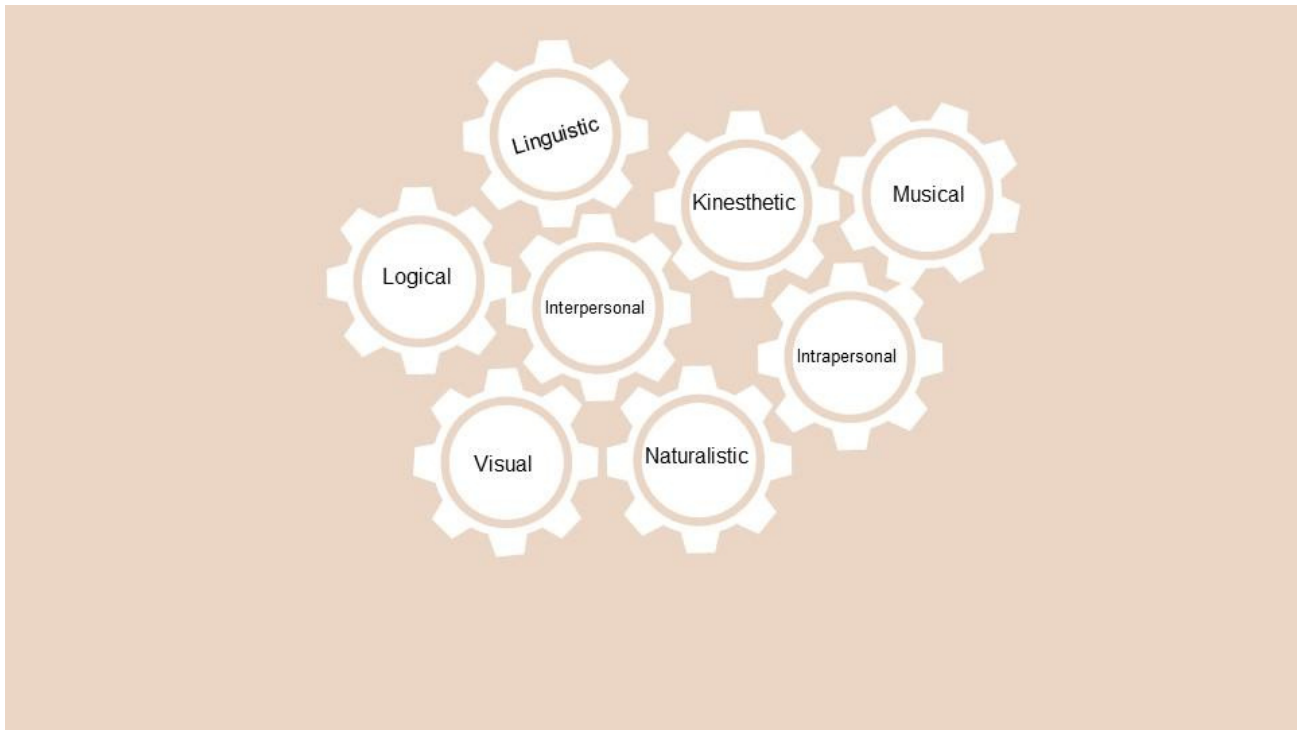


Figure 1. Multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2011)

This is why we should promote the use not only intelligences, but also morality and, as far as possible, combine them in the form of virtues. At the same time, we must be clear that constructive and positive uses of the intelligences do not happen by accident. Deciding how to make use of one's intelligences is a matter of values, not of mere capacity. In recent years, the conceptualisation of the so-called "existential intelligence" has been gaining a great deal of interest. This type of intelligence can be defined as the ability to position oneself before certain existential milestones of the human condition, such as the meaning of life and death, the final destiny of the physical and psychological worlds, and certain experiences such as feeling deep love or being absorbed by a work of art.

Once moral intelligence has been conceptualised, studies have focused on identifying the typical characteristics of people who stand out for their moral intelligence. Among the most important of these are:

- Facility to respect life in its various facets.

- Ease of mastering symbolic representations and encodings traditional ones that deal with issues related to respect.
- A lasting and thoughtful engagement on these issues.
- The potential to go beyond conventional approaches to create new forms or processes to regulate respect in human interactions.

In all likelihood, the environment in which the person develops will play a determining role. There is a broad consensus that a certain cognitive development is necessary for morality to emerge.

Another aspect to consider relates to leadership. The leader's art is to create and refine a narrative that captures the attention and engages the followers, thereby changing their convictions about who they are, what they are committed to and what they want to achieve and why. Effective leaders pay close attention to how audiences react to their speeches and continually modify them based on that feedback. Well-known figures such as Franklin Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan or Bill Clinton learned to do this during their early political careers. However, it is risky to create a narrative just to satisfy an audience. Leaders who do so often come across as inauthentic or, worse, hypocritical. Despite the rise of consultants, pollsters and propagandists, the appeal of authenticity to the public determines a leader's long-term effectiveness. At this point we can ask ourselves what kind of intelligence these leaders use. Firstly, they have a strong command of language in that they can tell effective stories, and they can often write very well too. Secondly, they have strong interpersonal skills. They are able to understand other people's aspirations and fears. This knowledge gives them the ability to influence public. Thirdly, they have a good intrapersonal sense, i.e. a clear awareness of their goals and their own strengths and weaknesses. This type of intelligence allows them to reflect frequently on their own personal journey. Finally, the most effective leaders can address existential questions, help the audience to understand their own place in life, clarify their goals and feel committed to something meaningful to them. We can also find these types of intelligences in creators. Both groups seek to influence other people's thoughts and behaviours and consequently employ persuasion. In addition, each leader or creator has a narrative to tell. A creator contributes to the narrative within a set framework while a leader creates a narrative about his or her group. Although intelligences, in themselves, are not morally good or bad, people can use their intelligences in a pro-social or anti-social way.

Schools are an area where it is necessary to encourage the development of multiple intelligences with the aim of training competent citizens in all spheres of the human being. This requires a positive disposition. These centres must put in place the methods and processes that make the development of multiple intelligences possible. However, in order to achieve this, it is necessary that both teachers and parents understand the need for the development of these intelligences. This awareness-raising process can be an arduous journey. This is why teaching based on the development of multiple intelligences is more likely to thrive in contexts that encourage student diversity and serious and consistent work. Collaboration and openness of schools are also essential. Opportunities should be provided for formal and informal contacts, both within and outside school, with people who share similar experiences and concerns. These contacts play an essential role when change processes have already started, as they will be enriching.

We cannot forget that schools must offer alternatives in terms of the curriculum and the assessment of their students' development and learning. These options must make sense both for the students and for the wider community. Finally, multiple intelligences should be used as a means to foster in students a taste for quality in their work. Ultimately, it is the students' work and their understanding of it that characterises good teaching.

## 2. Forming committed citizen

Another decisive aspect relates to the purpose of education: to create a more just, humane and sustainable future. For this reason, an education that aspires to excellence in the 21st century must create more than a quality curriculum. Excellence in education must also include structures and processes used in an ethical manner, with ethical models and experiences that are personally engaging for students and teachers (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon, 2001; Gardner, 2011). Therefore, excellent education is high quality, discipline-based and cross-disciplinary, ethically conducted, and meaningful to those involved. How can schools achieve this goal? By reframing their purpose: to develop learning citizens.

Citizen-learners recognise the complexities and uncertainties of the world in which they live. They are able to develop and share knowledge, make connections with their community and begin meaningful actions to support their own well-being and that of others. They are prepared to work with others to explore pressing issues of personal and community importance, such as environmental sustainability, global migration or the digital revolution. Pupil-citizens act boldly, but carefully and thoughtfully, with the goal of improving their own lives and the lives of others.

On many occasions, we find that the objective that a school sets itself is to achieve academic excellence. It is not uncommon to find that schools overlook the need to include among their objectives the need to contribute to building a better society. This is why we must promote the overlapping processes of becoming a citizen and a learner inside and outside school. We cannot forget that children are citizens both in the present and in the future; that learning is a continuous activity that takes place throughout life; and that educational institutions such as schools must have the community in mind from the outset. Schools are ideal places for children to learn the fundamental human skills necessary for participating in democratic society: how to offer, receive and modify ideas; how to understand and accept different points of view; and how to listen. Learning does not stop once schooling is over. Especially in a digitally connected world, with multiple sources of knowledge at hand, learning must be seen as a lifelong activity. Learners need to develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions to lead ethical and meaningful lives, and to make mistakes and overcome challenges along the way. These learners need to be active and reflective members of a community, learning from their successes and mistakes in order to progress in the future. We must teach more than content; we must teach them to learn in a way that fits the kind of people they want to become and the world they want to live in. In order to do this, it is essential to teach them the right way to relate to others as this will enhance their own learning and that of others. They need to learn to recognise and understand their own and others' emotions, and to respect and exchange different points of view. They also need to learn to rethink and reflect on their

own and others' learning. We seek to empower students to participate in society, to share their concerns, to seek social welfare and to uphold positive values for society at large. Teachers should be guides who facilitate the development of these competences within the educational framework of their subjects. Figure 2 presents these ideas in schematic form.

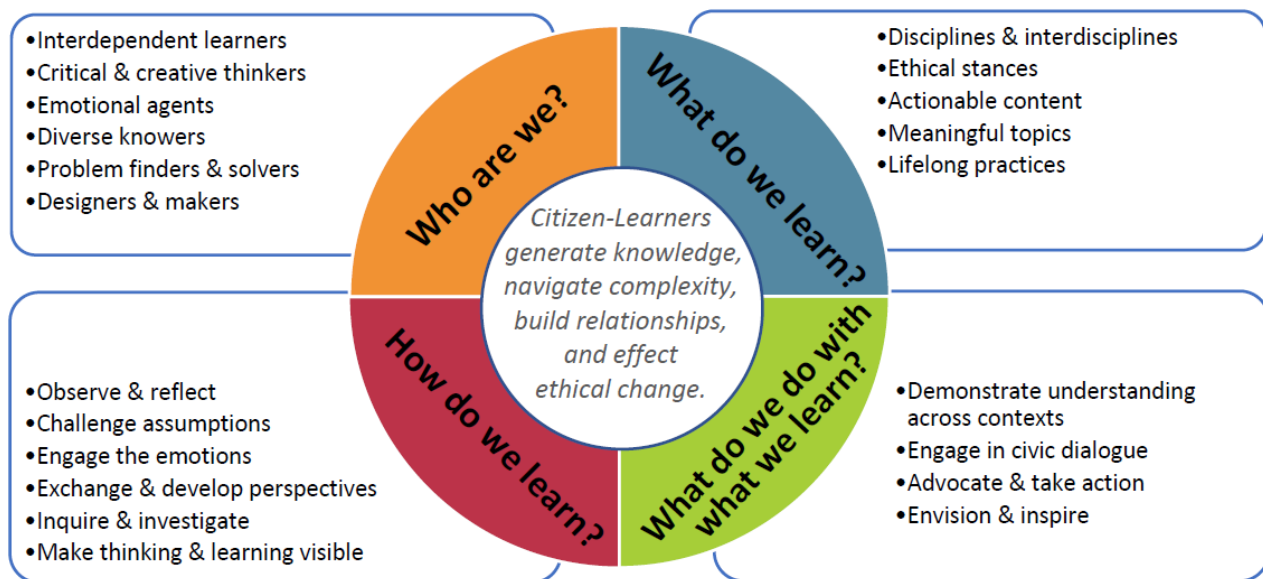


Figure 2. Model proposed by Allen

In this conception, the learner becomes the centre of the teaching-learning process. Teachers must involve students in their own learning by encouraging opportunities to communicate and to apply the knowledge learned in a meaningful way. The learner is no longer a passive agent, but now actively constructs his or her reality. Work is interconnected, recognising one's own individuality along with the need to be part of society. Motivation, attitude and values play a fundamental role in the promotion of critical and creative thinking. In turn, they must be able to recognise, accept, and understand their emotions, while being able to pay attention to the feelings of others. Emotions act as drivers for their engagement and enable them to enhance their learning.

In short, educational environments must promote not only cognitive intelligence, but also other multiple intelligences that, together with moral intelligence, enable them to become engaged citizens.

### **Mindset for change**

The changes needed in our society have to be brought about through a new approach. To do this we must use a hitherto unknown way of managing knowledge. That is why we propose to use what Gardner calls the "minds" needed in our future if we are to prosper and meet the challenges present in our society today. The minds needed will be:

- Disciplined mind
- Synthetic mind

- Creative mind
- Respectful mind
- Ethical mind

These minds use the various intelligences that were described above. We must change the way we do things as current practices are not really functional according to Gardner. Moreover, the world around us is changing significantly. This is why the present goals, capacities and practices are not useful in the context we are discussing. We need to reconsider which ways of thinking are essential, which need to be prioritised and how to combine them. The changes we are undergoing today require new educational forms and processes. We must conduct an analysis of what our world needs today. For Gardner "education is inherently and inevitably a matter of goals and values". We must be aware of what knowledge, skills and abilities are needed. We must also know what kind of individuals we want to have as a result. Today's education still prepares for the world of the past and not for the possible worlds of the future. We have not worked out how we should prepare young people to survive and thrive in a world that will be different from the one we know.

In this new context, individuals who do not show respect will not be worthy of the respect of others and will end up polluting the workplace. Unethical professionals will create a world devoid of decent workers and responsible citizens. Therefore, we need people who are disciplined, able to synthesise information, creative, respectful and ethical. The following is a brief description of the different types of minds as outlined by Gardner.

### **Disciplined mind**

We always carry with us those ideas or ways of doing things that have been useful in the past. However, when we take on a new job, we must eliminate habits we have used in the past that are no longer useful and gradually consolidate the new habits that are useful in the current job. We must eradicate erroneous ways of thinking and acting and replace them with those appropriate to a disciplined professional. We must clearly differentiate between subject and discipline. Nowadays, people study subjects, which involve a great deal of memorising. Disciplines, however, have a different purpose. A discipline implies a characteristic way of thinking about the world. I do not teach how to do, I teach how to be. This is why mastery of basic skills will be necessary, but will no longer be sufficient. To use a simile, we can say that discipline would be the Christmas tree on which the ornaments (theoretical knowledge) are to be hung. But how can we get learn to develop a disciplined mind?

First, we need to identify the really important topics or concepts within that discipline. Subsequently, we need to devote a significant amount of time to that topic. In turn, it is necessary to approach the same topic in different ways. However, we must always make use of the diversity of ways in which each of our students learns. This way of working will make it possible for the contents to be meaningful and for them to learn better. Based on the different multiple intelligences, we will adjust the activities to the characteristics of each student, with some we will use stories, with others debates, among other activities.

We must set up "comprehension situations" that allow them to put into practice what they have understood. In the end, we obtain a subject who continues to learn because he or she has come to enjoy, is passionate about the process of learning about the world. As Plato said: "It is necessary to contribute through education so that the disciples find pleasure in what they have to learn".

### **The synthetic mind**

In today's world it is essential to be able to bring together information from different sources into a coherent whole. We have many and very disparate sources of information. It is therefore necessary to be able to synthesise this knowledge. Any attempt at synthesis has 4 components:

- A goal
- A starting point
- A strategy, method or approach
- An evaluation or feedback

The process of synthesis involves the composition of a whole by joining its parts or elements. This construction can be carried out by joining the parts, merging them or organising them in different ways (Macizo and Bajo, 2004). The ability to synthesise allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the realities we face, to simplify their description, to discover apparently hidden relationships and to construct new knowledge from other knowledge we already possess. For all these reasons, it has a generic nature and is related to several competences (critical thinking, problem solving, organisation and planning or decision making, to give some examples).

### **The creative mind**

In recent years, creativity has been given an increasingly prominent place in formal learning. The creative process has often been seen as a path that only those who were genetically endowed with this quality could follow. Nowadays, however, we consider that the creative person will have to put to work various intelligences, skills and discipline in order to achieve his or her creative goal. For this reason, teachers must face the challenge of keeping their students' curiosity and sensitivity alive. These teachers will have to develop multiple and diverse representations of the same entity. They will also have to encourage criticism as a constructive process.

### **The respectful mind**

In an increasingly pluralistic world, it is necessary to know how to coexist with those who are different from me and to learn to value them. This learning must be supported by the environment throughout the developmental process. If we want to model people capable of respecting differences, we have to provide models and lessons that encourage this attitude. Respect for others should be present in every school environment and permeate our lives.

### **The ethical mind**

Ethics refers to the ability to reflect explicitly on how one does or does not fulfil a certain role. It is easier to acquire an ethical mind when one has grown up in an environment where a job well done is the norm. Ethical orientation starts at home and is also influenced by the people around the child during childhood and adolescence. We cannot forget that in today's society, peers will also have a significant degree of influence on a person's ethical development. From the time we are children, we spend a lot of time with our peers. That is why the qualities of peers will be crucial, especially in adolescence. When it comes to education, teachers act as role models and can pave the way towards an ethical mind. Students need to understand why they study what they study and how they can use that knowledge constructively. For this reason, community service should be an important part of any school's curriculum. As students see that knowledge can be put to constructive use, they are more likely to enjoy schoolwork and find it important for its own sake, thus achieving the ethical facets of the good.

### 3. Ethical and moral development

Every society has a set of norms about desirable and undesirable behaviour that individuals can engage in. Some actions are considered good and valuable, while others are considered harmful and should be avoided. No society is without these norms, which constitute what are called morals or ethics.

It could be said that morality is made up of the set of more general rules that regulate behaviour between individuals. Given that individuals live in society and have interests that may not coincide with those of other individuals, it is easy for conflicts to arise and it is therefore necessary to establish regulations to organise coexistence. However, some authors consider that there are innate regulations and others originating from the freedom that intelligence provides man. Morality thus has at its base innate components that are highly significant, since they have been moulded by culture and by the form of society.

Most work up to the 1960s used the term moral development to refer to the process of internalisation of social norms. However, the studies carried out from this perspective find a lack of consistency between the knowledge of social rules and their compliance, so that they may be strongly influenced by the situation. It should be borne in mind that there are conventional rules that regulate certain social practices such as dress or greetings. Others refer to the practices that are carried out, such as childcare. Nor should we forget customs, bearing in mind that these may vary from one group to another. In another group, we find moral norms that refer to more general aspects of relations with others and those that deal with justice, integrity and respect.

From a cognitive and evolutionary perspective, moral development is understood as an active construction that the subject carries out in interaction with the environment and that leads to higher levels of autonomy. From this point of view, moral consistency would be a consequence of development. In this line, there are also authors who consider morality as the sum of a set of personality traits that are the object of social approval or sanction.

Before children can develop their morality, they have to acquire logical development, have had contact with society and have felt affection. Logical development is a necessary



but not sufficient condition for the development of moral judgement.

Social perspective-taking and moral conflict can act as drivers of development. It is well known that the environment influences moral development by providing opportunities for children to adopt different social and reciprocal perspectives. Moral conflict, on the other hand, is closely related to the adoption of different perspectives. Moral conflict can occur through exposure to decision-making situations that generate internal contradictions in the structure of one's own reasoning or through exposure to significant others whose reasoning disagrees with one's own. Affect also plays a crucial role in the development of morality. We should encourage the understanding of emotions as this will help the child's moral development. From the cognitive-evolutionary perspective, these authors consider that there is a structure of moral reasoning, a structure that depends on the reformulations about the meaning that the subject gives to the world. These reformulations make possible the emergence of higher forms of justice.

Kohlberg's studies are some of the most relevant in this field. Kohlberg and his collaborators (1983) proposed three different stages experienced during moral development: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. At the pre-conventional level, morality is determined by external norms dictated by adults. The conventional level is characterised by conformity. At this stage, social norms are accepted as they serve to maintain order. For this reason, they consider that they should not be violated, as this would lead to worse consequences. Most adolescents and adults are at this level. The conventional level is divided into two stages: interpersonal normative morality and social system morality. From the perspective of interpersonal normative morality, appropriate behaviour is behaviour that pleases or helps others and is approved by them. Here we find an orientation towards normal behaviour, stereotypical behaviour and the "good person". Good intentions are very important and the approval of others is sought.

If we are governed by a morality of the social system, we must take into account not only the perspective of two persons but also that of social laws. Right conduct consists in doing one's duty, showing respect for authority and the social order established for one's own good. Morality transcends personal ties. In this case, morality is linked to respect for laws, which cannot be disobeyed, or else the social order will be disrupted.

Finally, we come to the post-conventional level, where only a minority of adults are found and generally from the age of 25 onwards. The subject distinguishes the "I" from normative roles. At this level, the subject defines values on the basis of self-constructed principles. These self-constructed principles are considered as fundamental for the construction of a moral society. In this case, morality is determined by universal principles and values. There are two stages: the stage of human rights morality and the stage of social welfare.

The morality stage of human rights is characterised by establishing criteria for building a better society based on respect for universal rights and building a hierarchy of priorities among them. In the social welfare stage, right action is based on self-chosen ethical principles that are comprehensive, rational and universally applicable. These are abstract moral principles that transcend laws, such as the equality of human beings and respect for the dignity of every person.

Maslow's renowned work on motivation also makes an important conceptualisation of morality and ethics. For Maslow, human behaviour is explained through five levels of needs. These needs are arranged in hierarchical order, from the most primal and immature (in view of the type of behaviour they stimulate) to the most civilised and mature. At the base of the pyramid is the group of needs that Maslow considers to be the most basic and reflexive of physiological and survival interests. This is the level of physiological needs and includes behaviours such as thirst or hunger. The second level of the hierarchy includes a series of security requirements. Once physiological needs are satisfied, the natural tendency of human beings will be preservation. Subsequently, when security is achieved, there is a need for group formation, association with other people, e.g., to be equal to others. These needs are known as social or associative. The next step on the scale of needs is that of esteem. At this point, the needs for prominence, recognition and admiration by the group are manifested by actions that seek distinction. At the last level we find self-actualisation. Here we find the motivation to realise the full potential of the self, e.g., the individual seeks to become what he or she can be by exploring his or her possibilities. This can be considered as the highest motivational achievement for human nature.

When dealing with concepts linked to existential meaning, we cannot forget the work of Viktor Frankl (1946), a Jewish neuropsychiatrist who was imprisoned in Auschwitz during the Second World War. For this author, human beings are mainly motivated by the desire to give meaning to life. For this reason, man tends to participate in the realisation of values in the form of creations, experiences and attitudes.

As we can see, knowledge is not something abstract or objective, but is created through our experiences and our relationship with the world around us. In this chapter we have been able to see that not only cognitive learning is necessary. The analysis of the main contributions from cognitive intelligence to moral intelligence has led us to such an existential aspect as the search for meaning in human beings.

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