

## Sternberg's Triarchic Theory

The triarchic theory of intelligence was formulated by Robert Sternberg in the 1980s. The theory attempts to understand the human intelligence in terms of distinct components rather than a single ability. The tri-archic theory by Sternberg categorized intelligence into three different aspects.

- Componential – Analytic skills
- Experiential – Creativity
- Practical – Contextual skills

Before Sternberg, general intelligence was the idea that dominated most of the intelligence theories. However, Sternberg believed intelligence to be a much more complex subject matter, which lead him to propose a theory dealing with the cognitive approach to intelligence theory rather than a behavioristic view point. He believed that a person's adaptation to the changing environment and his contribution of knowledge in shaping the world around them had a significant importance in determining their intelligence.

Sternberg also argued that intelligent tests were wrong to ignore creativity, and there are always other important characteristics like cognitive processes, performance components, planning and decision making skills, and so on.

### 1. Componential – Analytical Intelligence

Analytical Intelligence can also be referred to as being **book smart**. This form of intelligence is more in terms with the traditional definitions of IQ and academic achievement. It's also called componential intelligence. Because of its analytical nature, the person with high analytical intelligence is good at problem solving. These people are generally more able to see the solutions not normally seen, because of their abstract thinking and evaluation skills. Analyzing someone's analytical intelligence can be done by few general questions like

- How good are you at analyzing technical problems?
- What's your history of scoring in standardized tests?

#### Example:

Emma always scores high on standardized tests. It's because of her ability to evaluate and analyze materials using abstract thinking in order to achieve solutions.

### 2. Experiential – Creative Intelligence

The ability to invent new ideas and solutions when dealing with new situations is regarded as creative intelligence. It's also referred as experiential intelligence. This form of intelligence is associated with using existing knowledge and skills in order to deal with new problems or

situations. Analyzing someone's creative intelligence level can be done by few general questions like

- How quickly can they solve a new problem?
- Will they automatically resort to applying new skill in order to deal with the situation?

Creative intelligence can be further divided into two categories.

- **Novelty:** This concerns the ability of a person to deal with the problem for the first time.
- **Automation:** This concerns the ability of a person to automatically perform the repeated tasks.

#### **Example:**

James Bond is a person high in creative intelligence because of his ability to use his knowledge and skills to deal with new problems every time.

### **3. Practical – Contextual Intelligence**

In simple words, practical intelligence can be defined as **street-smart**. The ability of a person to adapt in an environment or change it accordingly to best suit the personal needs is dubbed as practical intelligence. Another way to understand such type of intelligence is as common sense. Dealing with the everyday tasks in the best possible manner shows the person's intelligence. Analyzing someone's practical intelligence level can be done by few general questions like

- Would the person be taken advantage of easily?
- Do they adjust well to the world around them?
- Are they comfortable with the daily adventures?

A person, who is street-smart, or high on practical intelligence, is more able to cope with concrete situations.

#### **Example:**

Johnny is considering buying a second hand motorbike. A salesman, being salesman, would obviously try to con the buyer, but Johnny is already prepared with price comparisons and has made up his mind to say no to unnecessary extras.