

What is 'creativity' and how can it be assessed



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Creativity refers to intuitive solutions that are of genuine value. A characteristic seen as most desirable, linked to problem solving and expertise (Garnham and Oakhill, 1994). Additionally, Weisberg(1993) believed intended originality is involved with creative thinking. Despite its difficulty to define, creativity has been studied in diverse disciplines, often in conjunction with intelligence testing. According to Mooney(1963), the study of creativity arises from 4 perspectives; creative people, creative processes, products of creativity and creative places.

The psychometric approach attempts to predict creative achievement and identify the products of creativity. Several established tests have been administered to creative people, to explain differences between intelligence, as measured by IQ and creativity tests. Guilford(1956) derived a hypothesis regarding this difference, differentiating between convergent and divergent thinking. Convergent thinking seeks to find the correct answer to specific problems, a strategy for solving most well-defined problems.

Conversely, divergent thinking requires flexibility and originality, leading to many possible solutions which aid solving ill-defined problems. Guilford identified the process of divergent thinking as important for creativity, since involving indirect and productive thinking. However, research has indicated only slight correlation between performance on divergent thinking tasks and other measures of creativity.

Additionally, its mixes creativity with intelligence or originality therefore is difficult to establish. The autobiographic and biographic approaches focus on the products of creativity. Unlike above, assumptions that intelligence and creativity correlate are ignored, as they are based on observation.

Wallas(1926) proposed a four stage account of creative insights. Beginning with; perception, preparatory work on a problem; incubation, internalisation of problem into the unconscious mind.

Followed by the most crucial stage, inspiration, the solution begins to appear in conscious awareness, in the form of flash of insight. Intimation occurs, feelings of the solution about to emerge; sensitivity is crucial in order to avoid distraction. Finally, verification is when the solution is applied and elaborated, ensuring the problem is solved. Wallas considered creativity to be a legacy of the evolutionary process, allowing humans to adapt to rapidly changing environments.