The Current Status of the Theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability in Relation to Theories of Intelligence

ROBERT J. STERNBERG

Abstract
This article discusses Feuerstein’s place among theorists of intelligence and intellectual development and the pervasive influence his work has had.

Keywords
theories of intelligence, theories of intellectual development, Feuerstein, structural cognitive modifiability

I count myself as among the fortunate that I had the opportunity to get to know Reuven Feuerstein and even to count him as a friend. Although we had not run into each other in recent years, during the 1980s, we frequently ran into each other at conferences and in various meetings in Israel. Perhaps the high point of our interaction was when we debated each other in Alberta, Canada. It was a friendly debate and one in which we struggled to find points on which we disagreed. There just were not so many!

Among contemporary theories of intelligence and of intellectual modifiability, Feuerstein’s is unique in having closely associated with it both an assessment (the Learning Potential Assessment Device—LPAD) and a cognitive-training program (Instrumental Enrichment—IE, also called FIE in recognition of its creator, Feuerstein). The theory thus is, in a sense, ahead of all the others in the readiness with which it can both be used and applied in psychological and educational practice.

As I write this short article, I have two books in front of me—Feuerstein, Feuerstein, Falik, and Rand (2002) and Feuerstein, Feuerstein, Falik, and Rand (2006). Both are revisions of earlier work (Feuerstein, 1979, 1980). They are the key works of Feuerstein, I believe, representing respectively his work

1. Cornell University, Department of Human Development, B44 MVR, Ithaca, NY 14853, USA, robert.sternberg@cornell.edu