

Further Readings

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ORIGINALITY

An idea or product must be original to be considered creative: Reproducing exact copies of paintings, verbatim quotes from poetry, or repeating scientific theories that others have already presented before the world cannot be considered creative. Definitions of *originality* usually focus on novel or unusual behavior and ideas, something or someone that does not imitate past action or practice. Originality involves escaping the obvious and commonplace, breaking away from habit-bound thinking. Originality—that is, novel or unusual behavior and ideas—is necessary for creativity. By itself, however, originality may characterize the bizarre and the inappropriate; therefore, originality is not sufficient for an idea or product to be deemed creative. Social value, aesthetic appeal, and appropriateness are also necessary.

Most measures of creativity assess originality by using the criterion of statistical infrequency or rarity of responses. The number of unique ideas is often used to score divergent thinking tests, which are the most commonly used estimate of creative potential.

Research findings support the existence of high correlations between originality and fluency on most measures of creativity. Fluency is the ability to produce many ideas; it enables the individual to formulate more ideas than others do. Paul Torrance

found that a person who generates a large number of alternatives is more likely to produce original ideas, and Dean Simonton confirmed those findings, showing that a person's originality is a function of the number of ideas formulated. Measures of originality, however, usually predict creative behavior more accurately than do measures of fluency. Therefore, though fluency increases the chance that original ideas will be produced, it is not sufficient for generating original ideas.

For meaningful measurement, originality must be defined with respect to sociocultural norms. Ideas that may be original in one culture may be old news to members of another culture. Although originality is a hallmark of creativity, the determination of originality needs a comparative base, whether it is the repertoire of an individual or the norms of a population, society, or culture. At the highest levels of creativity, the comparative base is worldwide or historical.

To assess originality of thinking across cultures, Paul Torrance administered three nonverbal and six verbal tasks to students in Grades 1 through 6 in the United States, Australia, Germany, India, and Western Samoa. Some responses were common across all cultures, whereas others were common in one culture but were considered original in others. For example, on the Circles Task, baseballs, basketballs, hoops, doorknobs, doughnut holes, steering wheels, and satellites were common in the United States but were scored as original for other cultures. Boats, bowls, breadfruit, cats, and leaves were common in Samoa but were unusual—and therefore scored as original—in other cultures. Eggplants, melons, pomegranates, rackets, pitchers, and tables were common in India but original elsewhere. Butterflies and traffic signs were common in Germany and original in other cultures. Buttons, clowns' faces, targets, and tires were common in the United States and Germany but were original in other cultures. Goats, lollipops, pumpkins, and scissors were common in the African American students in the United States sample, but were original in other cultures, including the broader United States. The cultural specificity of originality has been confirmed by the experiences of various scorers of creativity tests, including the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), using comparisons of American responses with the responses of people from other countries.

Originality scores on measures of creativity also change over time. Kyung Hee Kim questioned the reliability of originality scores from the latest version of the TTCT: It uses 1984 norms, and the frequency of different responses may well have changed since then. She suggests the creation and use of independent criteria for different times as well as cultures.

Mark Runco concluded that originality by itself is not a sufficient indicator of creativity, and that social value, aesthetic appeal, and appropriateness are also necessary. In fact, by itself, originality may characterize bizarre and obviously inappropriate work or behavior. Some researchers emphasize the fit or adaptiveness of creative ideas, and others define creativity in terms of originality and value, which includes intrinsic worth and/or pragmatic usefulness. An original idea or product is judged not by the originator but by its recipients; for instance, an original symphony that lacks beautiful or exciting themes and fails to make a deeper emotional connection with the audience lacks creativity when considering the criterion of adaptiveness.

Runco and his colleagues conducted a study to assess the relative contributions of originality and appropriateness to judgments of creativity. Their findings suggest that the best strategy for generating creative ideas or solutions focuses on originality because the judges in the study valued originality more than appropriateness.

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See also Creativity Assessment; Creativity Theories

Further Readings

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OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Out-of-school activities can play an important role in the life of gifted youth. Parents and gifted youth educators, challenged to meet the unique needs of students using established school curriculums, often turn to out-of-school programs to support the enrichment needs of gifted youth. Unfortunately, only sparse empirical data exist that directly examine the impact of out-of-school activities on gifted youth, although several guides to opportunities for out-of-school activities for gifted young people have been published, including Julia Roberts and Frances Karnes's *Enrichment Opportunities for Gifted Learners*. Existing research on development of non-gifted youth who participate in out-of-school activities, however, provides compelling evidence for the benefits of participation in these activities for gifted youth; out-of-school activities can provide ideal conditions and opportunities to facilitate and meet specific needs and motivations that typify gifted youth. This entry summarizes the research on organized out-of-school activities and discusses how they are uniquely situated to meet the needs of gifted youth.

The Prevalence of Out-of-School Activity Participation

The term *out-of-school* typically refers to weekday hours when parents are at work and unable to directly supervise their children during the after school hours; recently, this time has been called the *after-3-hours*. It is estimated that about 25 percent of K–12 youth in the United States, approximately 14.3 million youth, are unsupervised during these after-3-hours, with the rate increasing to nearly one-third in families where both parents work or in single-headed families. Among older youth in Grades 9 through 12, the rate of unsupervised time during the after-3-hours is much higher, at around 60 percent. Although unsupervised time is not inherently detrimental, having large blocks of time without supervision is known to place youth at risk for behavioral and academic problems. Out-of-school activities provide important places where youth can spend time engaged in structured endeavors during the after-3 hours, providing a