

Enhancing Strength-based Therapy by Focusing on Client's Talents and Concepts of Learning

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Abstract

This research investigated how adults perceived their talents and whether adult clients ($n = 132$; average age = 35 years) entering therapy had a different perception of their talents than adults not attending therapy ($n = 132$; average age = 34 years). Establishing whether gender was associated with respondents' talent ratings was also explored. Talents were measured using a questionnaire based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory. Respondents were asked to compare each of nine talents with items representing seven concepts of learning thereby linking talent with the methods used to learn and maintain the talent. Results showed nine factors emerged in conjunction with the seven conceptions of learning. Males were higher rating on the talents of Construction and Spatial Design and Mathematical and Logical. The therapeutic group of adults rated talents significantly lower than the nontherapeutic group. The rank of the concepts of learning based on their average contribution to each talent showed that both groups of respondents focused on performance and then natural ability, and least on effort when defining their talents. These findings support the suggestion that the client's talent is an appropriate subject to incorporate into therapy to maintain and expand their skills and competence.

Keywords: *Talents; Concepts of Learning; Strength-based Therapy Counselling*

Strength-based approaches to therapy are founded on the principle that focusing on enhancing the client's strengths provides a break with the client's negative pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving. Focusing on strengths moves the client away from the problem and allows reframing to acknowledge strengths and capabilities (Seligman, 1988; Snyder, & Lopez, 2006). Articulating the competencies and resources of the client in conjunction with dealing with the presenting problem is more efficacious than attending to the problem exclusively as it builds the client's competence when the problem recurs (Bowles, 2012a). Currently there are few therapeutic strategies to facilitate insights into a client's capabilities and talents, or intelligences, and how they may be improved (Wong, 2006).

For Gardner, intelligence is not only a cognitive process but part of the context in which intelligence is applied. Multiple Intelligences (MIs) are "a bio-psychological potential to process information that can

be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner 1999a, pp. 33-34). MIs are the products of raw potentials and require development – learning, skill training, practice, and habituation making MIs relevant to the process of therapy as building potential, unlearning relearning, re-skilling and generating automaticity are relevant to improvement in therapy. Once developed, MIs become talents about which individuals may display competence (Bowles, 2004; Klein, 2008; Scaturo, 2010). Gardner's original seven intelligences were: Spatial, Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Physical and Sport Activity, Musical, Social and Leadership, and Self-awareness. Naturalistic and Existential MIs have been added more recently to the original set of seven MIs (Gardner, 1999; 2000; Tirri & Nokelainen, 2011).

Recent research has suggested that Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (MIs; 1993a; 2003; 2006) have a place in education and therapy (Booth & O'Brien, 2008). It has been argued that MIs can be used as a tool to facilitate change, expand talents and skills, and help clients to make sense of their environment and context (Booth & O'Brien; Pearson, 2011). Further, while there are measures of talent in the literature (e.g., Jarosewich, Pfeiffer, & Morris, 2002) there are few that measure talents in a manner applicable and useful to therapy. Despite this MIs are considered relevant to psychological and career counselling (Booth & O'Brien, 2008; Pearson, 2011; Shearer, 1997; Shearer & Luzzo, 2009; Waterhouse, 2006). The first suggestion that MIs could be applied to therapy was made by O'Brien and Burnett (2000a; 2000b). Recently, MIs have been applied to career counselling (Shearer & Luzzo, 2009) and clients in therapy, generally (Booth & O'Brien, 2008; Pearson, 2011; Waterhouse, 2006). The benefit of applying MIs to therapy is the potential improvement in the therapeutic alliance between the client and counsellor and improvement of the effectiveness of therapy (O'Brien & Burnett, 2000a; 2000b). Focusing on the client's talents in the first instance can build confidence and reduces opposition (O'Brien & Burnett, 2000a). Careful discussion of the client's talent can expand the client's self-perception and enhances potentially transferrable skills from the talent area to focus on therapy.

The use of intelligence in counselling was proposed by Kaufman and Singer (2004) who argued that

counselling was an appropriate setting for the application of Sternberg's Successful Intelligence (Sternberg, 1997). This form of intelligence results in the adoption of a problem-solving cycle comprised of six stages: problem recognition; problem definition; formulating a strategy for problem-solving; representing information; allocating resources; and monitoring and evaluation. Analytical, creative and practical abilities are applied at each stage. Sternberg proposed that a balance of analytical, creative and practical abilities builds success in life by correcting or compensating weaknesses (Kaufman & Singer, 2004). Focusing on the client's analytical, creative and practical abilities is common in therapy and consideration of talents provides information that can be analysed in relation to the client's conception of learning. Both talents and conceptions of learning can then be expanded and cultivated within a framework of evidence-based therapy (e.g., Dattilio, & Freeman, 2007; Kaufman & Singer).

From its origins as a relevant framework in education and its application in career counselling, it is a small transition to apply MIs to therapeutic counselling with adults (Booth & O'Brien, 2008). It has been shown that adult clients entering therapy are less adaptive than those not attending therapy (Bowles, 2006) and less adaptive than those seeking career counselling (Bowles, 2010). Therefore, assisting clients to be more adaptive by developing and extending their talents through concepts of learning is an intuitively reasonable goal of therapy. Establishing whether clients are less talented than a comparable group of adults, at the onset of therapy, would further justify the investigation of talents in therapy.

One method of measuring talent, which combines abilities much like Sternberg's model (1997; Kaufman & Singer, 2004) is through using the Talent Questionnaire (Bowles, 2004; 2012b). This questionnaire defines nine talents based on Gardner's nine MIs (Bowles, 2004; 2008; Gardner, 1999; 2000; Tirri & Nokelainen, 2011; see Appendix 1). Each talent is rated against seven ways people obtain and maintain their talent, best described as conceptions of learning (Appendix 2; Bowles, 2004; 2008). The conceptions of learning are equivalent to Gardner's definition of learning or working styles (1999) and were derived by asking respondents to recall talented people and identify how they acquired and maintained their talent (Bowles, 2004). The nine talents are rated on each of the seven conceptions of learning in this research. Conceptions of learning are defined as personal experiences arising through relations between social and personal worlds and the contexts determining the experience, from the point of view of the participant (Billett, 2009; Olsson, 2011; Richardson, 1999). The link between the talents and concepts of learning marks the Talent Questionnaire as quite different to other questionnaires relevant to educational settings, and potentially so for therapy.

Previous research has shown that the highest rating intelligence was Social and Leadership, then Physical and Sport Activity followed by Construction and Spatial Design (Bowles, 2004, 2008). The least preferred MI was Mathematical and Logical. The ranking of the nine talents derived from the Talent Questionnaire with adolescents was, highest to lowest, 1) Physical and Sport Activity, 2) Musical and Rhythmic, 3) Construction and Spatial Design, 4) Social and Leadership, 5) Language and Communication, 6) Nature and Environmental, 7) Mathematical and Logical, 8) Self-awareness, and 9) Spiritual and Religious (Bowles, 2008). Scholastic subjects of Language and Communication ranked fifth and Mathematical and Logical ranked seventh, with Spiritual and Religious the lowest ranking talent. The current research was designed to validate the structure of the questionnaire for adults who were beginning therapy and with a nontherapeutic comparison group.

The research questions were:

1. Do the therapeutic and nontherapeutic respondents' ratings of concepts of learning form stable and coherent factors?
2. Do those entering therapy perceive that they are less talented than nontherapeutic respondents?
3. Is the rank order of the conceptions of learning will be consistent for therapeutic and nontherapeutic respondents?
4. Are there gender differences in the perceptions of talents of adults entering therapy and those of the nontherapeutic group?

Method

Participants

The sample is comprised of 264 respondents from two groups: a therapeutic group (females age was 34 years ($SD = 10.75$); males age was 36 years ($SD = 10.62$)) and a nontherapeutic group, matched for age and gender (females age was 34 years ($SD = 10.75$); males age was 33 years ($SD = 8.57$)). Of the 264 respondents, 140 were female and 124 were male; 132 were in the therapeutic group and 132 in the nontherapeutic group. The majority of respondents worked in management and professional occupations ($n = 58$). Forty-one respondents worked in trades and technical occupations; 38 respondents who were involved in unskilled occupations; 21 respondents who were involved in community and personal service occupations; 20 respondents worked in sales. The remainder of the respondents worked in clerical or home duties fields, were students, retired or did not indicate an occupation.

Procedure

Participation in the research for both groups was voluntary. The therapeutic participants attended one of two clinics to see a psychologist regarding self-reported or medical practitioner diagnosed emotional, relational or multiple problems. Therapeutic participants were asked to participate on their first visit to the psychologist. Those who volunteered returned the consent form and questionnaire the following week in a sealed envelope. Therapeutic participants were given feedback during therapy. No charge was made for the scaling and interpretation of the questionnaires. Nontherapeutic respondents volunteered their answer sheets after various training sessions on talent in a number of organizations and were matched on age, gender and occupation.

Results

One aim of this study was to define the factor structure, reliability, and validity of the Talent Questionnaire (Bowles, 2004; 2008). Principal components analysis was chosen as the appropriate method to analyse the factor structure of the items (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Finch & West, 1997; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Table 1 shows the output of factor analysis using oblique rotation and maximum likelihood which shows the 56 items formed nine factor analyses for both the nontherapeutic and therapeutic groups with all eigenvalues greater than 1. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy was .71 for the therapeutic group and .69 for the nontherapeutic group. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant for the therapeutic group ($\chi^2(n=132) = 6841.88, p < .001$) and the nontherapeutic group ($\chi^2(n=132) = 6729.93, p < .001$). The factor solution accounted for 61% and 59% of the variance for the nontherapeutic and therapeutic samples respectively. The scree plot of both groups indicated that the best solution contained 9 factors with a distinct elbow after the ninth factor. The factors were well defined by these analyses, with a loading of at least .3. Inclusion at this level revealed that the best solution contained all of the original items. The factor loading of each of the items for the Therapeutic (left hand columns) and Nontherapeutic respondents (right hand columns). Only loadings above the cut-off level. 0.30 for the sample size recommended by Hair et al. (2006) are shown. The first latent factor was sufficiently defined for both groups and accounted for above 11% of the variance for both the nontherapeutic and therapeutic groups. The subsequent factors contributed sufficiently to the communality, with the average

eigenvalue of 6.6% demonstrating a relatively consistent contribution of factors.

The order of the conception of learning, from highest to lowest loading, consistent for therapeutic/nontherapeutic groups was: performance (.86/.85), natural ability (.79/.81), understanding (.76/.75), interest (.75/.70), ease (.71/.69), preoccupation (.65/.66), and effort (.48/.45).

The majority of correlations were neither high or significant, indicating the relative independence of the talents (see Table 2). Each of the talents for both groups was significantly related to the Total Talent Score to a moderate level. The descriptive statistics for the therapeutic and nontherapeutic groups is also shown in Table 2. The average talent scores usually fit about the midpoint of the scale. The factor of Spiritual and Religious had the lowest mean score of any talent at 16.87. The two highest rating talents were Self-awareness and Language and Communication. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each talent, for both groups were high (.84 to .92).

A MANOVA tested differences between the therapeutic status (IV) and gender of respondents (IV) on the factor scores of talent (DVs). Wilks' criterion indicated that the combined dependent variables were significantly related to therapeutic status $F(9, 252) = 11.64, p < .001, \eta^2 = .29$, gender, $F(9, 252) = 3.08, p = .002, \eta^2 = .10$ and for their interaction $F(9, 252) = 1.35, p = .05, \eta^2 = .05$ (Table 3). Univariate analysis of the dependent variables showed that there were no significant differences found for any interaction involving gender and therapeutic status.

The univariate effect for therapeutic status showed that for each dependent variable of talent the nontherapeutic group means were significantly higher than the factor scores of the therapeutic participants. There were two significant gender effects for Construction and Spatial Design and, Mathematical and Logical. A univariate ANOVA was used to investigate whether there were differences on the basis of gender (IV) and therapeutic status (IV) for the Total Talent Score (DV). Results showed that there was no significant interactions involving gender and therapeutic status ($F(1, 260) = 1.47, p = .23, \eta^2 = .01$). Similarly, there was no significant effect of gender on Total Talent ($F(9, 252) = 1.98, p = .16, \eta^2 = .01$). There was a significant effect for the Total Talent with the nontherapeutic respondents' scores being higher than the therapeutic group ($F(9, 252) = 95.36, p = .01, \eta^2 = .27$; Figure 1).

Table 1
Pattern Matrix of the Factor Analysis of Talents by Concepts of Learning for Both Therapeutic and Nontherapeutic Respondents

Factor – Talents Styles of Learning	Factor Matrix of Therapeutic Respondents									Factor Matrix of Nontherapeutic Respondents										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	h ^{2,3}	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	h ²
Construction & Spatial Design																				
Natural Ability	88 ¹²									83	-88									77
Performance	86									81	-86									84
Ease	84									78	-88									81
Understanding	79									79	-84									82
Pre-occupation	77									58	-88									52
Interest	76									69	-66									75
Effort	51									33	-52									33
Language & Communication																				
Performance		91								87								82		68
Natural Ability		80								76								81		73
Ease		75								58								75		65
Interest		70								55								52		42
Understanding		68								57								63		50
Pre-occupation		66								77								40		33
Effort		39								28								31		28
Physical and Sport Activity																				
Performance			85							78		92								81
Natural Ability			84							74		90								81
Understanding			83							72		67								51
Ease			83							76		73								58
Interest			80							64		75								64
Pre-occupation			72							62		65								52
Effort			37							23		43								30
Spiritual & Religious																				
Interest				87						78	82									71
Performance				86						78	87									87
Ease				83						72	68									65
Natural Ability				77						66	77									79
Pre-occupation				72						52	73									61
Understanding				70						56	81									66
Effort				55						38	46									24
Social & Leadership																				
Performance					84					79					82					76
Ease					81					59					70					66
Interest					73					63					65					45
Understanding					71					53					65					50
Natural Ability					69					54					67					68
Pre-occupation					63					51					47					53
Effort					52					23					41					20
Musical & Rhythmic																				
Performance						-89				79					89					78
Natural Ability						-85				78					88					77
Understanding						-76				60					87					74
Ease						-73				58					72					58
Interest						-66				53					69					54
Pre-occupation						-63				49					65					53
Effort						-58				33					30					20
Natural & Environmental																				
Interest								87		80								81		71
Performance								82		80								81		76
Ease								80		67								31		63
Understanding								68		57								80		58
Natural Ability								62		53								79		76
Effort								59		38								72		11
Pre-occupation								56		34								73		61
Mathematical & Logical																				
Performance									88	85				89						80
Natural Ability									88	81				89						83
Understanding									88	82				89						80
Ease									86	72				79						69
Interest									68	56				76						65
Pre-occupation									58	40				75						58
Effort									38	22				54						36
Self-awareness																				
Performance										85	80									73
Natural Ability										81	67									74
Understanding										77	56									60
Ease										77	71									65
Interest										65	52									60
Pre-occupation										60	39									65
Effort										43	32									40
Rotation Sums Squared Loading	7.2	6.8	5.5	4.9	3.8	3.0	2.7	2.2	2.2											
Cumulative Eigenvalue (%)	11 ²	22	30	38	44	49	53	57	61											

¹ Note. Decimal points have been removed and eigenvalues have been rounded to hundredths; eigenvalues of 0.3 were suppressed and above 0.3 are included in the Table. ² Oblique rotation method with Kaiser Normalization. ³ h² refers to the extraction communalities.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for the Nontherapeutic and Therapeutic Respondents

	1 ^a	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(1) Construction and Spatial Design		.04	-.07	.24**	.20*	.03	-.05	.07	.01	.40**
(2) Spiritual & Religious	-.05		-.17	.00	.33**	.10	.32**	.15	.40**	.54**
(3) Physical and Sport Activity	.21*	-.11		-.08	.05	.10	.05	.15	-.14	.21*
(4) Mathematical and Logical	.26**	-.02	-.02		.12	-.07	.01	.07	.03	.35**
(5) Nature and Environmental	.35**	.01	.15	-.04		.14	.17*	.13	.19*	.57**
(6) Musical and Rhythmic	-.08	.24**	.10	-.010	-.13		.27**	.11	.30**	.46**
(7) Language and Communication	-.07	.07	.02	.19*	-.18*	.28**		.29**	.41**	.56**
(8) Social and Leadership	-.08	.09	.26**	-.03	-.09	.12	-.01		.23**	.50**
(9) Self-awareness	-.11	.21*	.01	-.11	-.07	.19*	.24**	-.05		.57**
(10) Total Talent (mean)	.44**	.39**	.48**	.34**	.28**	.48**	.42**	.33**	.36**	
Scale Mean	19.03	16.87	21.13	19.11	20.15	21.89	23.14	21.10	23.34	20.64
Scale SD	7.26	7.24	6.77	6.58	6.02	6.49	5.84	5.84	6.26	3.11
Alpha ^b (therapeutic)	.92	.91	.91	.90	.89	.90	.88	.88	.88	
Alpha (nontherapeutic)	.91	.91	.90	.91	.88	.88	.85	.84	.86	

Note. ^a Above the diagonal are from the nontherapeutic respondents' coefficients; below are the therapeutic respondents' correlation coefficients.

* Significance of less than or equal to .05 (2-tailed); ** significance of less than or equal to .01 (2-tailed). ^b indicates the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

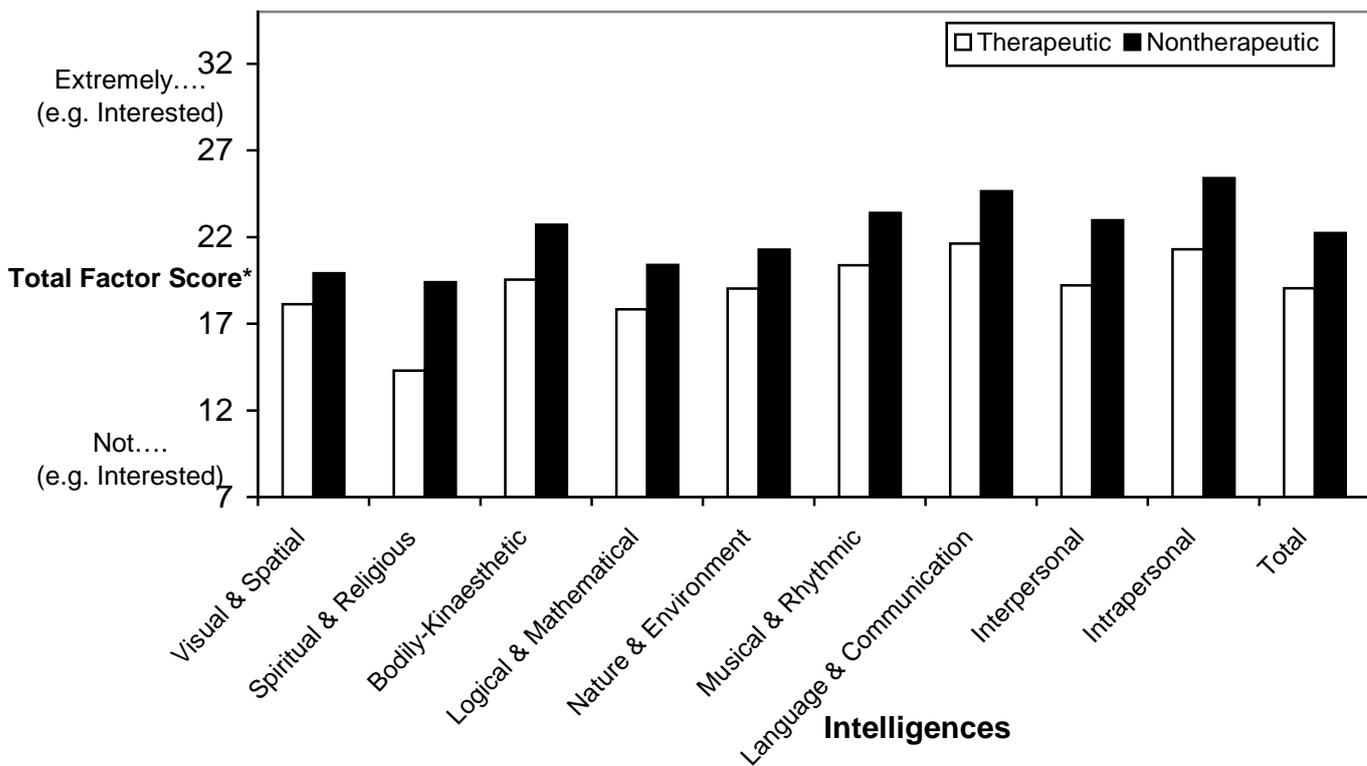


Figure 1 Distribution of responses according to the Modes of Proficiency

Note: * Minimum possible is 7; maximum possible is 35. The total score is the mean of nine Talents.

Table 3
Talents by Therapeutic Status, Gender and Age

Factor Labels Main Effects	Elements of the Variation				Univariate Significance		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	p	η^2
<u>Construction & Spatial Design</u>							
Females / Males	17.36	7.16	20.90	6.94	16.77	<.001	.06
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	18.13	7.03	19.92	7.26	3.97	<.05	.02
<u>Spiritual & Religious</u>							
Females / Males	17.27	7.46	16.41	6.97	1.03	=.309	.01
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	14.34	6.12	19.40	7.40	37.59	<.001	.13
<u>Physical and Sport Activity</u>							
Females / Males	20.45	6.85	21.90	6.63	3.22	=.074	.01
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	19.54	6.71	22.73	6.47	15.02	<.001	.06
<u>Mathematical and Logical</u>							
Females / Males	18.21	6.64	20.13	6.39	5.95	=.015	.02
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	17.84	5.95	20.39	6.95	11.17	=.001	.04
<u>Nature & Environment</u>							
Females / Males	19.63	6.04	20.73	5.98	2.22	=.137	.01
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	19.03	5.86	21.14	6.01	9.79	=.002	.03
<u>Musical & Rhythmic</u>							
Females / Males	22.04	6.45	21.72	6.55	0.17	=.685	.01
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	20.39	6.42	23.40	6.22	15.59	<.001	.06
<u>Language & Communication</u>							
Females / Males	23.48	6.06	22.75	5.61	1.09	=.298	.01
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	21.62	5.87	24.65	5.46	19.35	<.001	.07
<u>Social and Leadership</u>							
Females / Males	21.65	6.21	20.48	5.35	2.92	=.088	.01
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	19.22	5.76	22.98	5.30	30.08	<.001	.10
<u>Self-awareness</u>							
Females / Males	23.71	6.13	22.94	6.41	1.09	=.296	.01
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	21.30	6.11	25.40	5.73	32.56	<.001	.11
<u>Total</u>							
Females / Males	20.42	3.13	20.88	3.09	1.98	=.160	.01
Therapeutic / Nontherapeutic	19.05	2.45	22.23	2.89	95.36	<.001	.27

Note. ^a indicates a higher interaction involving two independent variables, see the text for details.

Discussion

The results indicate that the concepts of learning do define talents for adults generally and those beginning therapy. Ratings of concepts of learning formed stable and coherent factors in a similar manner for both therapeutic and nontherapeutic groups. A comparison of these groups showed that those entering therapy perceived themselves to be consistently less talented in comparison with the nontherapeutic respondents. The results showed that there were weak gender differences for two of the nine talents.

MI have been applied to career counselling (Shearer & Luzzo, 2009) and therapeutic counselling for children (O'Brien & Burnet, 2000a; 2000b) and now may have some relevance in general therapy (Booth & O'Brien, 2008; Pearson, 2011; Waterhouse, 2006). That the same nine factors emerged for the nontherapeutic

and therapeutic clients was validating, as it is possible that there was no defined structure or a more chaotic relationship between items and factors for the responses of this group. There was a strong item to factor structure for both groups. The communalities for both groups were relatively high given the number of factors and items with a substantial amount of variance accounted for with eigenvalues of 66% and 64%. The relatively consistent contribution across all nine talents and across both groups of participants indicates good structure (Finch & West, 1997; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and high alpha reliabilities (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

This operationalisation of MIs as talents is worthy of consideration in comparison with other methods, such as, Sternberg's Successful Intelligence (1997). The

Talent Questionnaire may be an advantageous adjunct to Shearer and Luzzo's (2009) career typologies in career counselling alongside the MIDAS as it adds the dimension of the conceptions to learning. Finally, the association of talents with the formal IQ of the individual may have utility as the latter measures relatively immutable cognitive functioning and former represents the ways in which the individuals displays their competence which may change more easily.

The planned between-group comparison showed there was a relatively large, consistent significant difference between those entering therapy and the nontherapeutic group showing that entering therapy was accompanied by a perception of depletion of talent, which is logically consistent with engaging a therapist to assist in remedying a psychological issue. Therapists could work variously to explore options to expand talents over time by generalizing talents to new contexts and assisting clients to practice and focus on previously low talent areas that may assist in their therapeutic trajectory.

As with previous research, differences associated with gender were present but not large. In this research females' scores were significantly lower than males' on Construction and Spatial Design and Mathematics and Logical. The magnitude of the difference between males and females was small to negligible and not consistently higher for either gender.

Both the talents and the conceptions of learning have utility in therapy when the aim of therapy is to build resilience and assist the client to move from a diminished state to normal functioning to flourishing following the key principles of a strength-based approaches (Padesky & Mooney, 2012; Seligman, 1988; Snyder, & Lopez, 2006). The therapeutic intention of strengthening the existing capabilities; broadening the repertoire of capabilities, and establishing competencies in a spirit of experimentation and exploration may be informed by talents (Pearson, 2011). Assisting the client to be particular about language, especially relevant to the concepts of learning related to talents may facilitate therapy. Re-instating an interest in Music and Rhythmic as well as Physical and Sport activities may provide an adaptive diversion and an appropriate way to expend energy, particularly if ease and interest are starting points. Nature and the Environment may be used to provide clients with access to spaces or venues for recuperation and insight. Spiritual and Religious talents may be suggested for clients to expand the self or increase participation in such activities if appropriate. This approach is consistent with O'Brien and Burnett's (2000a; 2000b) view that talents may be used to assist the establishment of the therapeutic alliance, enhance the preferred style (2000a) and build confidence and competence followed by exploration of non-preferred talents (Pearson, 2011).

Just as talents may inform therapy, consideration of the concepts of learning generally might be useful. The order of the average conceptions of learning from highest to lowest loading for both groups showed the following pattern: performance, natural ability,

understanding, interest, ease, preoccupation, and effort. The application of talents in learning settings is similar to therapy and the concepts of learning preferred by the client would be first explored and developed followed by exploration of, and experimentation with the less used conceptions of learning. Similarly, moving away from secure recreational pursuits that may preoccupy the client to explore and developing knowledge and understanding of different pursuits may result in becoming more agentic and self-directed, rather than reactive in managing daily life (Seligman, 1988).

It is instructive to note that the conceptions that contributed most to talents was performance which may be associated with a focus on the management of action and is relevant to therapy. Natural ability was the next ranked concept and it may be helpful in therapy as attributing behaviour to natural ability may increase the locus of control and self-agency for the client. Interestingly, the least contributing concept associated with the expression of talent, regardless of therapeutic status, was effort. This result is meaningful for clients as they may be approaching therapy having exhausted all options and be handing over to the therapist the responsibility for much of the way forward towards a solution or remedy. Importantly, learning processes and talent development are relevant in therapy and sometimes take the majority of the therapeutic time and activity, but should not replace therapeutic interventions designed to address psychopathological or diagnosed issues. Talent work in therapy is an appropriate adjunct to strategies specifically designed to ameliorate the clinical issues.

There are limitations to this research. First, the data were based on self-reports, which may have biases. Second, the data was not randomized. Third, while the sample and group sizes were sufficient for the planned analyses, larger samples would increase certainty about conclusions. Future research could attempt to redress these concerns; however, these limitations do not preclude the possibility of generalising the findings from this research to inform the practice of therapy and the benefits of the application of talents into therapeutic domains.

In summary, this research provides preliminary information about the validity and potential utility of the Talent Questionnaire as an adjunct to therapy. The analyses have shown that there are significant differences between the therapeutic and nontherapeutic groups in regard to talents based on Gardner's MIs. The questionnaire has good factor structure. The Talent Questionnaire has promise as a tool in therapy and gives the therapist and client "information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner 1999a, pp. 33-34) and "achieve success by capitalizing on strengths and correcting and compensating weaknesses" (Kaufman & Singer, 2004) for the individual.

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Funding and Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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Research Profile

Terry Bowles has a background in practice and leadership in school, clinical, educational and developmental psychological practice and research. Terry currently works at the University of Melbourne, training Educational and Developmental Psychologists in the postgraduate programs of the Education Faculty. His university research programs generally focus on clinical and normal functioning on topics of motivation, achievement, communication and relationships. Recently, this has included change management, adaptive functioning, time orientation and affect, talent and talent development. Most recently, he has been designing and developing selection tools and processes for defining suitability for entry to university programs.

Appendix 1

Definition of Nine Talent Areas

Talent	Gardener's MI Nomenclature	Stem Operationalizing the Talent...
1) Language and Communication	Linguistic	Communicating ideas, discussing, creative & other writing, reading, acting, telling jokes, playing with language or word games.
2) Mathematical and Logical	Logical and Mathematical	Recognising patterns and relationships, 'cracking' codes, solving problems and number patterns or calculating complex problems.
3) Construction and Spatial Design	Visual and Spatial	Making models, drawing, imagining how to build things, reading maps, working with wood, other material or construction sets.
4) Physical and Sport Activity	Bodily-kinaesthetic	A Sport/s, exercise, aerobics, physical training, creative movement, dance, acting, miming or other physical activities.
5) Musical and Rhythmic	Musical and Rhythmic	Music, listening for relaxation or pleasure, rhythm patterns, music playing, performing, reproducing rhythm or pitch by singing or playing.
6) Social and Leadership	Interpersonal Intelligence	Group activities, clubs, cooperative tasks, being with others, community service activities, being responsible or being a leader.
7) Self-awareness	Intrapersonal Intelligence	Finding out about your own feelings and thoughts, focusing on your own behaviour and the behaviour of others, spending time by yourself, thinking about thinking.
8) Nature and Environmental	Naturalistic Intelligence	Looking after nature, being in nature, visiting places where animals live, finding out about the connections between environments and animals.
9) Spiritual and Religious	Existential Intelligence	Being aware of a spiritual self and world, involvement in different religious activities and tasks, being involved in spiritual celebrations and rites.

Appendix 2

Definition of Nine Talent Areas

Concepts of Learning	Definition of the Construct
Effort (1)	Practice, Do it, Effort, Study, Motivation, Persistence, Committed, Determination
Understanding (2)	Understanding, Experience, Learning, Reflection, Thinking, Knowledge, Awareness, Imagination
Interest (3)	Being interested, Involvement, Like it, Enjoy it, Listening, Curiosity, Open minded, Participate
Natural Ability (4)	Natural ability, Born with it, Talent, Creative, Natural disposition, Ability, Aptitude, Inherit skills
Performance (5)	Training, Performance, Skill development, Achievement, Competitive, Challenge, Competence, Exercise it
Pre-occupation (6)	Pre-occupied, Passion, Need, Drive, Love it, Have to have it, Really focused, Compulsion
Ease (7)	Comes easily, Opportunity, Content, Relaxed, Comfortable, Suits them, As they are, Calm

Appendix 3 Definition of Nine Talent Areas

INTEREST INVENTORY

This questionnaire asks about your interests, abilities and activities in nine particular areas. Each page begins with a question which can be answered in regard to all nine areas. Respond to each statement using the **SCALE** from one to five on each page. Put the number indicating your response in the appropriate square on the answer sheet.

There is a different **SCALE** on each page. Each page is a new column on the answer sheet.

IN WHICH OF THE SETS OF ACTIVITIES ARE YOU INTERESTED:

SCALE	Not				Extremely
	<u>INTERESTED</u>		<u>INTERESTED</u>		<u>INTERESTED</u>
	1	2	3	4	5

(You do not have to be interested in all of the activities in each numbered group, just most of them.)

1.1

Communicating ideas, discussing, creative & other writing, reading, acting, telling jokes, playing with language or word games.

1.2

Recognising patterns and relationships, 'cracking' codes, solving problems and number patterns or calculating complex problems.

1.3

Making models, drawing, imagining how to build things, reading maps, working with wood, other material or construction sets.

1.4

A Sport/s, exercise, aerobics, physical training, creative movement, dance, acting, miming or other physical activities.