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Period 2

Intelligence Unit Essays

1. Theories of Intelligence

There currently is a great debate over what exactly is intelligence. Three leading theorists have developed their own opinions on what they believe intelligence to be composed of and these theories differ from one another in a number of ways.

Sternberg stresses a triarchic theory of intelligence, which proposes the idea that there are three basic kinds of intelligence. The first kind of intelligence is called componential intelligence and this refers to the mental processes emphasized by most theories of intelligence, such as the ability to learn how to do things or acquire new knowledge and carry out tasks effectively. The second component of this triarchic model is experiential intelligence. Experiential intelligence is the ability to adapt creatively in new situations and to use insight. This type of intelligence refers to an individual's ability to decipher the important from the irrelevant, and their ability to combine new knowledge with formerly known knowledge. The final component of this triarchic theory is contextual intelligence. Contextual intelligence is the ability to select contexts in which you can excel, or the ability to shape the environment to fit your strengths. According to this triarchic theory it is apparent that Sternberg believes that intelligence encompasses a broad variety of skills. The componential is basically a measure of ability, experiential a measure of creativity and contextual is a measure of practicality. Thus, in summary Sternberg's method of measuring intelligence is to examine the information processing involved in thinking, changes with experience, and effects in different environments and when such is measured, it will be shown that high intelligence results from the effective organization of these three components in altering their use to deal with familiar problems and making adaptations in order to work with new problems.

Gardner proposes the theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence suggests that there is not one intelligence, but rather many intelligences, each of which is relatively independent of the others. Gardner's theory suggests that intelligence is made up of seven various components each of which is independent of the other. The first of the seven components is logical-mathematical intelligence and this refers to an individual's ability to work with numerical values or logically solve problems. The second component, linguistic intelligence, refers to an individual's verbal skills and their ability to manipulate language. The third component is spatial intelligence and this refers to such skills as the ability to draw well or other artistic skills that deal with depicting or visualizing things from a spatial perspective. Musical intelligence is rather self-explanatory because it deals with the musical talents of an individual such as their ability to compose or play instruments. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence refers to the ability of coordinated movement such as dance performance or athletic competitions. Interpersonal intelligence refers to a person's ability to interact with other individuals. Finally, intrapersonal intelligence refers to a person's ability to know themselves. Thus, it can be seen that the number of intelligences are more extensive in this theory than in the triarchic theory.

Goleman has a theory of emotional intelligence. Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence refers to how effectively people perceive and understand their own emotions and the emotions of others and can manage their emotional behavior. Goleman believes

that there are five traits or components that contribute to one's emotional intelligence. The first component is knowing one's own emotions, and this refers to the ability to monitor and recognize our own feelings. This concept is of central importance to self-awareness and all other dimensions of emotional intelligence. The second component is managing one's emotions. This refers to the ability to control impulses; to cope effectively with sadness, depression, and minor setbacks; as well as to control how long emotions last. The third component is the ability to use emotions to motivate oneself and this refers to the capacity to marshal emotions toward achieving personal goals. The fourth component is recognizing the emotions of other people and this refers to the ability to read subtle, nonverbal cues that reveal what people really want and need. The final component is managing relationships and this refers to the ability to accurately acknowledge and display one's own emotions as well as being sensitive to the emotions of others.

All of these theories are unique in their own respect, and furthermore, they all tend to be different from the past traditional theories of intelligence. The past traditional theories tended to focus mainly on measuring concrete things such as numerical and verbal skills, but the more contemporary models discussed above account for the various other strengths of individuals. For example, a traditional theory presented by Thurstone stressed seven areas- spatial ability, perceptual speed, numerical ability, verbal meaning, memory, word fluency, and reasoning. Thurstone's theory basically centers around how smart an individual is, and it fails to take into account the other possible strengths of the individual such as their musical or artistic talents which are taken into account in the more contemporary theories. However, it is important to note that the more contemporary theories are not completely different from the past traditional theories, rather the contemporary theories seem to take the past, traditional theories into consideration and then expand upon them.

2. I would be in a rather tough situation if I wished to measure the intelligence of all the students because I obviously would have to account for cultural bias within the tests, and there would also be a good chance that I would have to keep my testing techniques within financial guidelines. To the students with US origins, I could administer a Stanford-Binet test. This test was developed with the purpose of measuring IQ and to help identify those individuals who are not too bright in hope that they can be given better assistance. One of the main advantages of this test is the fact that it will help me locate those students who are struggling and as principal, I would then help get these children the necessary help. However, a disadvantage of this test is the fact that this test is highly verbal in nature. This would be a huge disadvantage in my situation because some of the students aren't very familiar with the English language and thus, they have a disadvantage in testing. Therefore, if I administered this test to the foreign students they would most likely score poorly on it because they are unfamiliar with the English language. I wouldn't want to obtain a false measurement of my foreign born students due to an unfair test that is culturally biased so I would make sure that I would administer performance tests to my students. Performance tests are tests that attempt to minimize the use of language, and thus, all students will have an equal opportunity to perform well on the test despite their language background. I would also make sure that I administered culture-fair tests, which are tests that are designed to reduce cultural bias by minimizing

skills and values that vary from one culture to another. If the tests that I administer aren't culturally-fair, then the US students would perform better because they are so accustomed to our everyday values while the foreign students may not perform as well because they would be unfamiliar with the norms and traditions of our society.

In order to obtain an accurate measure of intelligence I may also wish to administer the WISC-III tests to my students. The WISC-III tests is an individual intelligence test developed especially for school-aged children; it yields verbal, performance and full IQ scores. The fact that this test would require individual testing may be beneficial because the student can get his or her necessary attention during the test. It may also be possible to have a favorable proctor for the foreign students that could help aid with the language barriers. However, this test does offer a number of disadvantages as well. First, the test measures and stresses verbal skills, and if English isn't the primary language of the student then there is a good chance that they will perform poorly and thus, the results will be lower than they should be. This wouldn't be fair to the foreign born students, so I would hesitate to administer the WISC-III. One of the other main reasons as to why I probably wouldn't administer the WISC-III test has to deal with the fact that it is an individual test and to administer an individual test to each and everyone of my students would be very time consuming and financially costly. Thus, from an economical point of view administering a WISC-III test to the whole school wouldn't be very practical, rather I may decide to only administer the WISC-III tests to those students who have performed poorly on the culture-fair performance tests that I originally administered. Through further testing with the WISC-III it may be possible to determine what specific areas the student needs help with improving.