

Theories of intelligence



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People are different. Some think faster than others, some learn faster than others. Some are naturally good at art, others are naturally good at math. Some people have a hard time in social situations, and some breeze through them. What causes people to be so different? Intelligence. Intelligence determines a person's potential and how well they are able to learn. However, intelligence is not definitive and simple as there are many factors that make intelligence a complex concept. If the line is blurred between what is and what is not intelligence, how was intelligence initially defined? Intelligence has been theorized, tested, and investigated for a long time. Theories have been made in order to define intelligence. Three prominent theorists have contributed to what the modern world knows today as intelligence. A British psychologist, Charles Spearman theorized that the definition of intelligence among society has a common factor known as general intelligence, also referred to as g , which represents the potential to be rationalize and resolve issues. The other factors of intelligence are known specific factors, which are also referred to as s . Spearman claimed that one's proficiency in a given subject correlates to that of similar subjects (Rathus), yet not a single person is good at everything, and it is no one's fault; the fault lies with the way the mind works. Louis Thurstone was another psychologist who theorized that there were eight separate factors that make up intelligence: visual and spatial ability, perceptual speed, numerical anility, verbal meaning, memory, word fluency, deductive reasoning, and inductive reasoning. Each factor pertained to a certain factor. For example, visual and spatial ability pertains to the ability to conceptualize information, but the verbal meaning factor pertains to the ability to recall

words and phrases. Similar to Spearman's theory, Thurstone's theory claims a person can be naturally competent in one factor, but significantly less competent in another. (Rathus 210). The last theory originated from Howard Gardner, a recent psychologist who claimed not that there are multiple factors of intelligence, but that intelligence wide foundation with several branches of intelligence. Gardner claimed that the different kinds of intelligence are linguistic, logical-mathematics, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence. Gardner believes social intelligence is as important as academic intelligence. For example, a person could excel in social skills, but not in school. Throughout history, psychologists have formed theories in order to explain what intelligence and how it works.

Intelligence plays a part in everyday life. The human ability to function in social situations and learn in academic situations encompasses the general idea what life on earth is. In order to define and categorize intelligence, intelligence tests have been made. According the Encyclopedia of Mind Disorders intelligence tests examine the psychology of a person and evaluate his mentality (Mind Disorders). There four tests that are used most commonly are Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Wechsler-Adult Intelligence Scale, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, and Wechsler Primary & Preschool Scale of Intelligence, which consist of trials of mathematics, verbal tests, and motor skills. There are advantages and disadvantages to using intelligence tests. The advantages include that testing uniformly measures the capability of a person and can identify gifts within him, opening greater opportunities, as well identifies certain learning disabilities in a person,

preventing damage to persist, while the drawbacks include that the tests normally give specific quantities that describe the functionality of a person, but intelligence itself is complex and a one dimensional number does not sufficiently determine a person's intelligence. Another disadvantage of intelligence tests is that the components of one intelligence test can also differ from the components of another intelligence test, altering his measure of intelligence. A common scale used in determining the intelligence of a person within the use of intelligence tests is the intelligence quotient, which is also known as IQ. (Mind Disorders). The average IQ is 100; a person with an IQ lower than 70 to 75 is considered intellectually disabled (WebMD). The bell curve made from IQ tests are able to categorize people from intellectually disabled to genius. In order to try and measure intelligence, tests have been made to investigate and to further advance the unanswered field.

Humans are not perfect; there is an incredible variety of different kinds of hindrances that affect the everyday life of all different kinds of people. One type of hindrance that can hold back a person is their ability to learn, or learning disabilities, which can be qualified by below-average intelligence and a lack of ability to perform everyday skills (WebMD). Intellectual functioning pertains to IQ, the ability to learn, rationalize, solve problems, and make decisions. Adaptive behaviors pertain to social intelligence and motor skills. Signs of learning disability include late development of motor skills, late development of communication skills, slower development of everyday skills, difficulty with recalling past event, behavior problems, and difficulty with logical thinking (WebMD). Learning disabilities are determined

by degrees of severity ranging from mild to profound. For mild learning disabilities which affects minor academic learning or smaller cognitive abilities such as short-term memory and mental flexibility. Learning disabilities do not necessarily limit the number of abilities a person can have, but prolong the amount of time it takes a person to learn them. The limitations brought on by learning disabilities include intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviors. The next degree of severity is called moderate; moderate learning disabilities causes a person to lag behind the rest of his peers academically as well as require assistance for everyday life. The third degree of severity is severe learning disability, which causes a person to have a minimal conceptual understanding and require a caretaker. Finally, the last degree of severity is called profound learning disability, which causes a person to solely rely on the physical world to generate conceptual skills (Association).

There are a number of causes that can cause learning disabilities as well. These causes range from genetic conditions to problems during pregnancy and childbirth. Genetic conditions that cause learning disabilities include disorders such as Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, and autism. Injuries such as brain infections and severe head injuries and illnesses such as meningitis and the measles can also cause learning disabilities. Consumption of alcohol or drug use during pregnancy can cause causing fetal alcohol syndrome and malnutrition (WebMD). For situations like pregnancy, learning disabilities and disorders can be prevented. For example, pregnant woman should refrain from drinking alcohol and consider ultrasounds and amniocentesis to identify the potential problem early (WebMD).

Intelligence has been theorized, tested, and investigated for a long time. These theories, tests, and investigations have created a better understand of what intelligence is, at least to an extent. Intelligence is hard to define; it is not only the good grades one receives in school, it is also how one functions in everyday life and in social situations.

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