In order to understand the emergence and evolution of intelligent life, I conduct an interdisciplinary cross-cultural investigation (anthropological, biological, and psychological) into the literature on intelligence in the human being. In doing so, I re-examine a well-known phenomenon related to changes in intelligence levels within one species, the Flynn Effect. The Flynn Effect is a species-wide increase in average intellectual performance found in humans over the last six decades. A model for the evolution of intelligence is developed based on the findings of the Flynn Effect and other phenomenon known to impact the evolution, development, and display of intelligence. This model expands the standard representation of the distribution of intelligence, the Standard Normal Distribution, to a multivariate normal distribution. In doing so, one finds that changes in the forms and functions of intelligence within the species are uniform and predictable, but are also contingent upon identifiable natural and social situations. These natural and social situations are delineated and discussed.

One particular contingency for the evolution of advanced intelligence is that of culture. Culture’s affect on the distribution of intelligence is, therefore, examined with special interest. It is then proposed that this model can be utilized and adapted by others to understand relative changes in apparent intelligence levels in non-human primates and other species.