Approaches to Intelligence

The cognitive approach to psychology led to the desire amongst psychologists to understand intelligence beyond a simple description of its products and to instead focus on processes. Major theories of intelligence include Sternberg's Triarchic Theory, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, Fagan's theory of processing and Vygotsky's sociohistorical theory.

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Sternberg's Triarchic Theory
Star-bird

Sternberg's triarchic theory looks to understand the content of mental abilities that make a person intelligent. He theorized that a triad of components, contextual ability and experiential knowledge are combined to lead to higher intelligence.

Gardner's Theory on Multiple Intelligences
Gardener with Multiple Brains

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences believes that there are several separate mental abilities. People can have different intelligences, such as linguistic, musical, spatial, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic.

Fagan's Theory of Processing
Fat-Reagan's Processor

Fagan theorized, in a simple and comprehensive manner, that intelligence is processing. Fagan argued against the discontinuity view, stating that intellectual development is continuous and that intelligence is the ability to process information.

Vygotsky's Sociohistorical Theory
V-goat-ski Socialist

Vygotsky theorized that intelligence was influenced by social and language-based factors. He stated that children's interactions and language shapes their thinking, while sharing knowledge increases the overall cognitive development of a society. Finally, he looked at intellect as potential, and compared what people can do on their own vs. how they perform with help from another person.

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