

# Iq tests and the iq scores



Most IQ tests and the IQ scores that come from them are based on the belief that intelligence is an objective quality that can be measured and ranked along with other objective personal qualities such as height or weight. In reality, society's perception of individual intelligence is highly subjective and may be affected by culture, environment, and other factors. Traits that make a person look like a genius in one context may be of very little value in another context. Ways of thinking that are totally inappropriate in one setting may be very valuable in another. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences recognizes that there are many different ways in which a person may demonstrate intelligence (Gardner, 1999).

IQ tests that are based on the theory of multiple intelligences do not simply measure how intelligent a person may be, but instead try to find out how a person is intelligent. It is important that parents, teachers, and psychologists recognize that there are many different ways in which a person may demonstrate intelligence so they can help students reach their full potential. To encourage this, psychology should adopt a theory of multiple intelligences.

Western culture places a high value on a student's ability to read and the ability to do math. Students who perform well in these areas are considered to be more intelligent than are students who have less developed verbal or mathematical skills. Traditional IQ scores also emphasize a person's verbal and mathematical skills. In fact, almost all of the tests that a student takes during his or her academic career will be affected by the student's ability to read. Students who cannot read well are at a severe disadvantage when they take an IQ test or any other type of a test, even if the test is supposed to be measuring something other than the student's ability to read. Reading

and math are important because our culture and the jobs that it has created are based on reading and math.

However, in a culture that was based on hunting, the ability to read and do math would be much less important than the ability to hunt for food. A person in a hunting culture could have a very high verbal score, but he would still starve to death unless he could hunt. A person with a high mathematical aptitude but no social skills would not be very successful in a culture that placed a greater value on the individual's ability to get along with other people. Depending on how much value the culture placed on social skills and how little value the culture placed on math, this individual might not be able to find a job or do much of anything else unless he could develop some type of social skills.

Gardner recognized that although reading and the ability to do math are important, they are not the only forms of intelligence that a person may possess. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is not designed to determine how intelligent a person might be, but in what ways a person is intelligent. Teachers who believe in the theory of multiple intelligence would not be as interested in measuring how much the student knows as they would be in determining how the student has learned what he or she knows.

While traditional IQ tests only recognize two types of intelligence, verbal and mathematical, Gardner identified eight types of intelligence. Gardner's list of intelligences includes the traditional verbal and mathematical intelligences and adds spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and naturalist intelligence. Gardner also recognized that there may be other

types of intelligence that have not yet been identified but that may be used by some people and in some cultures (Gardner, 1999, p. 47).

People who value verbal skills, mathematical ability, and the ability to use traditional logic - in other words, people who place a high value on traditional IQ scores - may not agree with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Critics of multiple intelligence theory may argue that it is wrong to call a student's athletic ability or musical talent a type of intelligence. These critics may say that the theory of multiple intelligence is just another way to help bad students to feel better about themselves.

While people who do not believe in multiple intelligence theory may recognize that a student may have highly developed skills in areas like music or athletics, they would probably say that these other skills are somehow less important and less valuable than verbal and math skills, which are the only true measures of IQ. This belief could create a problem in English classes and math classes, where the teachers tend to have high verbal skills and high math skills and are looking for the same types of intelligence in their students.

Gardner also stated that intelligences could overlap one another. For example, a student might have high musical intelligence and a high verbal intelligence. This type of person might become a songwriter. Another student, like a basketball player who can instantly compute the exact trajectory that is needed to make a basket, might have high athletic intelligence and high math intelligence. Business executives or politicians might have high verbal scores along with high interpersonal or social skills.

Gardner believed that people could have multiple intelligences that they could call on when necessary, depending on the situation.

Gardner is not the only person to recognize that there are other types of intelligence besides verbal skill and mathematical ability. Daniel Goleman developed a theory of emotional intelligence, or EQ. Goleman originally claimed that EQ was more important than IQ. More recently, Goleman acknowledged that both EQ and IQ are important and that there may be some situations in which a person's verbal, math, and logic skills may be more valuable than the ability to read and understand emotions (Goleman, 2008).

Goleman's recognition that EQ may not be as important as IQ in some situations does not take away from the credibility or the importance of EQ. He still emphasizes that EQ is important for jobs that require leadership skills and other social interactions. In fact, if Goleman had stubbornly insisted that EQ was the most important characteristic, then he would have been guilty of having the same attitude that the developers of the IQ test had when they insisted that there was only one way to measure human intelligence.

By recognizing that EQ is only one of several factors that might contribute to a person's success, Goleman actually makes his theory more credible. The recognition that EQ and IQ often work together also confirms what Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences said about people drawing on the type of intelligence that was necessary for a specific situation.

Abraham Maslow said, " When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem begins to resemble a nail" (" Maslow's Hammer"). For decades, the traditional IQ test of verbal and mathematical ability was the only tool that

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psychologists and teachers had to measure student intelligence. Consequently, IQ became strongly associated with verbal and mathematical ability. However, Gardner, Goleman, and everyday observations of how people think and learn prove that IQ is more than that.

Teachers who recognize these multiple intelligences can do a better job of preparing lessons that are more consistent with how their students learn. At the same time, students who are able to identify how they learn and how they think can use that knowledge to learn new material in ways that they can remember and apply to other situations.

Schools and teachers that insist that there is only one or two types of intelligence and that students who do not perform well in those areas must not be very intelligent will be less successful as they try to educate their students. It is possible, for example, that special education classes are not full of students who are disabled, but are instead full of students who have been mislabeled by a system that refuses to recognize other types of intelligence. That would be a tragedy. To prevent this type of mislabeling, psychology and education should adopt a theory of multiple intelligences.

#### References

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