Nature vs Nurture – Intelligence

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The nature versus nature debate of intelligence has been going on for a several years. The debate revolves around how intelligence is formed, either from a person's genes and physiological attributes (nature), or from personal experiences and learnt through education and exposure to the world.

The nurture debate states that all humans are born as a 'blank slate' and the amount of intelligence we have is dependent upon our experiences. This view states that all humans have the capacity to learn and have the same abilities as everyone else when it comes to IQ. Research has shown that family factors have an effect on a child's IQ up to adolescence, but after a certain point it seems that nature tends to play a part. Twin studies have been used to investigate this debate further and from these studies we can see that genetics can play a huge role in influencing a person's IQ. Twin studies have shown that twins raised in different environments have similar IQs that fraternal siblings raised together, suggesting that nature plays a more important part in IQ.

Previous research has shown that both, our genes and the environment play a role in intelligence, and we are all born with different levels of capabilities which can be developed through the years. Of important note here is the work of American Psychologist, Robert Plomin. Plomin has demonstrated that genetic factors can mediate the link between the environment and person outcomes such as intelligence. Research is somewhat divided in this area then with some researchers suggesting a 40%/60% divide between nature and nurture, others view the exact opposite, whilst some go with 50%/50%. What is clear is that both nature and nurture are responsible for how we are today. The nature versus nature debate can also be applied to other areas of psychology, such as development of language, identity or personality.

References

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