

# Theories of intelligence by bruce ballenger in the curious researcher

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



The essay continues in a narrative form with research findings interconnected with his personal experiences, making it relatable to readers. There are facts stated throughout the essay which he connects to his experiences, including his feelings of self-doubt. He recalls memories of feeling intellectually inferior and derives meaning from things he has learned from research and the media and applies that knowledge to his life. Ballenger emphasizes the importance of people utilizing their strengths in order to become more accepting of their intelligence. He wrote that it took him a while to realize this. He recalled learning about he agreed with Gardner's and Sternberg's theories of intelligence. While he agreed with the theories, he felt that "there was a kind of intelligence that really counted and that I didn't possess." (p. 16) Throughout the essay, Ballenger takes the reader from his early childhood to his current realization of his limitations and how this has helped him.

2. In the essay, Ballenger mentions the results of a study on happiness that he learned while watching the news. The study suggested that everyone goes through a midlife crisis around the age of 52 because people at this age may come to feel that their lives did not turn out as they had hoped. These people usually feel better when they accept their strengths and weaknesses and accept that not all wishes will come true. After discussing these facts he offers commentary stating "It's a great relief for me to know that things should be looking up." (p. 13) On page 14 Ballenger discusses a youtube.com clip from the teen Miss USA contest where a contestant, Caitlin Upton responds incoherently to a question most people would view as common

sense. Many people responded by ridiculing Upton on the website. While Ballenger admits to ridiculing Upton, he acknowledged that he also sympathized with her because he could relate to the embarrassment that she must have been feeling for appearing “unintelligent” He then discusses the research finding which states that American children tend to be rated on their intelligence beginning in elementary school, leading him to recall some of his childhood experiences in the school of feeling unintelligent. For example, Ballenger recalls in the second grade how he was sent into the back of the room to sit alone because he was unable to remember all of the months of the year. He discussed disliking reading and writing throughout high school because his teachers would often criticize his work. Ballenger states that while he had every intention of attending college he figured he would not succeed in life. (p. 15)

On page 16 Ballenger discusses agreeing with Howard Gardener’s theory of multiple intelligences and Robert Sternberg’s “Diarchic Theory of Successful Intelligence both of which basically state that there is more than a way to convey intelligence and relates this to his relationship with his father. Despite his agreement with these theories from a young age, he states that he felt he lacked “school smarts- the ability to pick apart an argument, to recognize the logical fallacy, and to make an arresting point-all of the things my father could do so well.” (Ballenger, p. 16) Ballenger states that his father was an intellectual, alcoholic man who tended to criticize many of his idealistic views when he was intoxicated, making him feel “young stupid and hopelessly inadequate.” (p16) Ballenger further states that “One of the

things my Dad's alcoholism taught me was how weak-kneed his kind of intelligence could be against the sucker punches of self-loathing." (p. 16) He essentially meant that he realized that if people are unable to accept their own strengths and weaknesses they will not like themselves and they will feel as though they cannot measure up, as his father felt about him.

Ballenger goes on to discuss his prior viewpoints of the academic world feeling that most professors wanted to inflict their feelings of supposed superiority upon others. He based this belief after reading a commentary of college teachers which essentially stated that professor's insecurity often turns them into intellectual bullies who come across as knowing everything. (p. 17) Ballenger further states that he still has self-doubts but he feels that because of them he can better connect with his students. He has become more accepting of his strengths and weaknesses.

3. The findings of the essay would confirm one's belief that writing research papers is not necessarily simply writing generic facts those students would not likely remember once their work is done. The message readers can take from the essay is that there is more than one way to convey intelligence.

Ballenger makes this point when he discusses a study where psychologist Joseph Glick asked a Liberian Kpelle tribesman to sort 20 items-foods, tools, cooking utensils in what he felt was a "logical way". He sorted these things into groups that showed relevance between the items. No group consisted of one type of item. The tribesman stated that it was illogical to sort the items based on their commonalities- the way many people in our society would sort them (p. 17 ) Ballenger makes the point that there is more than one way

to “ know” and everyone knows their own truth. Students need to make meaning out of their own knowledge and apply it accordingly.