International Handbook of Intelligence

This book is the first international handbook of intelligence ever published. It is intended to provide a truly international perspective on the nature of intelligence. It covers intelligence theory, research, and practice from all over the globe. Areas covered include Great Britain, Australia, French-speaking countries, German-speaking countries, Spanish-speaking countries, India, Japan, Israel, Turkey, and China. Each author is an internationally recognized expert in the field of intelligence. Authors represent not just their own viewpoints but also the full variety of viewpoints indigenous to the areas about which they write. Each chapter deals with, for its area, definitions and theories of intelligence, history of research, current research, assessment techniques, and comparison across geographical areas. An integrative final chapter synthesizes the diverse international viewpoints.

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International Handbook of Intelligence

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A school psychologist in the United States who was seeking to assess the source of difficulties of a child with learning problems would be very likely to give the child a conventional intelligence test, such as the Stanford-Binet; a French psychologist would be unlikely to use such a test. The reason for the difference is that the two countries have different histories and current traditions with regard to the study and understanding of human intelligence. This particular pair of countries illustrates an especial irony because intelligence testing as we know it began at the turn of the twentieth century in France with a Frenchman, Alfred Binet, whereas widespread use of intelligence testing in the United States did not begin until World War I.

Some fields in psychology and other sciences have a unified history; others do not. Intelligence is one of those fields that does not. For example, French-speaking countries have traditions emanating from Binet and Piaget. English-speaking countries have traditions emanating from Spearman and Thomson (United Kingdom) and Thurstone and Thorndike (United States). German-speaking countries have traditions emanating from Wundt and later, the Gestalt psychologists. Chinese work on intelligence goes back even to before the Common Era, when ability tests were used for selection for jobs. Work in several countries in Africa reveals very different conceptions of intelligence than in Western countries.

As a result of these varied traditions, histories of the field, textbook citations to the field, and current practices in the field vary fairly widely across different national and language borders. As an example, two widely cited recent reference works on intelligence (Sternberg, 1994,
both contain an overwhelming majority of their contributions from American contributors, whose points of view on intelligence are likely quite different from points of view of researchers from other cultures.

The goal of this volume is to present a truly international and unique set of perspectives on the psychology of human intelligence. This goal has been accomplished by asking authors from around the world who are distinguished scholars to write chapters of the volume that speak to the history and current state of intelligence research in their respective parts of the world. This book thereby becomes a unique source of information that is systematically international in its perspectives.

It is not possible in a book of this kind to cover every area in the world. For example, there is only one chapter from Africa and only one from each of South America and North America. The decisions about which areas to represent were complex ones. For example, with regard to the United States and Canada, although both have excellent scholars studying intelligence, it is not clear that the U.S. and Canadian traditions are sufficiently different to justify separate chapters. We were unable to find a strong enough tradition of psychological research on intelligence in Mexico and other countries in North America (e.g., Bermuda or the Bahamas) to justify separate chapters. With regard to South America, Ricardo Rosas was asked to cover as much of South America as he could, but he had difficulty finding large volumes of research to cover from the full complement of South American countries. Europe and Asia have greater representation in the book in terms of separate chapters, simply because there are more countries in which there are active and distinctive research programs.

The book is written for scholars and students with an interest of any kind in the psychology of human intelligence. Among psychologists, this includes differential, clinical, cognitive, school, educational, developmental, counseling, personality, and industrial-organizational psychologists, among others. But the book may also be of interest to audiences in education and business. The chapters are written at a level comprehensible to upper-level undergraduate students.

The book is organized by national or language areas. Each chapter author was expected to cover:

1. Definitions and theories of intelligence within the area
2. History of research within the area
3. Current research within the area
4. Current techniques of assessment within the area
Preface

The book was written to serve several purposes:

1. It uniquely provides an international perspective on theory, research, and assessment of intelligence.
2. Each chapter has been written by an investigator from the area of interest.
3. It deals both with the history and current state of work in the section.
4. Intelligence is by its nature cultural, at least in part. What constitutes adaptive behavior in one culture may constitute irrelevant or even maladaptive behavior in another country. This book therefore seeks to understand intelligence from diverse points of view.

I am grateful to the editorial board of the Handbook for their efforts in bringing this book to fruition. The editorial board included Paul Baltes, Berit Carlstedt, Ian J. Deary, Jan-Eric Gustafsson, Elias Mpofu, Ricardo Rosas, and Lazar Stankov. I also thank Alex Isgut for his help in preparing the manuscript.

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References