

Gardner Vs. Sternberg: We Are ALL Different!**Speaker: Deb Vos**

We all know people that are what we consider “sharp” because they are knowledgeable and perceptive or maybe they learn new ideas quickly. There are multiple definitions and even thoughts on what intelligence means. The Webster Dictionary (2016) defines intelligence as, “the ability to learn or understand things or to deal with new or difficult situations.” **David Wechsler**, a well-known psychologist studying human intelligence and the creator of many intelligence assessments, defines **intelligence** as the global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with the environment. Many psychologist endorse Wechsler’s definition knowing that this definition reflects just **one facet of the person’s global capacity: the ability to act purposefully, rationally, and effectively on academic tasks in a classroom environment**. However, people display intelligent behavior in other settings (at work, home, and play), and other characteristics contribute to intelligent behavior (persistence, realistic goals setting, the productive use of corrective feedback, creativity, and moral and aesthetic values). A true assessment of intelligence would take into account behavior related to these other settings and characteristics.

Research tells us that in everyday settings, **intelligent behavior** is related to the ability to recognize occasions that call for various capabilities and the motivation to use those capabilities. For example, in a situation that has the potential to become confrontational and hostile, intelligence might involve being open-minded and using humor. **Robert Sternberg**, a leading intelligence theorist and researcher, defines wisdom as the use of one’s ability for the benefit of oneself and others by either adapting to one’s environment, shaping it to better suit one’s needs, or selecting a more compatible environment in which to function.

Like David Wechsler, Robert Sternberg believes that most of research **evidence supports** the view that intelligence has many facets, or dimensions and traditional mental ability tests measure just a few of these facts. Sternberg’s **triarchic theory of intelligence** has three main parts.

- **Practical ability** involves applying knowledge to everyday situations, using knowledge and tools, and seeking relevance.
- **Creative ability** involves inventing, discovering, imagining, and supposing.
- **Analytical ability** involves breaking ideas and products into their component parts, making judgements, evaluating, comparing and contrasting, and critiquing.

Because these abilities need information on which to operate, memory ability underlies each of them. Sternberg’s work is a **break with tradition** in two respects. First, it includes an aspect of intelligence that has been and still is overlooked: **how people use practical intelligence to adapt to the environment**. Second, Sternberg believes that **each of these abilities can be improved through instruction and that students learn best when all three are called into play**.

Howard Gardner's concept of intelligence is broader than traditional conceptions. His model describes eight separate types of intelligence. The intelligences that Gardner describes are:

Types of Intelligence	Examples of Relevant Behaviors
Logical-mathematical Intelligence Ability to use language effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making persuasive arguments • Writing poetry • Noticing subtle nuances in word meanings
Linguistic Intelligence Ability to reason logically, especially in mathematics and science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solving mathematical problems quickly • Generating mathematical proof • Formulating and testing hypotheses about observed phenomena
Spatial Intelligence Ability to notice details of what one sees and to imagine and manipulate visual objects in one's mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjuring up mental images • Drawing a visual likeness of an object • Seeing subtle differences among visually similar objects
Musical Intelligence Ability to create, comprehend, and appreciate music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing a musical instrument • Composing a musical work • Identifying the underlying structure of music
Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence Ability to use one's body skillfully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dancing • Playing basketball • Playing baseball
Interpersonal Intelligence Ability to notice subtle aspects of other people's behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading other people's mood • Detecting other people's underlying intentions and desires • Using knowledge of others to influence their thoughts and behaviors
Intrapersonal Intelligence Awareness of one's own feelings, motives, and desires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminating among such similar emotions as sadness and regret • Identifying the motives guiding one's own behavior • Using self-knowledge to interact more effectively with others
Naturalist Intelligence Ability to recognize patterns in nature and differences among various life-forms and natural objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying members of particular plant or animal species • Classifying natural forms (e.g. rocks, types of mountains) • Applying one's knowledge of nature in such activities as farming, landscaping, or animal training.

Because these intelligences are presumed to be **independent** of one another, an individual would likely exhibit different levels of skill in each of these domains.

Sternberg and Gardner's theories caution us against focusing on the results of IQ tests to the exclusion of other worthwhile behaviors. Multiple Intelligence theory has influenced the preparation and professional development of teachers as well as curricula and instructional practice around the world. Educators from around the world have used both Sternberg and Gardner's theories in a variety of ways to help students understand that they could be smart in different ways and in varying degrees.

Intelligence. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2016, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intelligence>

Gardner, 2000, 2003

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